

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
Departamento de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras

U.S. AVANT-GARDE LITERATURE & THE SMALL PRESSES - 50'S TO 80'S:
THE STRUGGLE FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL LIBERATION

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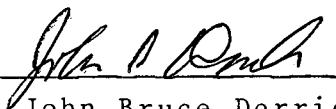
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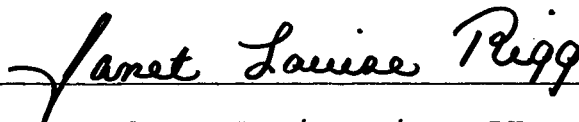
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FOR THE AVANT-GARDE, HUGH FOX, AND MYSELF

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A B S T R A T O

Este estudo é uma análise documentária da literatura vanguarda dos Estados Unidos a partir da segunda guerra mundial até o início da década de 1980. Ele focaliza os aspectos psicosociais do seu desenvolvimento e enfatiza a caracterização e evolução da vanguarda e do movimento das pequenas editôras dos anos de 50 e 60.

A vanguarda das últimas três décadas tem demonstrada uma progressiva regressão psicológica para dentro do inconsciente na busca do "eu".

O movimento contra-cultural da "Beat" geração dos anos de 50 refletiu o crescente senso de alienação no homem moderno, especialmente no norte-americano alienado na sociedade urbana.

A "Invisible Generation" dos anos 60 expandiu o movimento contra-cultural dos "Beats" a uma luta nacional para liberação psicosocial, a qual tornou-se uma cruzada abrangendo parte dos anos de 70. O movimento das pequenas editôras cresceu na costa do oeste dos Estados Unidos e alguns editores e publicadores desse movimento se organizaram em associações tais como COSMEP (Comitê de Editôres e Publicadores de Pequenas Revistas).

Uma grande parte dos escritos vanguardistas dos anos 70 demonstra uma tendência a auto-análise e um estado de crescendo indiferença quanto ao "establishment" e a sua autoridade. Expressa-se frequentemente uma atitude de apatia apocalíptica e/ou estado de sobrevivência amebiana.

Agora, no início dos anos 80, muitos desses escritores ativos nos anos 50 e/ou 60 morreram, ou se integraram na linha da literatura estabelecida, ou deixaram de escrever ou se tornaram psicosocialmente introvertidos e produzindo apenas por si próprios ou para pequenas editôras.

A maioria dos escritores da vanguarda das três décadas passadas não alcançaram reconhecimento das grandes companhias publicadoras que são geralmente sediadas em Nova Iork, portanto eles tem que depender das pequenas editôras. No entanto, há centenas de pequenas editôras nos Estados Unidos, e o fato que o número dessas está aumentando poderá indicar que um novo contra-sistema de publicar está se institucionalizando firmemente nas margens do estabelecido monopólio literário da costa leste.

A B S T R A C T

This study is a documentary analysis of U.S. avant-Garde literature from the end of World War II to the 1980's. It focuses the psychosocial aspects of its development, and emphasizes the characterization and evolution of the avant-garde and small press movement of the 50's and 60's.

The U.S. avant-garde of the past three decades has shown a pattern of progressive psychosocial regression into the unconscious in a quest for selfhood.

The Beat Generation counter-culture movement of the 50's reflected modern man's growing sense of alienation, especially the alienated American in urbanized society.

The Invisible Generation of the 60's expanded the Beat counter-culture movement into a nationwide struggle for psychosocial liberation which turned into an anti-establishment crusade reaching into the 70's. The small press movement gained impetus on the West Coast and some editor-publishers organized into associations such as COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers).

Much of avant-garde writing of the 70's shows a trend in individual self-analysis and a mood of increasing indifference towards the establishment and authority. It frequently expresses an attitude of apocalyptic apathy and/or amoeboid survivalism.

By the beginning of the 80's, many of the most active writers of the 50's and 60's have either died, fallen into the line of established writing, given up writing altogether, or have become psychosocial introverts producing for themselves alone or for small presses.

The greater majority of avant-garde writers of the past three decades have not gained recognition from the major publishing companies, mostly centered in New York, so they must depend upon small presses. However, there are now hundreds of small press editors and publishers in America, and the fact that they are increasing might indicate that a new counter system of publishing is establishing itself firmly outside the traditional East Coast monopoly.

"... In reality books are bred by men, men by life and life by books through a constant interrelation and cross - fertilization, so that an element of social history can scarcely be dispensed with in any account of literary phenomena and forces."

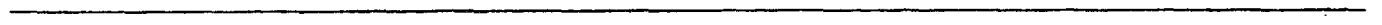
Van Wyck Brooks

The Struggle for Psychosocial Liberation

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

AVANT-GARDE WRITING IN U.S. HISTORY

Before overviewing avant-garde writing in U.S. history, I find it necessary to examine and explain the usage of the term avant-garde, or vanguard, in literature, particularly its use in reference to American literature. We might start with this typical succinct definition:

Avant-Garde: A military METAPHOR drawn from the French (vanguard, or van of an army) and applied to new writing that shows striking (and usually very self-conscious) innovations in STYLE, FORM, and subject matter. The military origin of the term is appropriate, for in every age the *avant-garde* (by whatever name it is known) makes a frontal and often an organized attack on the established FORMS and literary traditions of its time. See ANTI-NOVEL, ANTI-REALISTIC NOVEL, SURREALISM.¹

Nonetheless, with all due respect for the authors of recently revised dictionaries and encyclopedias, I suggest that the term avant-garde often varies in meaning in literary analysis, according to the divergent criteria of critics and writers. However, regardless of the pros and cons of what is and what is not avant-garde writing, we might at least agree upon the obvious - avant-garde writing characteristically opposes, deviates from, and/or is alienated from the literary establishment of a determined historical time.

Still, writers and critics frequently disagree as to what is within and without the questionable boundaries of an established literature. Therefore, and according to my own observations, I say that it is difficult and often impossible to draw an absolute line between writ-

ing which is merely different from a great part of established writing and that which is basically discordant with the literary establishment of a certain decade, period, epoch, or era in which it is produced.

In distinguishing avant-gardism, it then becomes more a question of calculating the degree and quality of nonconformity, rather than the mere existence of the element itself within the writing. Critics such as Daniel Hoffman, Richard Kostelanetz, Donald M. Allen, and Hugh Fox seem to try to follow this criteria in discerning U.S. avant-garde writing - yet each critic within his own personalized perspective.

Hoffman, for example, in his *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*, presents what he considers a vanguard under two different chapter titles - "Poetry: Schools of Dissidents" and "Poetry: Dissidents from Schools". His classification appears to be based on the high degree of confessionalism and anti-Puritanism within a work, which is in keeping with his Harvard/Puritan heritage. Whereas Kostelanetz, in *Possibilities of Poetry*, selects vanguard authors more according to their structural experimentalism, which is quite natural for a concretist poet to do. Donald M. Allen's *The New American Poetry* would have the avant-garde as a generational phenomenon in which the younger writers characteristically reject the formulas of the older generation, so he simply records birth dates and poems with little or no comment. Hugh Fox's *The Living Underground: An Anthology of Contemporary American Poetry* and *The Living Underground: An Overview* present a diversified selection of poets representing the more recent avant-garde movement which sprang up in the sixties, some of the latest crop of outsider poets on the U.S. literature scene, for the author himself is an avant-garde psyche-split* outsider writing for his place in the sun too.

Each of these viewpoints has merit - Hoffman's "dissidence",

* A state of multi-dimensional self rationalization produced by the psychological conflict between the individual's "civilized" logic and his inner intuitive consciousness of the nature of things.

Allen's, "rejectionism", Kostelanetz' "experimentalism" and Fox's "outsiderism". In my personal interviews with people of the avant-garde and the small press movements, each one described this type of literature within part or all of the above mentioned criteria. However, my own observations oblige me to go further by saying that the outstanding feature of U.S. avant-garde writing, past and present, has been its inherent psychosocial subversive nature.

In other words, U.S. avant-garde writing has been, and is, essentially subversive in content, more than in form, not only to the established literary group but also to established Puritan traditions in American society. Moreover, this kind of writing seems to derive its energy from pressures on the individual ego. That is, it has exploded more from individual feelings of psychosocial alienation - from the outsider who would change or destroy the systems which oppress him.

This subversive nature of much avant-garde writing lends to its continual state of ostracism within the establishment which nurtures it. Why? Because it advocates change, and change usually represents a threat to reigning systems - governments, religions, cults, and so on. The greater the degree of personal psychosocial non-conformity expressed in writing, the more it is pushed down the scale and driven to the "underground", feared and persecuted, or simply ignored to oblivion. Nevertheless, the evolution of literature, as well as the evolution of mankind itself, depends upon this experimentalism and non-conformity to static patterns.

Post-W.W. II America produced the Beat/Black Mountain avant-garde movement which was a combination of Thoreauvian anti-establishment Transcendentalism, Whitman's identification of the self with America and his visionary perception of reality, Hemingway's ambiguous male-bonding* fixation, Pound's social radicalism, and W.C. Williams' principle of poetry as spontaneous speech. In my opinion, the most out-

* Term used by Leslie Fiedler to describe solidarity among members of male sex in opposition to female sex.

standing poets of the movement were Allen Ginsberg and Charles Olson: Ginsberg lambasting everything heretofore sacred within and without literature; and Olson defying and rejecting most previous academic dictates in form with Poundian zeal.

But it was the Ginsberg/Kerouac Beat Generation counter-culture revolt which set the pace for and extended into the revolutionary 60's:

Poetry, by the fifties, had become a sadly academic affair. It wasn't really commercial. It wouldn't sell cars. It wasn't really "visual" enough for TV, and publishing houses in New York brought out their poets dutifully in small editions more because of habit than need or even taste. Poetry itself had become "neat" and clean: Karl Shapiro, Randall Jarrel, and of course the grand old man of U.S. poetry, Robert Frost.

Then came the revolution: Ginsberg, Kerouac, Lamantia, Frank O'Hara, Chandler Bossard, John Clellon Holmes, Seymour Krim, Diana DePrima. Artificial, theoretical academic language went out the window and subjectwise the poets and novelists left the universities and the libraries, went out into the streets, up into the mountains, into the bedrooms and toilets, and rediscovered America - this time a personal, essential, secretion and emotion centered America which was real, multi-dimensional, raw, insulting and totally unexpected.

Kerouac in *On the Road* and Ginsberg in *Howl* created a new poet-image for the twentieth-century: coarse, experience-oriented, at the same time spiritual, idealistic, even mystical. The orient was imported and spliced on to a kind of neo-Transcendentalism a la Thoreau and Emerson. The new voice decried American materialism, and chanted "Sutras". If the Beats were bums, they were "Dharma Bums," stripped of the accoutrements of the bourgeoisie in order to seek and find *Enlightenment*. They rediscovered the American Indian and made the "noble Savage" even more noble than he had ever been. They weren't interested in time-clocks, schedules, "making it" in the old, traditional American sense, but in discovering who they were, what they were, where they and their country were going.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti in San Francisco started City Lights books and actually made money with Ginsberg's *Howl*, and showed that, yes, it was possible to have a publishing house outside New York, and that, yes, a publishing alternative was possible. Little mags sprang up everywhere, and the New York-centrism of "the literary world" shafted out westward and the possibilities of multiple alternative grew.²

The Beat drive toward psychosocial liberation reached a climax in the revolutionary 60's. Young Buddha Beatniks, Hindu Hippies, and Tripping Spaceniks migrated from all over America to make San Francisco and outlying areas their Mecca. There, on the West Coast, art-

ists and writers of the avant-garde, social protesters, and aimless wanderers alike mixed, mingled, and moved together against the establishment and the vortex of the scientific spirit of the time. Sex, death, and the coming nuclear apocalypse were the haunting muses of avant-garde poets such as Charles Potts, in his *Little Lord Shiva*,* finished in 1968:

... there is no death
because u wont
be able to remember
it

(sec. 10)

... those of us whove ironed
history out
and dug the dirt
and swam thru water
and planted the seeds
and made the bread
and loved the bed
put history in our hands
do it well
and do it quick
the abyss is moving forward
let it take u

(sec. 8)

... the hindo visions of the beginning
was a turtle that carried
the world on its back...
what turtle
cld carry this explosion
between the edges of
begin and end
trapped on earth
till we surround
ourselves with each
other
and transcend
the bloody whining
about life and death

("Feedback," from "Uproar and Feedback.")

LITTLE LORD SHIVA)³

* Shiva is the Hindu god of destruction and reproduction, member of supreme Hindu trinity. (Variation of Siva).



Carol Bergé, poet and author of the book of short stories titled *A Couple Called Moebius*, is an avant-garde writer on the borderline - has own small press company but has been published by N.Y. Bobbs-Merrill Company too.

They were both made of metal, almost the color of the water. Now that night fell in chunks, the water formed blocks that worked against their oars. They fell into a lack of rhythm, their flesh working against themselves, against the self, and so against the rhythm of the waves surrounding them. Off to their left, left of the bow, the island lay, metallic and dulled against the water. It was an unknown metal, perhaps lead; the idea was somehow to transmute the two of them into lead too, and let the water serve as magnetic ore, to perhaps pull them toward the island. The tide was turning. Neither of them knew these waters enough to guess the character of that hour as a surface; the light was going as if it could be poured

- From The Water Ceremony, *A Couple Called Moebius*.

FIGURE 1

And, the Berkley anti-war uproar started an avalanche of protest writing which spread out over the nation - much of avant-garde writing of the 60's was within this category and, therefore, a mere documentary of the immediate social strife within the establishment of Western civilization. Although vanguard writers were concentrated in California, many were constantly on the move to be where the action was - sit-ins, demonstrations, public meetings. So we must think of them as a scattered and individualized, yet homogeneous group working from West to East to West.

Without going into geographical details, I should like to cite a few exponents of the post-beat movement who were or have been especially relevant to and/or representative of avant-garde literature of the 60's and 70's, in my own words:

Charles Potts, whose chaotic language and prophetic cosmic American philosophy typifies the American Transcendental search for roots and selfhood; D.A. Levy, whose "acid and weeded" visionary poetry denounces the rampant generational death wish; Doug Blazek, with his neo-beat "meat poetry" political attacks on American capitalism and consumerism; Charles Bukowski, whose four-letter-word excremental view of life can reach the limits of what the establishment calls obscene, but whose writings can also uncover the highest depths of human sentiments; Carol Bergé, who probes the mid-century female mind in relation to the macho world and spies into new concepts of space and being; Noel Peattie, whose witty satirical critical reviews of literature and writers in his own home-kitchen-pressed *Sipapu* should definitely be bound for posterity; Diane Kruckow, the clear-minded modern American Thoreauvian-styled poet; Charles Plymell, the all-American observer writing the reality of what the U.S. was, is, and will be; Paul Foreman, the anti-establishment neo-Puritan Texas-style intellectual; Harry Smith, the respectable anti-civilization traditionalist; Len Fulton, the anti-institution institutionalizer of the avant-garde and small press movement; Hugh Fox/Connie Fox, the Dr. Jekyll and Mrs. Hyde psychesplit enigma and his multi-dimensional self experimentalism.



John Bennett, author of *The Adventures of Achilles Jones* and editor of *Vagabond Anthology*.

"... you strike that chord that lies inside all of us and you say something that is true and always has been true and always will be true and is not and cannot be compromised and rationalized and frittered away, can only be lost from sight - you say it and do it and it is a poem, no matter what the form."

- John Bennett

(From Introduction *Vagabond Anthology*
1966-1977.)

Also, new philosophical groups and schools have developed such as Morty Sklar's *Actualists*, the Immanentists, the *Surro-Dadaists*, and the *School of Bukowski*. There are, of course, innumerable other writers, groups, and schools within the postbeat years. But these are, (to my knowledge), some of the most characteristic and/or outstanding elements of the sixties-born U.S. avant-garde movement.

One of the avant-garde, (I do not recall who), once commented to me that there are probably more people writing now in the U.S.A. than there was in the whole of Europe during the entire 19th century. Certainly only a part of these thousands of writers with their small presses display distinct vanguardism. However, we cannot deny that the very fact that everybody seems to be writing, expressing his or her own selfhood, is in itself an indication of a new avant-garde philosophy - a new outlook on life and the written word, a new type of American individualism in the making which could itself become the basis of a new established literary system.

Finally, I might add that American avant-garde literature movements, from the post-independence Transcendentalists to the 1980's, have been a battle of the "I's", that vanguard writing of the post-World War II generation shows signs of a growing sense of individual alienation, that the writings of the 60's movement might be defined as a struggle for psychosocial liberation, and that the writings of the 60's through 70's show a turn to apocalyptic apathy and a gradual regression into the individual self - an amoeboid withdrawal within the establishment for self preservation and survival.

CHAPTER ONE: THE FORERUNNER BEAT GENERATION

I Mood of the 50's: Portrait of the Alienated American

Besides the spectre of the Hiroshima victims of the atom bomb, there were other postwar hangups. During the waging of the war a general breakdown of cultural, racial, and ideological barriers occurred among the allied nations which led many Americans to self-criticism, to criticism of their country's systems, and to the assimilation of foreign principles and ideals often contrary to traditional American values.* Also, the war over, Negroes were once again "put in their place" in schools, on jobs, and in the back end of buses in the Southern and South-Western states. Consequently, black militancy increased and racial strife exploded violently in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. Abroad, the extreme Right and Left resumed their prewar antagonism. Communist guerrilla warfare broke out in Greece in 1947 and Berlin was blockaded by the Soviets in 1948. However, the biggest blow to American pacifists came in 1950 when North Korean Communists crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded non-communist South Korea. Though the United States sent troops and materials, public disapproval of the government's interference was evident in the elections of 1952 when the Republican candidate, Dwight D. Eisenhower, won a decisive victory over Adlai Stevenson, candidate of the long ruling Democratic party. Nevertheless, alarmed Americans soon began to realize that the Korean affair was just the beginning as stalemate became the order of the day and the international ideological chess game developed into a continuous cold war.

The 50's were marked by a fearful middle-of-the-road foreign policy backed by a dollar-dictated coexistence ideal, an ever expanding consumer prosperity, and an ever diminishing individualism. Eric Goldman

* Conclusions drawn from Eric Goldman, "Mood Maybe", *The Crucial Decade*, 3-15.

gives a description of the national situation in the late 40's and early 50's: "For the most part, intellectuals were glum, warning. They kept insisting that the decisions made in the Crucial Decade were not enough in either foreign or domestic affairs. They added that the very roads Americans had chosen brought their own dangers. A nation dedicated to lifting endlessly the standard of living and to a long-time coexistence with a powerful enemy could easily turn into a militarized, overfat, numb civilization, increasingly oblivious to the value that had stoked American progress - individualism." ⁴

The Golden Calf of American organizational democracy had its heyday in the early fifties, only to lose its shine in 1957 when the USSR launched the first artificial satellite ahead of the United States. The country was shocked out of a long-cultivated smugness.

Recalling the postwar years and the 50's we are reminded of the infamous Hell's Angels terrorizing California small towns, the wild Saturday night Elvis Presley rock'n'roll mob-ins, the stock car racing buzz, the male crush on the Mansfield-Monroe mama image, the discovery of motel sex, the bikini craze, the beatnik bum sensation, the TV communication revolution, the credit card boom, the Cadillac symbol of success, the United Nations fumbling the peace, the McCarthy tar and feather anti-communist inquisitions, the hydrogen bomb scare, the U.S. come hither holier than thou dollar-spiked counter-communist attacks overseas, and the government's "Look for a Star" to save face before interminable stalemate wars in which both Right and Left found a common denominator - greed for power without regard for human suffering.

In the midst of material plenty, adolescents of the James Dean-Marlon Brando decade began to show signs of psychosocial alienation, for after the outbreak of the Korean War juvenile delinquency soared.* Well-fed children of the upper and middle class roamed the streets

* "... after the outbreak of the Korean War it (rate of delinquency) mounted so swiftly that about a million children a year were getting in trouble with the police." (Eric Goldman, *Crucial Decade*, 190.).

looking for thrills which ranged from sexual indulgence and highway speeding to armed robbery and even murder.⁵ The thrill came from doing what was prohibited, but the basic idea was to break the older generation's commandments. The teenage misfit, prototyped in the James Dean movie "Rebel without a Cause", getting into trouble for no obvious reason except for a thrill, was an incomprehensible enigma to his Depression-brewed elders. In effect, though, the rebels did have reasons for mal-adjustment and disorientation. Nuclear energy and wars threatened their future existence, urbanization had disrupted family unity, and public authority was being demoralized through the Kefauver and other investigations. Even the workers unions and universities were involved in corruption scandals.⁶ So with the myth of the American Superman disintegrating day by day, what was the younger generation expected to believe in, preserve, or look forward to? The old values no longer held true in postwar urbanized American society.

Allen Ginsberg's portrait of the alienated American in his poem "Howl" is perhaps the rawest and most shocking avant-garde exposé of psychosocial alienation within the United States written at the time. It begins as follows:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness,
 starving hysterical naked,
 dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for
 an angry fix,
 angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection
 to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,
 who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high sat up smoking
 in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating
 across the tops of cities contemplating jazz,
 who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw
 Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs
 illuminated,
 who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes hallucinating
 Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy among the scholars of war,
 who were expelled from the academies for crazy & publishing
 obscene odes on the windows of the skull,
 who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning their money
 in wastebaskets and listening to the Terror through the wall,

who got busted in their pubic beards returning through Laredo
 with a belt of marijuana for New York,
 who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in Paradise Alley,
 death, or purgatoried their torsos night after night
 with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares, alcohol and
 cock and endless balls,
 incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and lightning in the
 mind leaping toward poles of Canada & Paterson,
 illuminating all the motionless world of Time between,
 Peyote solidities of halls, backyard green tree cemetery dawns,
 wine drunkenness over the rooftops, storefront boroughs of
 teahead joyride neon blinking traffic light, sun and moon
 and tree vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of Brooklyn,
 ashcan rantings and kind king light of mind,
 who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride from Battery
 to holy Bronx on benzedrine until the noise of wheels and
 children brought them down shuddering mouth-wracked
 and battered bleak of brain all drained of brilliance in the
 drear light of Zoo,⁷

The poem portrays the outsider, particularly the city-raised outsider. But, more particularly, Ginsberg is describing the alienated youth of his own generation, himself and fellow outsiders turned anarchists in defiance of American morality codes. Ginsberg and his male clan of avant-garde writers and thinkers who tried to escape the systems through drugs and alcohol were a minority group. A great part of their writings are autobiographical, confessional, and/or marked by sexual frustrations. Ginsberg himself has been a declared homosexual living with the poet Peter Orlovsky since the fifties, and much of his writing has been dedicated to the question of love and sex relationships.

But the alienated American in the first part of "Howl" details not only moral outsiderism but the spiritual despair of urban individuals and the seamy side of American materialism of the 50's.

Allen Ginsberg



AMERICA

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.
America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956.
I can't stand my own mind.
America when will we end the human war?
Go fuck yourself with your atom bomb.
I don't feel good don't bother me.
I won't write my poem till I'm in my right mind.
America when will you be angelic?
When will you take off your clothes?
When will you look at yourself through the grave?
When will you be worthy of your million Trotskyites?
America why are your libraries full of tears?
America when will you send your eggs to India?
I'm sick of your insane demands.
When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need
with my good looks?
America after all it is you and I who are perfect not the next
world.
Your machinery is too much for me.
You made me want to be a saint.

FIGURE 3

II Rebels with a Cause from East to West Coast

The results of long-time psychosocial alienation within American society culminated in the cultural rebellion of mid-century U.S.A. The discontentment of generations of anti-Puritan Puritans finally found open expression in the post-WW II generation. A general non-conformity to pre-atomic age values, to Puritan moralism, to Western civilization's precepts and ideologies, and to pre-established principles, codes, and systems in general, became manifest in the actions and thinking of the younger set. Anti-establishment manifestations varied in degree, from mildly delinquent student drop-outs in defiance of parental control, to the organization of secret free sex clubs, and to heavier Jazz-dive pot-smoking Bohemianism. Whatever type or degree of dissidence or protest it might have been, the enemy was the same - the establishment. And, the immediate and ultimate goal for all was greater individual freedom.

The U.S. avant-garde philosopher-thinker-writers were perhaps the first group to reflect this growing generational defiance and to expose the existence of spreading psychosocial alienation within postwar America by deliberately attacking and breaking the rules of the Establishment through written and verbal counter-culture movements. The cultural rebellion began with the poet's movement away from the universities on the West Coast in the late 40's. Almost simultaneously, in the early 50's, avant-garde poets emerged in diverse geographical parts of the country; and, though they were a melange of contradictory styles, techniques, and methods, the rebels of San Francisco, the Bay Area, Berkeley, New York, and Black Mountain, N.C., were united in one common cause - the "total rejection of all qualities typical of academic verse."⁸ To some of these poets "academic" referred not only to neo-classicism, but also to the earlier 1920-1940 Eliot blockade of styles and precepts of literary creation which had become dictatorial criteria for poets,

critics, and university English teachers even into the postwar years. Richard Kostelanetz, analysing pre-Beat generation poetry, says that it "was intricate in meter, approximately regular in length of line, ironic and elegant and sometimes aphoristic, controlled in texture and restricting in form, complex in thought and solemn in tone. It was rich in allusions to the history of literature and culture, distinctly formal in diction, impersonal in ambience, observational in perspective, cosmic in concern, associational in poetic syntax, reverent toward both the tradition and the work of poetry, and implicit in ultimate subject, which the reader generally has to deduce."⁹

The new poets who commanded the most attention during and immediately after the war tended to echo these predominant stylistic traits of their elders... Robert Lowell, John Berryman, and Delmore Schwartz, who favored elaborate Freudian symbols for psychic dramas:

"The heavy beast that goes with me,
A manifold honey to smear his face,
The hungry beating brutish one
In love with candy, anger, and sleep."¹⁰

These strategies formulated in the Eliot mold somewhat characterize what the avant-garde of the 50's came to call "academic" writing.

The end of the war marked the end of an era. "The beginnings and ends of literary eras usually coincide with important public events, such as major wars or economic booms and busts...", comments Kostelanetz. The fast moving events of the late 40's and early 50's and the jarring effects of war experiences caused the new poets, and some older ones, to feel that the existing delimitations of poetic form and content were oppressive and inadequate for the times. Drastic changes had occurred during and following the war - America was not the same, people were not the same. Therefore, if literary history is an intrinsic by-product of evolution, of the history of mankind, it must be allowed to develop and spontaneously change as people themselves change. The avant-garde

felt that the "academic" over-emphasis on strictly structured form and censorship of content* had gradually ostracized both aspiring poets and poetry readers. They believed that the essence of poetry was and is content rather than form - that content survives form in literary history. Or, as Van Wyck Brooks so aptly puts it: "To insist then that a literary history must be a history of literary forms is merely to express, - is it not? - a fashion of the moment; but one that has acquired, with the school of critics that has given birth to this idea, a singular hold upon academic circles."¹¹

1. The San Francisco Renaissance

The anti-academic attack was begun by young poets living on the West Coast in the late 40's. They were from the San Francisco Area, the Bay Area, and Berkeley, in California. They grouped together into what was called the San Francisco Renaissance movement, a dissident anti-academic minority composed of experimentalists. At the time, poetry had become an art of the past to most Americans, an art which had lost its function. It was not an expression of the people, of their actual lives, sentiments and desires. Instead, it was a complex mechanism which only specialized scholars, teachers, critics, or staid academics could understand and/or appreciate. Consequently, the greater majority of the population considered it a cultural enigma of the past and left it either to ornament private collections or to gather dust in public libraries. Such was the situation of American poetry when the younger generation of avant-garde poets of the San Francisco Renaissance initiated their campaign to bring poetry down from its inaccessible throne to the level of the reigning masses - to demechanize it and rehumanize it so as to reach the comprehension of the common people.

Their first move was to take poetry out of the academies and

* Ref. Kerouac's def. fig 5.

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HE

He is one of the prophets come back
He is one of the wiggly prophets come back
He had a beard in the Old Testament
 but shaved it off in Paterson
He has a microphone around his neck
 at a poetry reading
 and he is more than one poet
 and he is an old man perpetually writing a poem
 about an old man
 whose every third thought is Death
 and who is writing a poem
 about an old man
 whose every third thought is Death
 and who is writing a poem
 Like the picture on a Quaker Oats box
 that shows a figure holding up a box
 upon which is a picture of a figure
 holding up a box
 and the figure smaller and smaller
 and further away each time
 a picture of shrinking reality itself
He is one of the prophets come back
 to see to hear to file a revised report
 on the present state
 of the shrinking world

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

- From Ferlinghetti's poem in homage to Ginsberg.

into the streets. Informal gatherings were organized in which poets of the San Francisco area, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Philip Lamantia, Richard Duerden, Bruce Boyd, Kirby Doyle, Ebbe Borregarde, Lew Welch, and others, exchanged ideas and gave oral poetry readings. The locale was usually a popular bar or restaurant where the public was inadvertently involved, but the oral readings soon became so popular that groups of poets from Berkeley and the Bay Area followed suit. Readings became common on the campus, in parks, or any other place which the general public might have access to.

Many poets were involved in the effort to popularize oral poetry, such as Lawrence Ferlinghetti who was outstanding in his readings with jazz bands and Helen Adam, from the Bay Area, who was most influential in the revival of the ballad. Her readings definitely helped to restore the universal human element to poetry and to place it within the comprehension of the average person. Her poem-ballad, "I Love My Love," written late in 1958, is an excellent example of how she managed to reach universal common denominators for reader responses, some passages of which are the following:

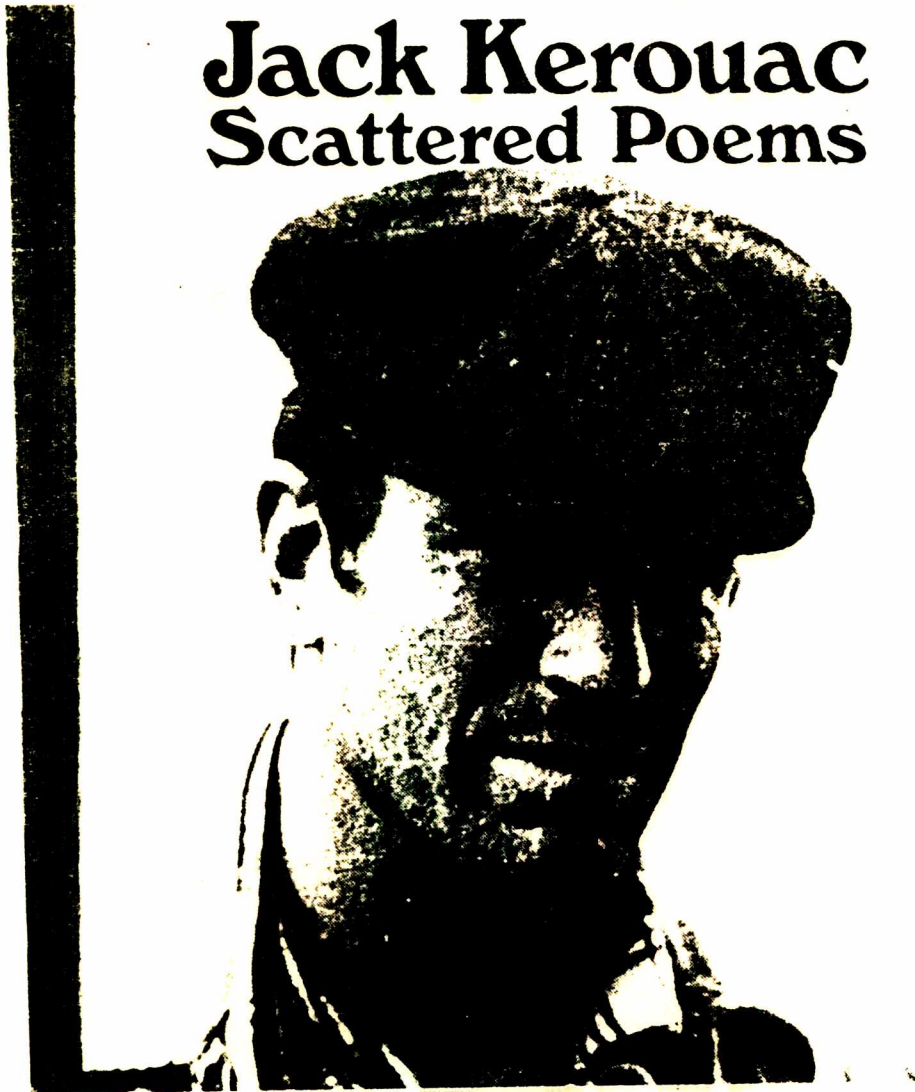
"He lived alone with his chosen bride, at first their life was sweet./ Sweet was the touch of her playful hair binding his hands and feet./ When first she murmured adoring words her words did not appall/ 'I love my love with a capital A. To my love I give my All./ Ah, Ha!/ To my love I give my All!/ She circled him with the secret web she wove as her strong hair grew./ Like a golden spider she wove and sang, 'My love is tender and true!/. . . She shackled him close to the Tree of Life. 'My love I'll never set free./ . . . Whenever he broke her golden bonds he was held with bonds of gold./ 'Oh! cannot a man escape from love, from love's hot smothering hold?'/ He roared with fury. He broke her bonds. He ran in the light of the sun./ Her soft hair rippled and tripped his feet, . . ./ He dug a grave, and he dug it wide. He strangled her in

her sleep./ He strangled his love with a strand of hair, and then he buried her deep./... and then it came to pass/ That the hair sprang up through the earth of the grave, and it grew life golden grass./.... Every hair had a plaintive voice,..../ 'I love my love with a capital T. My love is tender and True./.... My body crumbles beneath the ground but the hairs of my head will grow./ I'll love my love with the hairs of my head. I'll never, never let go./ Ha! Ha!./.... 'I am the man who escaped from love, though love was my fate and doom./ Can no man ever escape from love who breaks from a woman's womb?'/.... The hair rushed in. He struggled and tore..../ 'I love my love with a capital Z. I mark him Zero and mine!'/.... sang the hair of the sorceress./.... It smothered his flesh and sought his bones. Until his bones were bare./.... There was no sound but the joyful hiss of the sweet insatiable hair./...."¹²

The imagery of the poem points to the murderous mission of creation: Death-immortality is symbolized by "hair"; the victims are man and woman; the weapons used by creation are love and hate. There is a spark of Gothic mystery and a bit of morbid appeal in it which fascinates the reader just as Polanski's modern witch-hunting films do. The love-hate-death theme is universal and the style an attempt to thrust one back into time to regain lost myths and fantasies. Helen Adam forces the reader into his former self-centered instinctive reasoning and away from his present machine-directed selfless logic.

Why this sudden back-tracking into medieval fears, desires, and beliefs in the form of a seeming Renaissance ballad? Why did ballad singing break out in big urbanized areas? It is quite obvious that the implantation of the ballad was in keeping with the San Francisco Renaissance get-back-to-origins and the common people trend. The ballad had become relegated to the pre-industrial past, to the rural areas, and was thought of as a crude archaic diversion produced by the

Jack Kerouac Scattered Poems



The new American poetry as typified by the SF Renaissance (which means Ginsberg, me, Rexroth, Ferlinghetti, McClure, Corso, Gary Snyder, Philip Lamantia, Philip Whalen, I guess) is a kind of new-old Zen Lunacy poetry, writing whatever comes into your head as it comes, poetry returned to its origin, in the bardic child, truly ORAL as Ferling said, instead of gray faced Academic quibbling. Poetry & prose had for long time fallen into the false hands of the false. These new pure poets confess forth for the sheer joy of confession. They are CHILDREN. They are also childlike graybeard Homers singing in the street. They SING, they SWING. It is diametrically opposed to the Eliot shot, who so dismally advises his dreary negative rules like the objective correlative, etc. which is just a lot of constipation and ultimately emasculation of the pure masculine urge to freely sing. In spite of the dry rules he set down his poetry is itself sublime. I could say lots more but am't got time or sense. But SF is the poetry of a new Holy Lunacy like that of ancient times (Li Po, Hanshan, Tom O Bedlam, Kit Smart, Blake) yet it also has that mental discipline typified by the haiku (Basho, Buson), that is, the discipline of pointing out things directly, purely, concretely, no abstractions or explanations, wham wham the true blue song of man.

Jack Kerouac — THE ORIGINS OF JOY IN POETRY

uneducated country folk. As such, the ballad-singing guitarists were looked down upon by the city-wise academic elite and most certainly could never reach the concert halls. Yet ballads and country music represented the taste of a greater percentage of Americans who were still on the farms or country misfits in the big cities. There was an underlying desire to get back to the bucolic and spiritual roots of pioneering America in order to escape mounting feelings of individual alienation within the increasing extreme materialism of post-WW II U.S.A. At the time, the popularization of the ballad by the West Coast cultural rebellion was probably the most powerful blow to academic classist elitism in the arts.

The most active poets of Berkeley were Robert Duncan (who later joined the Black Mountain Poets), Brother Antoninus, Robin Blaser, and Jack Spicer. Duncan was the most prolific and profound of the group - indeed, one of the outstanding poets of the East to West literary movements. At least Denise Levertov said that she considered him as one of the chief poets among her contemporaries.¹³ Daniel Hoffmam, in his *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*, describes Duncan's work as "By turns sensuous, transcendental, ecstatic, occult, and Orphic... with affinities to Blake and Whitman..." and that in this Blake-Whitman visionary tendency, Duncan would seem more akin to Ginsberg than to his Black Mountain colleague, Creeley.

The San Francisco Renaissance poets were the first to attempt an organized resistance against the tightly closed establishment, the systems - the dehumanized universities and discriminating academies. The early avant-garde anti-academic poetry, orally expressed in public places, nurtured seeds of the subversive Beat counter-culture revolt of the 50's.

2. The Black Mountain Poets of the Early 50's.

Black Mountain College in North Carolina produced another well-known group of avant-garde poets in the early 50's. These rebels, dedicated to the same anti-academic cause, decided to begin their offensive by founding the avant-garde *Black Mountain Review*. Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, and Robert Duncan comprised the founding staff. Olson led the way with his "theory of projective verse"; his "preferences for American language and experience"; his consideration of "the formal idea of the poem as an open field of energy"; his "congnizance of the expressive possibilities intrinsic in the typewriter"; his search for "freedom from constraint in the shape and syntax of poetry" - his refusal of grammatical order and punctuation.¹⁴

Olson, "like Pound,.. assumes that poetics can have the power to alter perception, to change sensibility and hence affect the behavior of men and nations. Like Pound's, Olson's poetry and aesthetics are based upon an extensive, even heroic, effort to substitute for the entire mental set of a defective civilization a new principle of responding to and expressing reality."¹⁵

Both writers were inclined towards pre-Socratic syntax, hieroglyphs or ideographs, as a more satisfactory medium for poetry,¹⁶ thus indicating a mutual revulsion against Western culture, which they believed to have led to social inequities and unnecessary wars and destruction,¹⁷ Olson's *The Maximus Poems* (1953 - 1975) is reminiscent of W.C. Williams's *Paterson* in that both criticize American materialism to its Puritan trader roots.¹⁸ Though influenced by Pound and Williams, Olson superseded the other avant-garde poets of the 50's in inventiveness and originality of techniques in literary renovation. Many Writers have since emulated his style of prose and poetry. Poetic form was very much revolutionized by Olson. He had a great following, and many exceptional writers published in the *Black Mountain Review* - Denise Levertov, Larry Eigner, Paul Blackburn, Paul Carroll; also, among the writers who stud-

ied at the college at the time, we find Edward Dorn, Joel Oppenheimer, and Jonathan Williams.

The Black Mountain Poets' contribution to the cause of freedom in literary creation was the reformulation and amplification of both form and content. Theirs was a quiet and deliberate attack with the written word alone, but one which dealt a secure Ezratic blow to the Eliot styled neo-classicism of the academies.

3. The New York Poets

John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, and Frank O'Hara were originally from Harvard University and the Poets' Theatre. They migrated to New York in the early 50's where they became closely associated with the Artist's Theatre and the Living Theatre, (and also came into contact with writers Edward Field, Barbara Guest, and James Shuyler). This trio stood somewhat apart from the basically psychosocially propelled radicalism of the anti-academic poets. That is to say, they did not really break away from their New England heritage, neither in their modes of life, (they were Harvard graduates and teachers), nor in their poetic expression - rebelling within the establishment only to the extent of adopting certain French literary tendencies and to timidly question established poetic structures through explorations of "acoherence" (experiences in atonality).¹⁹ However, in this manner, they did make "a series of 'flank attacks' upon an established style,"²⁰ thereby broadening the possibility of more radical changes in the structural message of poetry. These writers called attention to the importance of the visual aspect and to the debatable usage of the element of silence in poetry. Owing to their experimental efforts in "acoherence", amazing concepts of poetry began to develop - poets produced "pattern poems", "word images", "poems to be looked 'at' not 'thru,'"²¹ and even blank pages received the title of "poem".

In the hollowness of the New York Poets' structural rebellion we encounter early reflections of imported Concrete Poetry. By hollow, I mean that the New York Poets were mostly concerned with structural variances which often became "an open field of fragments - images and remarks, phrases and even single words - whose relationship to each other would be tenuous, ambiguous, and perhaps multiple," as in the case of Ashbery's spatial poetry.²² This particular type of poetry denounces an escape from the conventional through omission in structure, and would suggest an aimlessness to the conventional reader. But the point to this kind of fragmentation is just this - the reader is supposed to fill in the spaces. It is a deliberate ordering of disorder, one might deduce.

Though the New York Poets cannot be classified as crusaders of the irate Ginsberg type, their visual fragmentation tactics would seem to have coincided with the poet's oral poetry reading techniques which made him so acclaimed. According to writer-professor Paul Jenkins, "Ginsberg and O'Hara hung out together in N.Y.C. rather frequently and claimed to have learned a lot from each other." It appears that the New York Poets subjugated content to form and the West Coast Poets took to this new form but added a new content to it.

4. The Beat Generation

The San Francisco Renaissance released poetry from its academic confinement and attempted to reinstate it as an actual and living part of American culture; there was a renewal of interest in poetic expression as an outlet for personal feelings and emotions, as a release from the exigencies of an insatiable dehumanizing socio-economic system. The Black Mountain Poets unshackled poetry - freed it from the "tyranny of the iamb"²³ - and gave it new directions and incentives and

wider horizons. The New York Poets gave it a new aestheticism associated with French surrealism and action painting.²⁴ Each group helped to prepare the way for a poetry truer and more representative of its source - the American people, the American individual.

However, the real pacesetters for the more generalized anti-establishment avant-garde writing of the 60's were the writers called "beats". This youthful circle of writers, often referred to as the Beat Generation, migrated from New York to San Francisco where they united their urban-born psychosocial hangups into a Whitman-Pound anti-Puritan counter-culture attack upon U.S. systems and Western civilization as a whole. It was the beginning of the 50's when the Beat Generation began to loose their pent up individual frustrations, an outgrowth of urban alienation, by challenging nearly everything previously considered pious in poetry,²⁵ and by breaking most previous moral and aesthetic codes of life in the U.S.A. "For reverent solemnity, they substituted irreverent blasphemy; for impersonality, they put anarchistic egotism; instead of ironic personas and other symbolic artifices, they used man-to-man address and explicit statements. They phased out elegant diction and consistent texture for jagged surfaces and lines of wildly irregular length and mundane words, which were sometimes so profane that Ginsberg's *Howl*, for one, became the subject of an "obscenity" case. Rather than a second-hand world drawn from the history of literature and culture, the beat poets treated their own immediate experience, in specific places and at specific times, often in response to current social malaise; and instead of elliptical associative coherence, they resorted to less obscuring, more accessible kinds of poetic syntax. Moreover, they identified not with the great tradition of English verse but with counter traditions of rebellious, if not mad, poets, from Rimbaud to Artaud, from Whitman to the Ezra Pound of the late *Cantos*.²⁶

Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Gregory Corso were the

original "beats"*; Ginsberg being, by far, the most outstanding. Gary Synder, Philip Whalen, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti soon joined them, and other West Coast poets began to imitate their writing styles and modes of life. As a matter of fact, later in the 50's, any avant-garde writer expressing irreverent or blasphemous attitudes towards the establishment was quickly charged with being a "beatnik". Ironically enough, the original meaning of the term "beat" was "beatific", implying pure; and, this usage of it comes from the beat poets themselves - they considered themselves holy visionaries estranged from what they deemed Western decadence and were therefore dedicated to Buddhism and/or Hinduism. Prof. Hugh Fox, writer-critic, claims that Kerouac was the one to begin to call his group of writers "beats". Most certainly, Kerouac's *Dharma Bums* gives us an insight into the ambiguity of the "holy" generation bent to beat the systems in their decade.

Daniel Hoffman gives a concise description of the Beat Generation within his "Poetry: Schools of Dissidents," in which he states the following: "It may be said that the Cold War and Senator Joseph McCarthy's roughshod persecution of supposed communists engendered such dissent as theirs. In California, traditional home of refugees from the burdens of tradition, they became bards of the cult of complete personal freedom, of the nascent drug culture, of beatific visions and oriental religions, of communal living. They were the vanguard and Pied Pipers of the Hippie movement a decade later."²⁷

But it wasn't until Ginsberg's oral reading of his yet unpublished *Howl*, (it was published later that same year of 1956 as a 13 page pamphlet by Ferlinghetti's pioneering avant-garde City Lights Press), that nationwide acclaim came from other young Bohemian rebels who felt *Howl* to be the "testament of their generation's despair" and that the author was the prophet of their future.²⁸ The veteran anar-

* Neal Cassady is included as a Beat more for being a close friend of Ginsberg & Kerouac than as a writer. He wrote little. All three collaborated on poem "Pull My Daisy" (1948-1950?).

chist poet Kenneth Rexroth, who had been "at odds with American capitalism and the Eliotic aesthetic for twenty years",²⁹ was probably the most fanatical beat fan and pusher - their greatest publicist for many years. Other anti-Eliot figures - Charles Olson, William C. Williams, and Karl Shapiro - came to the beat's aid, despite the otherwise conflicting points of view among these writers.

5. Avant-Garde Freelancers

A great number of post-WW II poets rejected the New Criticism, a longstanding school of literary interpretation which attempted to institutionalize poetry tastes along the Eliot-academic line. Many older writers abnegated their earlier works in the academic style and tried to get "fresh starts" or at least looked for other alternatives in writing. Moreover, as stated earlier, the war had changed people; so, then, must literature change. Still, not all avant-garde writers gathered together in bands to fight the anti-academic war, the anti-establishment drive toward more individual freedom. Numerous writers, such as Michael McLure of the mid-west, John Wieners of Boston, David Meltzer residing in San Francisco, and Le Roi Jones in New York, managed to get recognition and to get their messages through without adhering to any specific movement for any length of time. Not that they were not influenced by the general trends - their works were in keeping with the experimentalism of the 50's too, but none of these writers came up with particularly different nuances of the kind to distinguish their works from the rest of the anti-academic milieu.

Each of the aforesaid groups of poets and their works attracted admirers, imitators, publicists, and interpreters. Little magazines and small presses sprang up to aid the anti-academic cause which, as the decade wore on, multiplied into innumerable "anti" pro-

posals. By the 60's contemporary American writing was reaching a Babelonic chaos in which the extremist first-person anti-establishment poetry of the Beat Generation was to lead the way.

III Psychosocial Alienation in the Melting Pot: Avant-Garde themes

The fact that the people of the United States have been a conglomeration of races and religions, and not a singlerooted society, might have led them to bedlam and extinction as a nation. However, these differences seem to have worked as a driving force behind their accelerated material progress, for they have instilled a spirit of competitive survivalism in the American individual which has often been most conducive to change, to a permanent ordering and re-ordering straining within American democracy.

It might be said that the individual's Jeffersonian right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" is the one common principle which has held the nation's divergent peoples together. The avant-garde anti-academic movement of the 50's and its rejection of a static state of literary expression was an exercise of these rights.

On reading avant-garde poetry of the generation of the 50's, I have been able to distinguish two predominant themes related to modern man's alienation: Man vs Moloch and the Quest for Selfhood.

1. Man Vs Moloch

The first theme, man vs Moloch, treats of man's fear of the scientific spirit of the time and his rejection of "mechanical man". Van Wyck Brooks, in *The Writer in America*, reminds us that Ellen Key, at the beginning of the 20th century, predicted "the century of

the child", but he adds that it "turned into the century of Moloch,* the eater of children".³⁰ The term Moloch has since been used by writers and critics to describe the self-destructiveness of modern man's creative prowess, particularly the alienating effects of scientific discovery upon the individual ego.

In the United States, Moloch came to represent the capitalist scientific network which produced the atom bomb and systems to maintain the individual "mechanized" and controlled in accordance with the demands of material expansion. Since, in the fifties, the U.S.A. was the country most developed in industry, most dedicated to scientific technology, and most mechanized in the world, many avant-garde thinkers and writers directed vindictive attacks upon the U.S. capitalist dehumanization. The maddest avant-garde attack upon materialism was launched by Cinsberg in *Howl*:

What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls
and ate up their brains and imagination?
Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable
dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys sob-
bing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!³¹

In this passage, he gives the negative side to American industrialized urbanized mid-century society. It describes tenement life in the cities. It pictures the despair of neglected children and old folks, and of youths who are obliged to fight other human beings against their wills.

Continuing, the poet goes on to accuse the establishment of having inhuman laws, and of reducing him, the individual, to a suffering abstraction: "... Moloch the heavy judger of men!... Moloch

* Var. of Molech, an ancient Phoenician & Ammonite god to whom children were sacrificed by burning, (*Bible*).

whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood is running money!
 Moloch whose fingers are ten armies!.... Moloch whose love is endless
 oil and stone! Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks.... Moloch in
 whom I sit lonely!.... Moloch in whom I am a consciousness without a
 body!"

Ginsberg's "Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless hydrogen!" synthesizes the possible outcome of Western civilization's incoherent rush to the Apocalypse. When he cries "Moloch who frightened me out of my natural ecstasy! Moloch whom I abandon!", this part of the poem takes on the character of an individual declaration of independence from the establishment and particularly from its established moral restrictions on love and sex relationships.

Avant-garde poets began to dissect American organizational democracy and to find out just where they, as individuals, stood in relation to the state; they began to measure their individual liberty. The anti-academic movement was part of their mood of self examination and rehabilitation. The realization that they were being controlled and manipulated by complex systems of organizations within their democracy caused much speculation on the subject of freedom in their writings. The writers felt that "the lives of most contemporary men are lived on the sufferance of some bureaucratic organization or another".³²

To the avant-garde, freedom became a myth and they pitted the real individual against the abstract state in their writings.

LeRoi Jones satirizes his own feelings of alienation as a writer trying to break through literary censorship of established publishers. He also focuses the futility of trying to beat a system which controls the mind by overstuffing the body:

I long to be a mountain climber
 & wave my hands up 8,000 feet.
 Out of sight & snow blind/ the tattered
 Stars and Stripes poked in the new peak.

& come down later, Clipper by my side,
 To new wealth & eternal fame. That
 Kind of care. I could wear
 Green corduroy coats & felt tyroleans
 For the rest of my days; & belong to clubs.

Grandeur in boldness. Big & stupid as the wind.
 But so lovely. Who's to understand that kind of con?
 As if each day, after breakfast, someone asked you,
 "What do you want to be when you grow up??" &
 Day in, Day out, you just kept belching.³³

He suggests that freedom in America is a myth in the last two lines - that the establishment keeps leading you on with "what do you want to be when you grow up?", which means: When will you begin to write what the establishment's publishing companies want to read? "& Day in, Day out, you just kept belching" infers that the writer has had his fill of academic content and will just keep on writing as he feels even though he knows his writing will continue to be rejected because it does not follow established rules. Still, he would like to have the publisher understand his works ("Clipper by my side"), but he realizes that this can only happen with "the tattered Stars and Stripes poked in a new peak", or rather, when the establishment discards the old and accepts basic new values in relation to the immediate reality of American life.

Black Mountain poets also showed signs of revolt against material expansionism at the price of individual spiritual freedom. We have, for instance this counsel from Charles Olson:

Holes
 in my shoes, that's all right, my fly
 gaping, me out
 at the elbows, the blessing
 that difficulties are once more
 "In the midst of plenty, walk
 as close to
 bare

In the face of sweetness,
 piss
 In the time of goodness,
 go side, go
 smashing, beat them, go as
 (as near as you can
 tear
 In the land of plenty, have
 nothing to do with it
 take the way of
 the lowest,
 including your legs, go
 contrary, go
 sing ³⁴

2. The Quest for Selfhood

In avant-garde literature of the fifties, the unconscious self rebels. Poets talk about individual feelings of emptiness, the reason for existence, and about the individual as an emotional and sexual bi-self.

Jack Kerouac summarizes his feelings of meaninglessness and emptiness in his "Mexico City Blues":

Got up and dressed up
 and went out & got laid
 Then died and got buried
 in a coffin in the grave,
 Man —
 Yet everything is perfect,
 Because it is empty,
 Because it is perfect
 with emptiness,
 Because it's not even happening.

Everything
 Is Ignorant of its own emptiness —
 Anger
 Doesn't like to be reminded of fits —³⁵

Reference to individual psychic emptiness within industrialized America is also found in Ginsberg's "Wichita Vortex Sutra":

quoting Kierkegaard 'death of God'
 a million dollars
 in the bank owns all West Wichita
 come to Nothing!
 Prajnaparamita Sutra over coffee—Vortex
 of telephone radio aircraft assembly frame ammunition
 petroleum nightclub Newspaper streets illuminated by Bright
 EMPTINESS—

Thy sins are forgiven, Wichita!
 Thy lonesomeness annulled, O Kansas dear!
 as the western Twang prophesied
 thru banjo, when lone cowboy walked the railroad track
 past an empty station toward the sun
 sinking giant-bulbed orange down the box canyon—
 Music strung over his back
 and empty handed singing on this planet earth
 I'm a lonely Dog, O Mother! ³⁶

In the above we have the image of the writer himself in the role of a child caught in the whirlwind of capitalistic materialism and wherein he is "singing" (writing poetry) to himself in a void, for no one can understand or even notice him. He is alienated from all except the "Mother", not only the mother who gave birth to him but also the cosmic mother who has left him on earth "emptyhanded singing", or rather, abandoned him to his fate of complete alienation in his environment.

"Lysergic Acid" is an example of Ginsberg's use of LSD to reach a different state of consciousness and perception of reality. It is a first-person confessional of his hallucinations under the drug and of the conclusions he came to.*

It is a multiple million eyed monster
 it is hidden in all its elephants and selves
 it hummeth in the electric typewriter
 it is electricity connected to itself, if it hath wires
 it is a vast Spiderweb
 and I am on the last millionth infinite tentacle of the spiderweb,
 a worrier
 lost, separated, a worm, a thought, a self

* Ginsberg experimented with poetic effects of psychedelic drugs beginning in 1952 and continuing with Dr. Timothy Leary through Cambridge experiments in 1961: Certain texts of "Howl", part II, and "Wales Visitation" were written during effects of drugs. (Ref. *Poems All Over the Place, Mostly Seventies*, 58).

one of the millions of skeletons of China
 one of the particular mistakes
 I allen Ginsberg a separate consciousness
 I who want to be God
 I who want to hear the infinite minutest vibration of eternal
 harmony
 I who wait trembling my dcstruction by that aethereal music
 in the fire
 I who hate God and give him a name
 I who make mistakes on the eternal typewriter
 I who am Doomed

But at the far end of the universe the million eyed Spyder that
 hath no name
 spinneth of itself endlessly
 the monster that is no monster approaches with apples, perfume,
 railroads, television, skulls
 a universe that eats and drinks itself
 blood from my skull
 Tibetan creature with hairy breast and Zodiac on my stomach
 this sacrificial victim unable to have a good time

My face in the mirror, thin hair, blood congested in streaks down
 beneath my eyes, cocksucker, a decay, a talking lust
 a snaeap, a snarl, a tic of consciousness in infinity
 a creep in the eyes of all Universes
 trying to escape my Being, unable to pass on to the Eye
 I vomit, I am in a trance, my body is seized in convulsion, my
 stomach crawls, water from my mouth, I am here in
 Inferno
 dry bones of myriad lifeless mummies naked on the web, the
 Ghosts, I am a Ghost
 I cry out where I am in the music, to the room, to whomever
 near, you, Are you God?
 No, do you want me to be God?
 Is there no Answer?
 Must there always be an Answer? you reply,
 and were it up to me to say Yes or No —
 Thank God I am not God! Thank God I am not God!
 But that I long for a Yes of Harmony to penetrate
 to every corner of the universe, under every condition whatsoever
 a Yes there Is . . . a Yes I Am . . . a Yes You Are . . . a We

A We
 and that must be an It, and a They, and a Thing with No
 Answer
 It creepeth, it waiteth, it is still, it is begun, it is the Horns of
 Battle it is Multiple Sclerosis
 it is not my hope
 it is not my death at Eternity
 it is not my word, not poetry
 beware my Word 37

The drug is the network which would connect him, as electric energy,
 to the universal source, "the millioned eyed Spyder that hath no name",
 but he is "unable to pass on to the Eye". The "Eye" refers to the Hindu
 concept of self liberation, the liberation of the mind from the material

to reach the universal truth of existence. But he cannot escape his body and is thrown back into the "inferno" of his decaying flesh without an answer to his questions - "Are you God? No, do you want me to be God?". Here is typical Ginsberg questioning both the oriental and occidental concepts of God and existence, searching for identity and trying to escape from painful feelings of alienation within a society which denies him the "harmony" he so desires.

Gary Snyder writes "of that other, totally alien, non-human" essence which is the individual unconscious beyond the physical senses:

One moves continually with the consciousness
Of that other, totally alien, non-human:
Humming inside like a taut drum,
Carefully avoiding any direct thought of it,
Attentive to the real-world flesh and stone.

Intricate layers of emptiness
This only world, juggling forms
 a hand, a breast, two clasped
Human tenderness scuttles
Down dry endless cycles
Forms within forms falling
 clinging
Loosely, what's gone away?
 - love ³⁸

To him, materialism has destroyed the essence of love, which would be spiritual; and has made the world of human relationships "intricate layers of emptiness".

Frank O'Hara writes about the unconscious, defining it in a way that it becomes a personal property which must be defended against society:

My quietness has a man in it, he is transparent
and he carries me quietly, like a gondola, through the streets.
He has several likenesses, like stars and years, like numerals.

My quietness has a number of naked selves,
so many pistols I have borrowed to protect myself
from creatures who too readily recognize my weapons
and have murder in their heart!

 though in winter
they are warm as roses, in the desert
taste of chilled anisette.

At times, withdrawn, ³⁹

He would maintain his inner life-giving fantasies hidden in the unconscious. He would stay alienated from a society which invents ways of destroying the individual ego, would isolate himself "from creatures who too readily recognize" his feelings "and have murder in their heart".

The quest for self is most evident in the Beat Generation's down-with-censorship campaign and their stand on what should go down in print:

Ginsberg urges writers to describe in plain, natural language what they see before them. He also urges them to write down what they really think, not what they believe they are supposed to think, and that one way to do this is to trust the unconscious, not to censor it by rewriting. "First thought is best thought." He goes on to explain that "the parts that embarrass you the most are usually the most interesting poetically, are usually the most naked of all, the rawest, the goofiest, and strangest and most eccentric and at the same time, most representative, most universal, because most individual, most particular, most specific." ⁴⁰

Since Beat writing was mostly confessional, we find many traces of their homosexual tendencies and/or emotional frustrations in their writings. They were searching for a new kind of male self and a new set of moral codes based more on the religious concepts of Buddhism and Hinduism, and also on Whitman's idea of fraternal tenderness or adhesiveness among both men and women. They developed what I call a male female-self bonding among themselves. That is, they cultivated feminine self-sacrificing in their love ties, but without losing their male identity. It was an attempt to reach a bi-self or multi-self ideal of existence which should lead to global tenderness among human beings. Ginsberg explains it in the following way:

I'm saying and Whitman is saying that the antidote to the Hemingway macho and military macho scene is the development of frank, emotional tenderness and an acknowledgment of tenderness as the basis of genital or non-genital emotion. It may resolve itself in more men friendships, a democratization of friendships, so that it's not exclusively friendships between men and women on a sexual basis. I think it would resolve a lot of the macho conflict and contradictions. ⁴¹

Ginsberg identifies himself with Whitman in "A Supermarket in California", an outsider living on his visions of love and harmony which only a minority can understand in the world of today:

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman, for
I walked down the sidestreets under the trees with a headache
self-conscious looking at the full moon.

In my hungry fatigue, and shopping for images, I went
into the neon fruit supermarket, dreaming of your enu-
merations!

What peaches and what penumbras! Whole families
shopping at night! Aisles full of husbands! Wives in the
avocados, babies in the tomatoes!—and you, Garcia Lorca,
what were you doing down by the watermelons?

I saw you, Walt Whitman, childless, lonely old grubber,
poking among the meats in the refrigerator and eyeing the
grocery boys.

I heard you asking questions of each: Who killed the
pork chops? What price bananas? Are you my Angel?

I wandered in and out of the brilliant stacks of cans
following you, and followed in my imagination by the store
detective.

We strode down the open corridors together in our
solitary fancy tasting artichokes, possessing every frozen
delicacy, and never passing the cashier.

Where are we going, Walt Whitman? The doors close in
an hour. Which way does your beard point tonight?

(I touch your book and dream of our odyssey in the
supermarket and feel absurd.)

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The trees
add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll both be
lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love past
blue automobiles in driveways, home to our silent cottage?⁴²

In Ginsberg's loneliness, we again discover the socially alienated homosexual dreaming of acceptance within the American moral establishment. The supermarket and what it offers represents life in the establishment. In his desire for man-love, he imagines an alliance with Garcia Lorca* and Whitman, "With a headache/ self conscious looking at the full moon", he envisions himself and Whitman "possessing every frozen/ delicacy, and never passing the cashier". The "headache" is his

* Ginsberg says Lorca's "Ode to Walt Whitman" has images of "erotic beauty" indicative of the writer's homosexual emotion. (Ref. *Gay Sunshine Interview*, 17.).

frustrated sexual urge incited by the "full moon", and "possessing... and never passing the cashier" insinuates his wish for complete sexual freedom without remorse. Yet, in the previous stanza, he is followed in his "imagination by the store detective", which is, of course, the American love-sex taboos. Also, "lost America" means an America blind to his concepts of love and what he has described as "smash sexism".*

IV The Beat Revolt: A Counter-Culture Is Born

The Beat counter-culture movement was an expression of an alienated few writers, psychosocial outsiders who were trying to escape from what they considered to be a moribund culture. Their literature was usually an attempt to debunk the capitalistic materialism of the time and to call attention to the consequent mechanization and dehumanization of the individual. It was also dedicated to the demystification and repudiation of Western civilization's moral codes and aesthetics.

Actually, in their time, the Beat writers probably called more attention to themselves because of their experiments with drugs, the practice of homosexuality among them, and the fact that they made no secret of the aforesaid. Note these comments by Ginsberg in a recent interview with Allen Young in *Gay Sunshine Interview*:

YOUNG: Did the 1950s hipsters all think of yourselves as anarchists?

GINSBERG: Oh, yeah. Kenneth Rexroth and Robert Duncan back in 1948-49, in San Francisco (I wasn't there), and in 1943-45 Brother Antoninus and Philip Lamantia, both poets, had an anarchist circle in San Francisco. They were reading Kropotkin, and gay lib was accepted among them. That was the traditional bohemian-Anarchist-West-Coast-Wobbly-Chicago-American Populist (tradition).

YOUNG: What do you mean when you say that gay lib was accepted

* Ginsberg speaks of non-genital "ethereal orgasms" & "a total relation", "all sorts, all forms... 'Smash sexism'". (*Gay Sunshine Interview*, 10.).

among them?

GINSBERG: I mean there were all sorts of gay cats around. Robert Duncan was gay and he was a sturdy member of the anarchist circle, I think. The panoply of tolerances and understanding and gnostic (mystic, psychedelic) awarenesses, as well as social hopes and humors, were already fully developed in the 1940s and that continued right on through in San Francisco, and in some circles in New York.⁴³

Needless to say, conventional writers and critics of established literary circles either did not take them seriously or were scandalized by their disregard for social proprieties. Even W.C. Williams, though he wrote the preface to Ginsberg's late 1940's *Empty Mirror* early poems and later the introduction to *Howl* (1956), maintained a strictly literary acquaintance as evidenced in Williams' *Paterson*, Book V. Letters from Ginsberg are included in this part of the poem (signed A.G.), followed by Williams' divarications from the same. Accordingly, it gives me the impression that there was perhaps a psychosocial breach and/or generational gap between them but that there was bilateral intellectual stimuli. So it is that Ginsberg became the despicable geni to some of the older writers and the epitomy of American alienation to others.

Ginsberg's friend Charles Plymell considers the "obscenity trial with "Howl" text declared legal by court S.F. 1957" as being the writer's first real literary award.* Between "Howl" and the National Book Award for the poem "Fall of America" in 1974, he was persecuted and glorified for his social behavior and literary activities. He and most of the remaining Beats and followers seem to have reached a kind of status quo from the mid-seventies to now.

Without doubt, Ginsberg's small group of socially outcast writers were the leading gurus of the new generation of writers of the 60's.** Neo-beat poet D.A. Levy makes this quite clear in his *Marijuana*

* Allen Ginsberg, *Poems All Over the Place - Mostly Seventies*, 58.

** Ref. Appendix, Chapter One.

Quarterly:

"In 59 & 60.... the first wave of the 'Beat Generation' had passed away.... it arrived in Cleveland's primitive west side.... i stopped.... & looked around & wondered.... Why? with all this happening.... why? wasn't anything happening in Cleveland. Before I learned how to swear & how this form of slow death of a dead city can kill you before you know it.... I planned to change it,"⁴⁴

Levy was another urban misfit poet alienated from his immediate society, the city of Cleveland. He was looking for an intellectual kinship, just as the young Ginsberg living in Paterson turned to W.C. Williams in 1948. There is a sequential expansion of thought in these three poets. In *Paterson*, man is identified with the city; Ginsberg goes on to identify man with the nation, America, and often tries to identify him with the cosmos. Levy picked up where Ginsberg stopped and identified man with cosmic energy, space, and time.* Levy was to become the martyred poet idol of his generation.

*** Ref. pp. 47 & 50.

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⁴³ *Gay Sunshine Interview*, 42.

⁴⁴ Hugh Fox, *The Living Underground: A Critical Overview*, 16.

CHAPTER TWO: THE INVISIBLE GENERATION: A STRUGGLE FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL LIBERATION

I Mood of the 60's

The decade of the 60's proved to be one of the most revolutionary and controversial in the history of the United States - an upheaval of Western civilization's codes and creeds, and a semi-complete disruption of once blindly accepted and/or unquestioned Puritan modes of thinking and acting. The struggle for self liberation prevailed as each and everyone tried to "do his own thing". Thousands of young people deserted their homes and parents in the quest for individual and generation identity and freedom from a Puritanical system gone berserk in its adherence to a Cotton Mather security blanket. Intolerance reigned in the guise of law and order. Oppressive rules and regulations had multiplied in American organizational democracy and were zealously infringing upon civil and human rights. The concepts of right and wrong, sane or insane, competent or irresponsible had come to depend much upon U.S. industrial demands and economic conveniences. Increasing material prosperity had progressively dimmed the nation's spiritual perspective - the family was disintegrating and there was nothing to replace it. Mental hospitals had reached their peak by the 60's but soon had to make way for an overflow of runaway adolescents addicted to drugs or guilty of crimes.* Something was definitely wrong with American Society by the 60's - the country which had prided itself on the fact that it was the "melting pot" of races, creeds, and religions. It would

*"The explosion of the addict population in the 1960's made it clear that the treatment offered in the federal facilities was not effective.... In 1963 the Community Mental Health Centers Act was passed. Aimed at eliminating the 'human warehouses' state hospitals had become, the bill envisioned the eventual creation of 2,000 clinics to provide counseling and care." (*Time*, Dec. 17, 1973, 33.).



In the explosion of the 60's "there was basically a cultural awareness... there was enough disillusion after the Second World War... nobody trusting any longer government or that we were going to be on the planet much longer... about every aspect political and social a questioning... everybody felt an urgency for communication".

- Doug Blazek (From interview with author / 1980)

FIGURE 6

seem that the mixture had become too potent and had begun to melt the pot.

The U.S. establishment stood firm but perplexed before a multitude of reactions and drastic changes of behavior among its supposedly content organized mechanized masses - democracy yields to anarchy as youth proclaims its freedom from parental control and traditional pre-set rules of conduct. Minority groups follow suit, and the demand for civil rights evokes other protests from festering discriminated factions. Slogans are born: The white "macho" is charged with being a "chauvinist pig"; career-minded women are classified as either "feminists" or "lesbians"; the homosexual is elevated to "gay"; the Vietnam War provokes "make love not war"; transcendental nature lovers and purity seekers abandon mid-20th century Western civilization standards and are baptized "hippies"; the older generation is exiled into "never trust anyone over thirty".

A defiant anti-establishment drive ensued as the decade wore on - an active crusade against Puritan moralism and American consumerism: The Salem witches and their persecutors were smoked out with Mexican "weed"; Hindu idols and Buddha came into vogue, replacing the "fire and brimstone" God; the naked body was sanctified in the stage play *Hair*, and protesting social reformers bared their bodies in public park "love-ins"; clothes and hair styles became a strictly personal thing, but maximum length locks and beards came to symbolize the non-conformist; while the Beatles sang "Help", the U.S. younger generation tried to beat consumerism by dressing in second-hand store clothes and drifting aimlessly about the country hitch-hiking and living on handouts and the small profits of their handicrafts; idle poets scribbled poems on sidewalks and artists painted murals on public walls; national and international "bumming it around" to see the world free of charge and spread the anti-establishment word became the generational fashion or mania; and "live for today" was the motto to replace elder Americans'

"save for tomorrow".

The generational dissidence of the revolutionary 60's might be viewed as a personalized psychosocial declaration of independence from established group systems, (particularly Western civilization's capitalistic set-up), which resulted in social anarchy and national counter-culture chaos. The strongest trait of the 60's dissident was his capacity for ignoring authority other than that of the dictates of his own rationalization of right and wrong, of truth, regardless of the country, religion, and social class in which he was raised. Emersonian "Self-Reliance"? Well, not exactly. However, I am certain that Emerson would have understood the reason for it all. Thoreauvian "Civil Disobedience" would be a more likely precursor of the 60's melee.

The Watts riot, the assassinations of President John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and the Vietnam War helped kindle the smoldering coals of psychosocial alienation and discontent in the United States of the sixties: Home-made American apple pie was traded for science-made American lysergic acid (LSD), oriental hashish, and Mexican marijuana; left wing Maoism was glorified and considered a possible cure for the world's social ills by some extremists. The bloodiest bloodless social revolution of 20th century U.S.A. exploded in the decade of the 60's.

Future shock*, the horrors of endless wars, and fear of a nuclear apocalypse permeate the literature of the 60's avant-garde just as the effects of the First World war and Prohibition are reflected in the works of Gertrude Steins's Lost Generation. Moral frustrations and social resentments filtered through dissident literature of the twenties and Depression thirties.

Nevertheless, it was the forerunner alienated beat genera-

* Toffler's term for "culture shock in one's own country... dizzying disorientation brought on by premature arrival of future... a time phenomenon, a product of greatly accelerated rate of change in society... arises from the superimposition of a new culture on an old one." (Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock*, 11.).

tion, with their poetic bared raw instincts and uncensored confession-
al lamentations, which really cut the Puritan umbilical cord for the
generation of the 60's. Still, avant-garde writers of the 60's went fur-
ther. Their search for purity resulted in a psychic awareness of a
different reality of existence, of themselves in society, which denied
most traditional standards of behavior in the Western World. With low-
toned half-spoken childlike fantasies charged with four-letter word
manifestos, they bannered a nationwide flower-powered crusade for self-
liberation in opposition to American organizational democracy.

The greater part of the 60's reformers mentally and physi-
cally exiled themselves within their country, (with and without drugs),
while struggling for psychosocial liberation, and resorted to their
own inventiveness and creativity for survival. From the outer space of
their inner selves, the unconscious, "psychedelic" bloomed - pop, liv-
ing, absurd, oriental, and macabre art turned them on. Scientific pro-
gress and technology turned them off, and was the declared enemy -
they demanded ground zero changes:

LIFE HAS ELUDED US - THE TV WAVES GOING
THRU US ALL DAY LONG HAVE CONDITIONED
US TO THINK LIKE HOLLYWOOD & ROCKEFELLER
CENTER
WE REASON & FEEL AS ADEPTLY AS THE LOWEST
COMMON
DENOMINATOR IN OUR SOCIETY. IT IS TIME FOR
A CHANGE
OF DIET! WE NEED A NEW APPROACH TO INSIGHT
THRU A
NEW APPROACH TO POETRY.

- Douglas Blazek*

The 60's avant-garde literature movement followed the whims
of its anarchistic members. There were no set grammar rules and there

* Neo-beat proletarian poet Blazek "sees poetry as a means of liberat-
ing ourselves from mind-control". *The Living Underground: A Critical
Overview*, cf. pp. 53 & 55.

was no set format - no fixed visual pattern, no censorship of form or content. Traditional boundaries between genre and media were disregarded - poetry became prose and vice versa, magazines called books, and poetry pamphleteered and sold by beggar-students on the streets.¹

The "do-it-yourself" mimeo movement proliferated not only in the U.S. but spread to Brazil, Belgium, Canada, England, Mexico, Germany, Italy, Argentina, Australia, and other countries. Indeed, this disorderly counter-culture literary movement systematically expanded throughout the Western World without the help of the big publishing companies which monopolize literature production and distribution within and without the U.S.²

Approximately three decades have elapsed in which underground and avant-garde writing along with the small press movement have grown into a phenomenal system themselves - an active and valid threat to those who would dictate, confine, or delimit literary expression.

The Cult of Chaos: The Rootless American Writer

According to Len Fulton, the issue of the 60's and beyond was "the relevance of all else to the self and being, the sanctity of body in charge of its extension in mind, reversing the root ingredient in Western rationalization and so seeming to make chaos itself a value to cherish..."³

The cult of chaos, the culture of anything which sublimated the individual and released him to self-experimentalism in the arts and/or in modes of living, is, I believe, the most adequate description of the tactic used by the generation of the 60's to call attention to their desire for radical changes. Their avant-garde movement in literature, which developed mainly from the counter-culture Beat revolt, was a struggle for psychosocial liberation - an all-out battle for individ-



Len Fulton and the author in his workshop-home set back in the woods of Paradise, California, in 1980. Fulton is author of the novels *The Grassman* and *Dark Other Adam Dreaming*, and editor of the *International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses*.

FIGURE 7

ual and generational recognition. It might be said that the cult of chaos became both the cause and effect during the cultural explosion of the sixties as the search for new values became more desperate, the drive for authentic American roots more evident, and the quest for selfhood more direct. While chaotic experimentalism proceeded, avant-garde writing became more and more individualized and most often reflected feelings of lost identity and a sense of rootlessness. D.A. Levy illustrates this in the following manner:

our arms reaching
 for each other forever through
 time doors
 i think i have Them
 then changes

i find myself
 sitting on pieces of colored light
 the horse of my hallucination
 returns to me

& ITS BRIGHTNESS
 ITS EYES lead

me into the expanding universe
 & i vomit a universe i can
 understand / waiting
 for communication

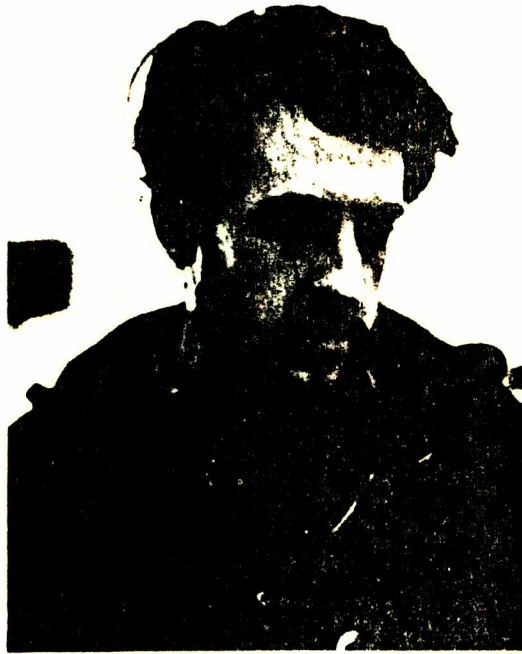
while

invisible webs & chemical networks
 FORM a telepathic mesh
 & for those who meet
 the upturned eye
 I RIDE THIS almost LONLINESS

2.

i think
 i am an emotional being
 if my feelings cease
 WHAT AM I?
 i slow up - i die &
 it is not my ego that dies
 my entire being becomes
 a death ship
 a weight i carry

- D.A. Levy ("The North American Book of the Dead", Part III).⁴



D.A. Levy, young poet-editor-publisher of Cleveland,
who shot himself to death in 1968.

TO RESIST
ISIS & the
SAFFRON ROBE
FROM ROME/ROMA/GALLO/SWISS
COLONY
BAYONET IN YUR COLON
YOU ARE BLEEDING WINE
WHINE AS YOU DIE at the age of 18
YOU have seen the world thru the eyes
of politics
tic
tic
tic (SNAP/BOOM/you are dead. . . .)
("Beret, A Concrete Poem for the War Monuments.")

- D.A. Levy

(From *The Living Underground: A Critical Overview.*)

The rootless American writers of the sixties, the avant-garde writers which Hugh Fox has christened the Invisible Generation,* were the uncompromising successors of the Beat/Black Mountain avant-garde. They were the core of the 60's literary vanguard movement, and were, as a rule, extremely reckless experimentalists and blatant anti-establishment protesters. The Invisible Generation was a conglomeration of mostly young non-conformist writers drawn from all parts of the United States to the Berkeley/San Francisco mecca for revolutionary artists and self-exiled anti-Puritans during the sixties.

The search for roots and a truly American literature dates back to the 1800's and the efforts of the early American transcendentalists, such as Emerson, Thoreau, Alcott, Parker, and Fuller. The latter, Margaret Fuller, wrote a prophetic essay at the time called "American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future," in which a fairly accurate description of the recent chaotic cultural revolution of the 60's can be discerned. She stated the following:" Books which imitate or represent the thoughts and life of Europe do not constitute an American literature. Before such can exist, an original idea must animate this nation and fresh currents of life must call into life fresh thoughts along its shores...that such a genius is to rise and work in this hemisphere we are confident; That day will not rise till the fusion of races among us is more complete. It will not rise till this nation shall attain sufficient moral and intellectual dignity to prize moral and intellectual, no less highly than political freedom, not till, the physical resources of the country being explored... talent shall be left at leisure to turn its energies upon the higher department of man's existence. Nor then shall it be seen till from the leisurely and yearning soul of that riper

* Idea taken from Charles Plymell's definition (1976): "Since Ginsberg, Kerouac, Cage,.. they've got this Media Hype, keep front stage center, there is no room for any/one thing NEW. So the generation(S) after the Beat/black Mountaineers remains invisible, in the Beat/ Black Mountain shadow". (*Ilha do Desterro*, No.1,5.)

time national ideas shall take birth, ideas craving to be clothed in a thousand fresh and original forms... The symptoms of such birth may be seen in a longing felt here and there for sustenance of such ideas. At present it shows itself... in sympathy with the prevalent tone of society, by attempts at external action, such as are classed under the head of social reform. But it needs to go deeper, before we can have poets, needs to penetrate beneath the springs of action, to stir and remake the soil as by the action of fire... Another symptom is the need felt by individuals of being even sternly sincere. This is the one great means by which alone progress can be essentially furthered. Truth is the mother of genius."⁵

Avant-garde writing of the 60's did attempt "to stir and remake the soil" through the cult of chaos. The avant-garde movement was a struggle for psychosocial liberation - a struggle for the establishment of "fresh thoughts" towards "truth!" The avant-garde of the 60's played an active part in the social transformations of the decade - crusading rootless American writers lost in their own maze of changing values. The primary aim of the movement was to recreate, put together, or perhaps discover a strictly "now alive" American writing, an expression of the current decade's language and context. It was a literature dedicated to the present - to current events in relation to the individual and his immediate feelings. It often depicted the rootless American writer scraping together bits of his multi-racial past along with scenes of his imagined apocalyptic non-future in an attempt to mold a timeless present root existence in order to escape both the past and the future - what I think to have been a premature effort towards cultural fusion to reach a truer American rooted writing. These passages from "Blue Up the Nile" by avant-garde poet Charles Potts somewhat synthesize this particular situation:

nothing is safe/ no place has not bin
 is, was not, wil b/ contaminated
 by th likes of/ cultural xchanges at th
 level of/ eat and gro comfortable/ trade
 gun powder/paper/printing/ guns and ammuni-
 tion/missles and anti/ missles...
 th mongoloids in asia and th american indians
 yay/ r th most highly / developed in terms of
 ther ability to conserve and maintain
 vitamin D/ and pushing that migration
 backwards thru caucasians/ to negroids
 who had so much of sun/lite
 th darker ones cd not take onenuf D
 in th migration north
 and th lighter ones became
 thes blue green eyes staring out at u
 which i have opened to xpose
 th sun bleached rainbow of/valhalla
 over into yellow/ bits of jewlery broken
 flutes/ live heart ripped out of
 th unknown soldier in tenochitlan
 and thrown into/ chichen itza
 precious and semiprecious stones
 i role back up each generation/ tribe,
 migration, nation, civilization, /culture, race
 into/less and less / complexity
 throbbing at th source / of th Nile
 without thos deficiencies/between th endless
 black/ hydrogen cenote/pupil and th red blood
 laced/ yellow and white cornea
 xpands and contracts/ in th uneven/lite
 my iris/ still as star/sapphire/in
 th physics of absolute ether⁶

Like Potts, D.A. Levy demonstrates his generation's search
 for roots by pushing backward into the unknown past to discover a
 cosmic origin - perhaps to find cosmic roots:

later
 i close my eyes and discover
 a small yellow skull
 with a window in it
 inside/ a pink flower
 moving in time
 & in time i tumble
 out of an eye or five eyes
 into anywhere except
 from where They are
 haunting me from, *i am trying*
 to find Them
 by creating
 new word pottery ⁷

Therefore, taking into consideration the avant-garde writers' helter-skelter individualized search for roots - racial, religious, philosophical, and on to cosmic origins - I find that the main characteristic of their particular literature is its rootlessness. In other words, according to avant-garde writer Hugh Fox, "The main characteristic of these 60's writers is that there is no characteristic... there are some in the Bukowski school, such as A.D. Winans and John Bennett - a sense of masculinity and super realistic 'say it as it is',"* but most of them seem to follow their own noses, their own personal egos. So it is that this cult of self in the search for roots by avant-garde writers added to and reflected the decade's general state of chaos.

The cult of chaos, led by avant-garde poets and their followers, spread out from the Berkeley/ San Francisco/ New York City public meetings, demonstrations, and uprisings and developed into a widespread anti-establishment movement within American society which bordered on an out and out armed social revolution during the 60's. What began as a generational taboo-breaking movement in poetry turned into a violent struggle for psychosocial liberation - a mental and physical battle against Western civilization's longstanding systems which caused both national and international repercussions. Fortunately though, the U.S. government began to enact social reforms in the 60's and pulled out of Vietnam in the early 70's, thereby avoiding a civil war at home. Consequently, I would like to believe that, as Margaret Fuller predicted, soon "talent shall be left at leisure to turn its energies upon the higher department of man's existence."

II The Invisible Generation: Looking for a Revolution

The most cherished value of avant-garde writers of the 60's was the individual ego above and apart from the established group au-

* From a taped interview with the author in Brazil in 1980.

thority. The Invisible Generation, the younger outsider writers of the 60's who were not part of but were influenced by the Beat/Black Mountain movement, struggled for psychosocial liberation. The greater part of their writings was dedicated to social protest and the generational anti-war/anti-establishment crusade which originated in the student demonstrations and uprisings at the University of California in Berkeley in the early 60's.

1. The Berkeley/San Francisco Mecca: The Poets

The avant-garde poets who adhered to, were in, or sporadically drawn to the Berkeley/S.F. readings and rallies were looking for a revolution, for radical changes in the country's political and/or psychosocial status quo. They were a mixture of college students and rootless anarchists from diversified social classes of both urbanized and rural areas in the States. But they were united in the drive to stop the war machine and establish a more humane society. These poets were part and party to the anti-draft and anti-war demonstrations, the Free Speech Movement, the Peace Movement, the Black and Indian protests, the anti-nuclear energy protests, and to numerous other anti-establishment happenings. Therefore, the establishment considered these poets dangerous.

The poets really hit the streets in the sixties. Doug Palmer was probably one of the earliest street poets to write poetry on pieces of paper for handouts.⁸ Then we have the radical poet John Thomson's Filthy Speech Movement, symbolizing the liberation of all words, but which sent him to jail for thirty days after he had written the word "fuck" on a piece of butcher's paper and paraded onto the University of California campus.⁹

Also, I am reminded of a photograph in *Mad* magazine of a

bloody scene of the Vietnam War on which is printed "war is a 4-letter word.* "So the avant-garde breaking the "profanity barrier", (as Hugh Fox calls it), also reflected their feelings of desperation and disgust with the U.S. involvement in war horrors abroad. A few poets went to extremes to call attention to their protest readings, such as Andy Clausen who stripped off his clothes at a public fountain in San Francisco. Four-letter words and stripping in readings jarred the public and at the same time was a symbol of complete freedom from the established social order.

"DANGEROUS! MEAT POETRY! Juice to make the ears jump... SOMETHING!"¹⁰, said Blazek in his revolutionary stand against the "age of the Enslaving Machine."¹¹

On the other hand, another Meat School Poet, Steve Richmond, takes the whole Meat School position even beyond Blazek's stand when he writes in his *Poetry Toward a Creative Nonviolent Anarchy*:

. do you demonstrate?
do you dig even the slightest political idea? do
you even
respect Che a little? Bonito Juarez? Hitler? Ghandi?
Assholes
like that? Oh
they would shut me up
for their purpose is control.
limits on the mind, the mouth, the word
as it has never been spoken.
So what will I put on this paper Up your ass? Have you
a plastic dick
in your skull? Can we exist without
compromise?¹¹

Charles Foster also had revolution on his mind, like Steve Richmond, posing the question of psychosocial liberation without "compromise" and suggesting that revolution always holds strings to individual liberty:

* Ref. fig. 9



WAR IS A FOUR LETTER WORD



ANOTHER
MAD
MINI-
POSTER

From *Mad* (magazine), Special Number Seven, E.C. Publications Inc., N.Y.C., 1967.

FIGURE 9

always a revolution

we dont need

*no more red rags
sticks & stones & fire
symbols stuck up on
iron poles, broken bones
phoney words & terror*

we don't need

no more insane

*we had all forever
of those old sounds.*

*no, we don't need your
jails, courts, schools, churches
factories, armies, stores, offices,
factions, prisons, gun butts,
whatever you come on with
that fat-ass delegate fucking with
people, man, people who
don't have nothing to do
with your dead old system man,
don't have nothing to do
man, with you!*

we say, man, the world

belongs to the people

who live in it

its theirs, ours,

don't say it ain't

sing a live song, man

sing!¹²

According to Charles Potts, in a letter to me, the setting for his generation's revolution was the S.F. Haight Ashbury District and the Mission District, the East Bay, and, most important, Berkeley. He cites the Home of the Tenth Muse as the most vanguard bookstore at the time.*

* Ref. Appendix, Chapter two.

Pott's autobiographical novel *Valga Krusa*, published in 1977, is an on the scene account of the role of the poets and their involvement with the drug culture. Like many of his generation of writers, he was subject to military draft when he finished college but wanted no part of war. He wound up in the Berkeley avant-garde movement and was in and out of poetry readings, communes, jails, and publishing little magazines.

In *Valga Krusa*, the Beats, Le Roi Jones, and many others from the anti-academic 50's were on the Berkeley/S.F. scene participating in readings organized by the participant younger avant-garde, such as Potts himself, Richard Morris, John Oliver Simon, Richard Krech, Paul Foreman, Edward Smith, Doug Blazek, D.R. Wagner, Andy Clausen, Hugh Fox, Ben Hiatt, John Bennett, Harry Smith, John Thomson, and others, during the 60's. However, judging from Pott's account of these readings, usually at the Berkeley Art Center or Shakespeare's bookstore, there was much egocentricity, quibbling, and confusion among and between the poets of these two generations. Guru Ginsberg still held his ground on the fame of "Howl", but the Invisible Generation wanted a new approach to the old problems rooted in man's loss of identity and shattered ego.

The generation gap is explained in part of an interview I had with Potts in 1980:

(Question: What were the most influential philosophies of the 60's?)

Potts: "There was a kind of rejectionist mode to get rid of what had ever been or was. Some of the most influential people were Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder. Whalen especially had an influence on me. Both were very much Zen-Buddhists. I know nothing of Buddhism. I hate religion. Things oriental were very appealing. I was interested in some Chinese translations with David Wang".

(Question: Do you know Chinese?)

Potts: "No, Edward Smith was the one who got me interested. I read it in translation - Mencius*.... I repudiate religion because it's an excuse for people not to be responsible for themselves. The only thing that interests me is the original religious impulse. Once you get committees, etc., it's no longer religion".

The above statements show that Potts, like many of his colleagues I interviewed, admits the initial influence of the elder poets but desires to transcend their dedication to orientalized Western ritualism and achieve a mode of the mind in which the individual becomes self-liberating without the need of outer pressures or rituals. Potts mentions Mencius in his *Trancemigracion of Menzu*:

2
a china man

menzu th magnificent say
in ordr to survive u must
turn deeply inside yr heart
find evrything in it u lov
bring it out and turn it ovr in yr hands
so u can c it
force sympathy for it
that wil make it move
nothing gets closer¹³

2. D.A. Levy's One-Man Crusade

While the Berkeley happenings were going on, D.A. Levey was carrying on practically a one-man crusade in Cleveland, Ohio, against the local establishment. He, too, was of the drug culture and doing what he denominated "an experiment in destructive writing"¹⁴ and splicing his poetry and life with drug-inspired mysticism and Zen-Buddhism. His wild drug escapades and profane written attacks upon the

* Mencius (L.name Meng-Tze) was a Chinese Confusian philosopher (372?-289? B.C.) who believed that the individual should accept all his past experience and integrate it into his "self" and whole life span.

establishment kept him at odds with the authorities. We have, for example, his magazines with the titles *UKANHAVYRFUKNCITIBAK* and the *Marrahwannah Quarterly*.

Levy said that "poetry should not be just for poets - the people who make guns do not go hungry."¹⁵

In the mid-sixties he ran afoul of the brutal and reactionary Cleveland constabulary which took a stereotypically narrow view of his *Marrahwannah Quarterly* and related activities. Before he knew it Cleveland's youth had cast him in the role of martyr, which he eschewed with only limited success. Under constant harassment he refused to remain socially or aesthetically isolated, and so his work, concrete included, took on more and more social, political and psychological implications ("Visualized Prayer for the American God # 6" is a good example, done in 1967) sometimes approaching cartoon art, and certainly spilling into photo-collage and cut-up art, which he produced voluminously.¹⁶

Levy, of course, was in close spiritual and material alliance with Blazek and the *Olé* poets. In *Marrahwannah Quarterly* (volume 2 number 4), he mentions that each issue from *Open Skull* "contains bloody fingerprints of Doug Blazek who prints almost as much as I do." Their proximity and prolixity are fact, and Levy's writing and publishing bore an ever-expanding energy into the global village. But what moved him, foremost and finally, was the American industrial city of Cleveland, Ohio, there on the shores of what the Cleveland poets called "Swamp Erie" (they even published a series of books called *The Polluted Lake Series*). "This town has been here for 150 years and has managed to murder every poet and painter who has been here", he told Andrew Curry in an interview (*Dust # 12*). "I wrote

about Cleveland as I saw it. I was very young when I wrote *Cleveland Undercovers* (7 Flowers Press, 1966) . . . I was only nineteen or twenty . . . I'm twenty-four now. And that's *old* in Cleveland." He likened Cleveland (and the U.S. in fact) to Nazi Germany, but he stayed.¹⁷

Levy stayed in Cleveland where he ended up shooting himself to death in 1968, but his works, mostly through D.R. Wagner, circulated at the readings and conferences at Berkeley. He was perhaps the most radical poet in the underground movement of the sixties.

III The Struggle for Psychosocial Liberation: Avant-Garde Themes

"Man has reached the threshold of controlling his own psychosocial evolution. Dramatic advances in all areas of behavioral science are converging to negate the long-held assumption that human behavior is somewhat immune to scientific control. . . . Many Americans find the idea of behavior control repugnant - the antithesis of the democratic ideal."¹⁸

Much avant-garde writing of the 60's is a direct response to and reflection of this situation in which science, united with the establishment, threatens to demolish the remains of man's already withered ego. The use of LSD and other behavior control agents in psychiatric treatment in the early 60's accelerated the individual search for identity and the anti-establishment movement. That is, the clandestine use of drugs for psychic escape defeated the original scientific purpose of fitting people into the establishment. In this way, scientific L.S.D. boomeranged.

1. Psyche Probing

In the search for identity, psyche-probing through the psychedelic trip was practised among the avant-garde which sometimes resulted in psychic splits and duality, such as in the case of Charles Potts and D.A. Levy. Potts reached the point of burying his Charles Potts "self", (under establishment control), and brought out another psychic "self", Laffing Water, free of establishment control (in his mind):

FU HEXAGRAM 24 NO HANGUPS

Charlie Potts is dead
and I wonder if I should
be opening his mail
just as tho it had
been addressed to me
from all his friends

and for him as well as me
I tell you I have gone
all the way with Charlie
back to nothing
and the cycle is complete
d
by the highest sound
I ever heard
going around in circles
my name is Laffing Water
and whatever form it takes
I have plenty of

changes to go thru
before I outwrite
all my errors¹⁹

In the same poem, he expresses feelings of still being controlled, his mind controlled by his country's systems, "locked in English", and explains his desire for universal integration with other minds which he can attain only through drugs and getting "higher".

tho sometimes I feel trapped
 with so many other
 ugly Americans
 locked in English
 long time—no see
 the blind embrace the blind
 the deaf the dumb
 the dead the living
 let go of me

I may not be one
 with everything
 but I am one with me
 and you are 2
 and we are 3
 and 4 is cool
 and 5 is plenty
 lets get higher
 lets get higher ²⁰

D.A. Levy, in the long poem "The North American Book of the Dead", goes through the whole psychedelic trip searching for identity of his "self", In it, the drug is the "doorway" which opens to his psychic inner space expansion, "the quiet place", where he becomes a free non-material essence in cosmic space of "no time" and "absolute silence". There is no past or future, just "Now", he says, "not knowing where i can not go - YET/ but go into Now/ HERE I AM", which is his idea of his real identity - an intangible energy in space free of all earthly controls:

in the quiet place
 is the wind whistling
 the wind picking me up
 is absolute silence
 i stop here/not knowing where i can not go - YET
 but go into Now
 HERE I AM

the quiet place is a doorway
 that opens to nothing
 the return is thought
 to stop is HERE I AM
 the quiet place is a doorway
 that opens to no time
 all directions in no time
 are like motions of light ²¹

2. Anti-Establishment Writing

Anti-establishment writing concentrated on social protest which was most radical and profuse in the mid-sixties. The establishment was not giving way but the young, the Blacks and other discontented minorities created powerful currents towards social revolution:

All these currents are very clear in the Berkeley Liberation Program pamphlet.

The attack is directly against the capitalistic power structure as such: "We will stop the defiling of the earth; our relation to nature will be guided by reason and beauty rather than profit. The civilization of concrete and plastic will be broken and natural things respected."

The radical black *and* white ideologies merge and fuse, and the whole apolitical love-philosophy that characterized the Hippies in the beginning is exchanged for a rather clear commitment to world revolution: ²²

13. WE WILL UNITE WITH OTHER MOVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD TO DESTROY THIS MOTHERFUCKING RACISTCAPITALISTICIMPERIALIST SYSTEM.

Berkeley cannot be free until America is free. We will make the American revolution with the mass participation of all the oppressed and exploited people. We will actively support the 10-point program of the Black Panther Party in the black colony: all revolutionary organizing attempts among workers, women, students and youth; all Third World liberation movements. We will create an International Liberation School in Berkeley as a training center for revolutionaries. ²³

- Richard Krech

It was a time when anything and anybody connected to the establishment was liable to avant-garde criticism. Not even Yevtushenko escaped it when he visited the United States and gave readings because he was sponsored by established commercialized literary groups, which were so hated by the Invisible Generation. Social reformer poet Paul Foreman shows such indignation in direct address to Yevtushenko:

YEVTUSHENKO !

Why do you sell your poems
to Playboy magazine?
Are your poems stifled
with big breasts
filled with silicon?
Yevtushenko,
Playboy is a ripoff press,
the best of the worst
capitalists.
They are making money off you,
Yevtushenko,
exploiting your name;
what illness of fame
eats at your entrails
that you should stoop so low!

Yevtushenko!

You deserve to be
an American poet, yes,
to live in America,
where they kick their poets
in the teeth till their
gums are slick,
where poets starve
and stumble emaciated
through barren streets
howling at their shadow!

Yevtushenko, Playboy,

yes. Playboy
has never paid an American poet
as you have been paid.
They paid you handsomely,
and fitly so; you are
a handsome poet.²⁴

Joseph Bruchac has helped develop writing and small presses in U.S. prisons. Being on the outside but working inside the penal system has resulted in a type of protest. "There Are No Trees Inside the Prison" is a bleak picture of mankind's rationalized sense of justice:

There are no trees inside the prison

There are no trees inside the prison,
although number 31370, the Chaplain's clerk,
keeps two turtles, a red ear and
a snapper, inside a plastic aquarium
equipped with a plastic palm.

There are no trees inside the prison
 where 1300 men stroll yards of stone
 hard as the white plastered wall
 where NO HAND BALL PLAYING
 is printed in black block letters.

There are no trees inside the prison,
 although the Chaplain's inmate clerk
 tries to make seeds sprout in a pot
 above the clanging radiator in a window
 where light sifts through the bars.

There are no trees inside the prison
 because their branches would be shaped
 into weapons,
 because their leaves might hide
 a fugitive,
 because their tops might overshadow
 gun towers,
 because trees, like men,
 need deep roots to grow.²⁵

Buchac's stand is against civilization's destruction of the natural order of existence on earth -that mankind's split away from nature has led to a sterilization of both man and nature. "There are no trees inside the prison/ because their branches would be shaped/ into weapons", he explains. That is, men have not learned to accept the natural course and form of things. They must always re-shape, re-create, and in this reforming nothing but self-destruction is produced. The world itself is becoming a prison with its invented systems, a "white plastered wall", as barrier to psychosocial liberation and truth.

Ed "Foots" Lipman was a convict poet who, while in the penitentiary, wrote "Poem for Rupert Weber, 85 Years Too Late".* It is about the first man on whom the authorities experimented the electric chair. The inhumanity of the electric chair as a form of capital punishment confirms the dehumanization process of the scientific spirit of the time and the sad fact that man has always had great ingenuity

* Weber was executed August 6, 1890, and Lipman wrote the poem evidently in 1975 which would be the 85th anniversary of his death and also of the establishment of the electric chair in prisons. (Ref. *Second Coming*, vol. 5, No. 1, 1977, 111.).



The author interviewing Paul Foreman in his bookstore dedicated mostly to small press productions, in Austin, Texas/ 1980.

FIGURE 10

when it comes to punishing his fellow human being.

The poem's description of the cruel torture Weber suffered before dying and the indifference of his jailers is direct criticism of the establishment's idea of justice and its penal system:

Rupert Weber took 8 minutes to die,
the State tried to claim
he was unconscious
from the very first shock,
but knowing States - and prisons -
like I do,
I'll always wonder . . .

The Edison electrician claimed
the whole thing was a conspiracy
by George Westinghouse
to discredit the fine equipment,
equipment which was to prove
again & again
more than capable
of the job for which it was
so lovingly designed.

IV

They buried Rupert Weber
in a Potter's grave
in the far corner
of the State cemetery.
Convict trustees
wearing gloves & rubber aprons
opened the coffin
& dumped Rupert's remains
into quicklime,
taking the box back with them
to the prison;
because by then
there was someone else
in the Death House cell ²⁶

There was an enormous generation gap in the 60's which seems have been widened because of the Vietnam War - that the older generation was obliging its youth to fight against their wills. The anti-war demonstrations and peace movements are proof enough of this. Many avant-garde writers served in the armed forces but against their principles. Richard L. Bennett expresses the young men's resentment towards the

older generation and militarism:

We will go. You know that.
 We will go and we will try.
 We will go and we will be tried.

In some dark jungle night we'll cry,
 Cry for a buddy who, only last night, cried.
 He is dead. We may be. And you,
 You are far away with papers.

Before patrol we'll eat unleavened wafers,
 And know more of Christ than you.
 And moving in a jungle made savage by you,
 We will know more of the whole world scene
 Than you. Lying in mud we'll be afraid.
 And for the future, we'll be afraid.

With legs gone and eyes out he blurted
 In delerium some wild outrageous scheme
 And told us how the pain it hurted
 And we understood he was only seventeen
 Speaking adolescently of some great power
 Strong as THRUSH or UNCLE that would crush
 Each leader of each state that sent
 For any reason soldiers outside its walls
 So when any leader sent the boys to war
 Sent the youth to war he'd be sure
 He would die before any of them did die.²⁷

To Richard Bennett, the war was senseless and neither the Left nor Right ("THRUSH or UNCLE") should advance upon one another. The only solution he can imagine is that "of some great power", a third superior force, which would destroy any leader who "sent youth to war" thereby abolishing offensives from any and all states.

There was and has been much written against nuclear energy. In "Our Glands and Talents" Brown Miller brings to mind the spectre of Hiroshima - the fear that the atom bomb invention and its explosion at the end of the Second World War was the beginning of the end of humanity, and the first step towards destruction of the earth. He warns that people do not realize this danger because radioactivity is invisible and they were not at the other end of the weapon:

Everything I say about Hiroshima belongs
to some other meaning, should blister
from some other awareness.
People ask me (as if they feel) why write
about that?
It happened thirty summers ago - why think
about it now?
I can't tell them Hiroshima
has penetrated everything, is flowing
through us, flies in the sky of our lungs:
I see it, the finest dust in our clothes,
in our hair underwear armpits nostrils,
in our car engines and pocket calculators
and the loges of our theaters, coating
the screens of our televisions,
permeating our softest facial
and toilet tissues, our bones
and connective tissues, our stand-up²⁸

Protest writing continued into the 70's but the anti-establishment movement began to weaken. Much energy had been spent and many taboos broken regarding language, sex, religion, ideology, and philosophy. The writers felt that the crusade had not really changed anything. Wars, discrimination, and dehumanization continued. Also, none of the younger Berkeley/S.F. avant-garde had managed to get published by the big publishing companies. The 60's revolution was just as stalemated as the international situation in the 70's.

IV Emergence of Amoeboid Survivalism: The Apocalyptic American

**Man is the universe. Aware
of the self as a cosmic cell
in space, one
has no need for god.**

**Besides, it is governments
and businesses and other men
who manipulate our lives.²⁹**

Doug Blazek's statement here is a good illustration of the 60's generation's attitude towards human existence in the 70's. From the early 70's to 80's, the avant-garde revolutionaries gradually came out of chaos and became "aware of the self as a cosmic cell in space." Amoeboid survivalism replaced their characteristic aggressiveness in writing and modes of life styles, in general. Amoeboid survivalism is a term I invented to describe this state of psychological reaction (to a hostile environment) which is characterized by the cult of self, by psychic shrinking back into one's amoebic origin, by growing feelings of meaninglessness, and by a fear of "psychic numbing".* Amoeboid withdrawal is an attempt to escape all outside systems by assuming a simulated one-celled psychosocial state. It is manifest in a new kind of individualism in the U.S. which no longer accepts dependence upon group authority for personal survival. Blazek's words above are a simplified yet exact description of this phenomenon of the 70's into the 80's.

In this same poem, "A Poem About Now", Blazek asks "What did our revolution do?", and falls into a Mencius philosophy of life saying: "What is destroyed will grow back unless man uses all events and builds upon them". We have the ex-revolutionary and amoeboid survivalist in this work:

O.K., your 3 minutes are up!
What did our revolution do?

If we threw enough beautiful
things into a junkyard
it would cease being a junkyard.
We build a fence
with tanks on one side
people on the other, then
throw in enough beautiful things.

* Robert Jay Lifton's term meaning "an inability or unwillingness to feel what happens at the other end of the weapons... they see before them no corpses..." ("A Matter of Life and Death", *Newsweek*, April 26, 1982, 20:).

Revolutions won't change
 enormous areas of life -- just
 surfaces, appearances.
 What is destroyed will
 grow back unless man
 uses *all* events
 and builds upon them.

Man is forever
 trying to turn back,
 run away, tear down in
 order to start over as if
 starting over automatically
 jogs everything in proper
 order for perfection.

Man has yet to realize
 that his ideal existence
 will have strife, discomfort,
 challenge and loss.³⁰

In 1967, psychiatrist "Salvador Maddi identified the emergence of a distinct existential neurosis marked by chronic meaninglessness, apathy, and aimlessness."³¹ This discovery coincides with the American apocalyptic apathy and death wish which began to be expressed by the avant-garde at the end of the 60's.

Charles Bukowski's "Thermometer" is symbolic of the apocalyptic American sensing that the end is coming, knowing that science and governments are gradually drawing mankind closer to extinction, but ignoring it. He says "I read the New York Times/ while spiders wrestle with ants in shaded/ roots" and "I don't think anymore -". Yet he does think about it:

As my skin wrinkles in warning like
 paint on a burning wall
 Standard oil signs like salami,
 fruitflies with sterile frozen
 orange-grey eyes
 stare at me
 while I dream of lavender ladies as impos-
 sible/ and beautiful as
 immortality
 as my skin wrinkles in warning
 I read THE NEW YORK TIMES
 while spiders wrestle with ants in shaded
 roots/ of grass

and whores lift their hands to heaven for
 love
 while the white mice
 huddle in controversy over a
 piece of cheese
 as my skin wrinkles in warning
 I think of Carthage and Rome and Berlin
 I thin' of young girls crossing their
 nylon legs at bus stops
 as my skin wrinkles in warning like
 paint on a burning wall
 I get up from my chair to drink water
 on a pleasant afternoon
 and I wonder about water
 I wonder about me,
 a warm thermometer kind of wonderment
 that rises like a butterfly
 in a distilled pale yellow afternoon
 and then I walk back out
 and sit on my chair
 and don't think anymore -
 all the strain of broken ladders and old war
 movies - / I felt everything / burn³²

Bukowski uses the word "skin" to signify both his and the
 earth's protection which is burning away. Thomas Head Caputo speaks of
 "a stretching skin of night" which lies menacingly about him. It is
 death and infinity, but he too displays a "let it be" apathy saying,
 "Dark water is my simple explanation":

*Dark water is about me:
 a stretching skin of night.*

*It is the come of air,
 the come of earth
 laying there.*

*Dark water took many
 lifetimes coming.*

*Dark water is becoming
 my simple explanation.³³*

In both of the above examples we encounter a conscious acceptance of an apocalypse and personal extinction through amoeboid withdrawal - "We step through, split, lift/ and disappear (into ourselves)", finalizes Hugh Fox, in "The Cross Country Stars & Stripes Forever Mind-Blast".³⁴

"As the twentieth century approaches its end, the conviction grows that many other things are ending too. Storm warnings, portents, hints of catastrophe haunt our times. The sense of an ending, which has given shape to so much of twentieth-century literature, now pervades the popular imagination as well. The Nazi holocaust, the threat of nuclear annihilation, the depletion of natural resources, well-founded predictions of ecological disaster have fulfilled poetic prophecy, giving concrete historical substance to the nightmare, or death wish, that avant-garde artists were the first to express".³⁵

D.A. Levy could very well have been mentioned as a perfect example, in Lasch's statement above, of these "avant-garde artists", since it was published in 1979. But Lasch probably never heard of Levy who expounded life without "walls of skin" and executed the death wish on himself in 1968:

i lay down without energy
in a world of sawdust
i have no desire
i am being packed & sealed
in a tomb of my own arms

the numbness
of my limbs amuses me
& then
somewhere in the past hour
i realize i've lost my body
& am hovering in a dim
cotton passageway

looking for direction
in this world of dust
i become bones & flesh
& am once again
confined within
my walls of skin

i am tired

i continue moving
like a shadow
through the endless
days of rain and fire³⁶

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January, 1971.
- 2 Ibid.
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- 4 Hugh Fox, *The Living Underground: An Anthology*, 247.
- 5 Perry Miller, *The American Transcendentalists: Their Prose and Poetry*,
189 - 191.
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- 12 *Peyote Toad*.
- 13 *The Transmigration of Menzu*, 8.
- 14 "Little Magazines in the Sixties", 29.
- 15 "On Poetry in the Wholesale Education and Culture System", *The Living
Underground: A Critical Overview*, 24.
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- 17 Ibid., 32.
- 18 Lewis Andrews & Marvin Karlins, *Requiem for Democracy?*, 103.
- 19 "Fu Hexagram 24 No Hangups", *Rocky Mountain Man*, 26.

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- 24 *California Bicentennial Poets*, 51.
- 25 Joseph Bruchac, *There Are No Trees Inside the Prison*, 4.
- 26 Ed "Foots" Lipman, "A Poem for Rupert Weber 85 Years too Late", *Second Coming*, 116.
- 27 Richard L. Bennett, "Sometime They'll Give a War and Nobody Will Come", *Vagabond Anthology*, 28.
- 28 Brown Miller, *Ilha do Desterro*, Nos. 2/3, Maio, 1979, 100.
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- 31 *Requiem for Democracy?*, 103.
- 32 Charles Bukowski, "Thermometer", *Ilha do Desterro*, Nos. 2/3, Maio, 1979. 44.
- 33 Thomas Head Caputo, *Dark Water*, 7.
- 34 "The Cross Country Stars and Stripes Forever Mind-Blast", *The Living Underground: An Anthology*, 112.
- 35 Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, 28.
- 36 D.A. Levy, "The American Book of the Dead", *The Living Underground: An Anthology*, 249.

SIPAPU

v. 12, no. 2

a passage
between
two worlds

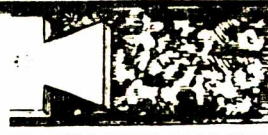
consecutive issue
number twenty-four



a newsletter
for librarians.



MEMBER
COSMOPOLITAN
COMMITTEE OF SMALL MAGAZINE
EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS
BOX 100 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94101



SIPAPU copyright by Noel Peattie 1982. Strictly speaking this is the late 1981 issue, but it's coming out in 1982.

FIGURA 11

CHAPTER THREE: THE SMALL PRESS MOVEMENT - COSMEP

Since the new avant-garde was dedicated to profaning and disrupting the U.S. establishment, traditional publishers would have nothing to do with them. So the writers resorted to underground small presses and the "do-it-yourself" mimeo movement. As small used offset presses became cheaper in the 60's, individual writers began to print and bind their own works at home.

Some of the most expressive of these sixties-born presses, (1963 - 1968), were the following:

Runcible Spoon. D.R. Wagner/ Sacramento, Ca.

Olé. Doug Blazek/ Besenville, Ill. & Sacramento.

Litmus. Charles Potts/ Seattle, Wa. & Berkeley.

Marrahwannah Quarterly. D.A. Levy/Cleveland, Ohio.

The Smith. Harry Smith/ N.Y.C.

Dust. Len Fulton/ El Cerrito, Ca.

Aldebaran Review. Alta & John Oliver Simon/Berkeley.

Grande Ronde Review. Ben L. Hiatt/La Grande Oregon.

Camels Coming Press. Richard Morris/San Francisco.*

Distribution was the big problem which the small presses faced. In 1968, some of the above editors and others united to solve this problem. They founded COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazine Press Editors and Publishers). Diane Kruchkow and Hugh Fox summarize the event:

* Len Fulton's "Little Magazines in the Sixties" gives a fairly complete account of international growth of small presses in 60's.

COSMEP CONFERENCE: 1974-1975

Diane Kruchkow

Berkeley, April of 1968. There was a "pow-wow" of little mag people. I was teaching at Loyola in Los Angeles, flew up, it seemed like the whole small-press world was there: [Doug] Blazek and RJS (Captain Zero, from Cleveland), John Oliver Simon, Alexandra Garrett, Charlie Potts, Richard Krech, Pat Goldenberg, D. R. Wagner, Harry Smith, Richard Morris, Sharon Asselin, Norm Moser. I somehow got on a distribution panel, I'd just started *Ghost Dance*, didn't have anything but skeletal notions about distributing anything, but there I was, and then the distribution panel didn't stop panelling, ended up at the basement grill of the Student Union and [Len] Fulton (who was chairing it) and Blazek and Wagner and I got the idea that, Jesus, here were all these poets and all these little mags, all this talent and energy and goddamit we were spread all over the country, in fact all over the world, and we didn't know who the hell we were, we were all unbelievably isolated and our isolation was keeping us small and unknown (even to each other) . . . let's do something about it! And so COSMEP was born.

—Hugh Fox, COSMEP Board member, in COSMEP flyer

And so COSMEP, the Committee of Small Magazine Press Editors and Publishers has grown and developed. Meetings since the Berkeley event have been held in Ann Arbor, Buffalo, San Diego, Madison, New Orleans, and New York. From an amorphous group of fifteen to twenty poets and publishers meeting on the West coast, COSMEP had developed into an organization of nearly nine hundred little magazine and small press editors by June, 1975. *

COSMEP began with few women writers but by 1974 the number had increased and the COSMEP Women's Committee was created. The women, led by feminist Anne Pride,** practically took over from then on. They instituted workshops, bookfairs, a book van, technical pamphlets on small press publishing, etc. In other words, COSMEP was changed from the once spontaneous conferences into a halfway beurocratic big business corporation.

Then some members began to branch off into regions, creating branches such as NESPA (New England Small Press Association). There was even a one state branch called the Committee of Rhode Island Small Presses. With the dividing up and subdividing into men writers, women writers, gays, lesbians, and regionalists, there has been chaos in COSMEP.

* Dianne Kruchkow, (*Contemporary Literary Scene, II*, Salem Press, N. J., 1979, 299), gives an overview of COSMEP activities, 1974-5, & other information on organization.

** Anne Pride is ed. feminist pres *KNOW* (Pittsburgh).

Never See

From the logotype of the Stony Hills Review

ar Press

ve. There is fiction, like Hans A
thful Frog: A Nuclear Fairy Tale."
koglund's "solution to the Radioac-
' an essay where he volunteers the
next to the Rockland dump ("The
hang out around the dump would be
).

by Miriam Dyak, John Tagliabue,
others. Including Louise Pieper's

neighborhood," I said,
w you moving in.

a center of small press activity.
She's not in it for the profit — grants
from organizations like CCLM have
helped her get started, and the 40
hours a week she may put in on the
magazine brings no paycheck.

But Stony Hills has a good reputa-
tion in independent publishing
circles. Since moving to New Sharon
from Massachusetts in November
Kruchkow has been working to build
a local circulation, trying to place
copies in bookstores and encourag-
ing people to ask for a copy where
there are none.

"There aren't many bookstores
that can really give you a good over-
view of what's happening in small
press publishing," she admits.

An independent press might print
1,000 copies of a book. Most are sold



Sentinel Photo by Neil Genzlinger

"Stony Hills" editor Diane Kruchkow.

by mail, at fairs, on street corners,
at alternative bookstores. They
don't reach mass audiences, but
Kruchkow says the circle is still a
wide one.

"It's obvious that the major au-
dience is other writers, but there are

people all over, in backwater towns
as well as major cities," she says.
"Literature today is happening in
Skowhegan, it's happening in New
Sharon, it's happening in Hulls Cove,
Maine. Most people just don't know
about it."

Diane Kruchkow, editor of *Zahir* and a member of COSMEP, has been one of the most active writer-publishers in the small press movement since the late sixties, and yet has maintained independence from radical feminist movements. Her stand is Thoreauvian and back-to-nature.

COSMEP

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS

P.O. BOX 703 SAN FRANCISCO, CA. 94101

August 28, 1980

Dear Anita,

Hugh had me make a tape with him which he said he would send to you.

COSMEP? Well, COSMEP was founded back in 1968. It came about as follows:

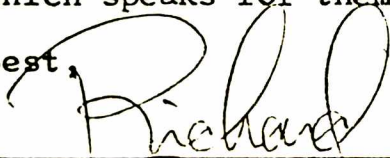
In 1967, the federal government began to fund literature through the National Endowment for the Arts and an organization called the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. At first, all the money went to Establishment literature: university literary journals and the like. Naturally this didn't go over very well with the literary editors who were publishing innovative literature.

In 1968 (May), the "underground" literary editors and publishers met at a conference at the University of California at Berkeley. The conference was about what you would expect: people talking about revolution, people taking their clothes off at poetry readings, and so on. But there was also a lot of serious discussion on topics like distribution, and representatives of government funding organizations were subjected to quite a bit of criticism over the government's financial investment in the literary establishment.

In the following fall, I and several other people put together an organization to keep the energy that had been exhibited at the conference alive.

Over the years, COSMEP managed to exert quite a bit of pressure, with the result that the great majority of federal grants funds now do go to publishers of innovative literature. It also evolved from a literary organization into one which represents all small publishers in the U.S. (I don't mean that they're all members; I mean we're the only organization which speaks for them).

Best,



Allan Kornblum Glenna Luscher Dan Poynter

COORDINATOR: Richard Morris

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Alexander Harvey, Chair
Paulette Balogh
Loris Essary
Paul Foreman
Kathryn King

In my interviews with several of the early members of COSMEP, Harry Smith, Doug Blazek, Hugh Fox, Charles Potts, Paul Foreman, Noel Peattie, and Len Fulton, there is evidence of nonunity or indifference in regard to the COSMEP of today. They are still members but most of them make it plain that they could very well do without it now, (1980).* In Hugh Fox's interview with A.D. Winans in the 70's, Winans commented that "the government grants have done more harm by just pitting one (writer) against another with minimal grants."

Richard Morris, Coordinator of COSMEP in San Francisco, is the only one of the founding members to hold his ground under the pressures of a mounting complex of hundreds of writer-editors. Both he and Diane Kruchkow have become the mainstays of the organization during recent years.** However, even Diane, in recent letters, has become critical of COSMEP, saying she did not join COSMEP to "fit in".*** So the tendency is for the original avant-garde founders of the organization to shun it and keep to themselves.

* Ref. Appendix, Chapter Three: The Small Press Movement - COSMEP, Interviews.

** Ref. figs. 12 & 13.

*** Ref. Appendix, Chapter Three.

CONCLUSION: THREE DECADES OF STALEMATE

Sidney Bernard, commenting on the state of American culture and avant-garde writings, said "I think the 70's are a long, drawn-out stalemate burying, but not destroying the conflicts of the 60's".* But I would say that there have been three decades of stalemate, considering the fact that the Beat/Black Mountain generation is only now, in the 80's, being credited or recognized as vanguard by established literary groups; that, even so, the Beats obscured the achievements of the Berkeley/ S.F. movement led by the Invisible Generation in the 60's; and that the writers of both generations are still ignored or ostracized by the big publishing companies. Moreover, both generations fell into a state of defeatism and lack of direction in the seventies though still firm in their stand against traditional East Coast dictates in literature. Also, granted that the 70's buried the issues of the 60's, and with them the avant-garde generation of the 60's, we must remember that the earlier fame of the Beat Generation also obscured the 60's generation.

The Beat/Black Mountain movement might be viewed as the beginning of a new consciousness of reality within the context of American life. It was homogeneous and seminal, whereas the Berkeley / S.F. movement was inflated and haphazardly experimental stemming mainly from the philosophies of the Beat counter-culture revolt:

WHAT HAPPENED in the 1950's in American literature may someday be viewed as the first truly seminal literary movement in our nation's history - a fact that is most remarkable for the vast number of academic and professional writers who still fail to believe. Jack Kerouac rests "safe in heaven dead" in a well-tended grave in

* Sidney Bernard, author of *Witnessing: The Seventies* (Excerpt from "William Packard Interviews Sidney Bernard", *Small Press Review*, 3, July, 1980.).

Lowell, Massachusetts, bestrewn with flowers, poems, dimes, bird feathers, and half-empty beer bottles left by those who have come to pay homage. The ashes of Neal Cassady are reverentially sheltered by his widow Carolyn. Lew Welch's bones were long ago scattered by vultures over the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Allen Ginsberg continues to drag his bones to colleges and poetry readings to present a living relic of the miracle, and William Burroughs, I am told, now steps slowly and elegantly with a cane. But the America they and the other Beats gave us has far outstripped their own conceptions. Before their soaring creations, both the surviving Beats and their fellow citizens still gape in wonder, and that is the wonder of it all: that the impossible diversity of American thought and deed should at last have yielded to the mystery of a purpose and direction, which not even the Beat detractors can deny.*

The predominant differences between the Beat Generation and the Invisible Generation were:

1. The Beats were more products of urbanization, culture shock, and the atom bomb scare while the Invisible Generation showed the effects of future shock and the international space and armaments race.
2. The Beats were tribal and aloof from yet a dissident fraction of the East Coast establishment. The Invisible Generation were dispersed, rootless, and disconnected from the Eastern establishment.
3. Beat writing was more of a personalized reaction specifically to American traditional moral codes and sex taboos whereas the Generation of the 60's writing was a more global rejection of Western civilization's social order taboos.
4. The Beats have become mythical figures within American literature. The Invisible Generation has been ignored and obscured by the Beat image.
5. The Beat small press movement was minimal for their works were more oral-oriented. The Invisible Generation relied more on print com-

* From introduction to "Focus the Beats", *The American Book Review*, 7.

munication which led to the widespread development of small presses in their time and on into the 80's.

I have but scraped the surface of a subject which would take volumes to thoroughly explore. In response to my request for more and more biographical information on the avant-garde of the 60's and 70's, Len Fulton scribbled back this curt reply: "I could do this in this or any other lifetime!". Quite logically, he meant "couldn't" instead of "could" and that he either considered my task an impossible one or one that he felt so annoying that he did not want to discuss it and even upset him to the point of making a mistake in his writing.* However, I can understand his attitude for I found there was an infinity of writers then and the number is soaring as I delve deeper into the two decades.

There has been an explosion of writers and small presses throughout the United States over the past two decades. Everybody seems to feel the necessity of expressing themselves in print even if but for the "self" alone which would indicate that the struggle for liberation of the individual ego is intensifying in comparative obscurity.

Most of the revolutionary writers of the 60's generation have drawn within themselves and express a state of apocalyptic apathy. Also, the ones I interviewed seem to now have little in common with each other except their desire to destroy or break into the East Coast (especially New York) publishing monopolies. Most have gone back to their home states and avoid involvement with social and literary movements, other than the anti-nuclear movement. The majority consider Ginsberg and followers now degenerate as both writers and persons. Out of the Beat movement, Philip Whalen and Gary Snyder seem to be the only ones whose writings they still respect.

Bukowski is claimed by both the Beat and Invisible Genera-

* He had furnished me with much information previously so I was a bit disturbed when I received my letter back with just this note. (Ref. fig. 14).

Len Fulton

7/30

Dear Anita -
Really! I'm afraid
I could do this
in this or any other
lifetime!

Len

Reorder From: Robert James Co., P. O. Box 2726, Birmingham, Ai 35202 MPJ

Len Fulton's reply to my request for biographical information on a long list of 60's 70's avant-garders.

FIGURE 14

tions. He was born in 1920, and was first published by a small press in 1944, which puts him in the 50's (and back to the 40's). But since the Invisible Generation's small presses published and publicized him more, they also lay claim. Certainly Bukowski is a profane outsider who fits into all three past decades and is becoming well-known without the help of N.Y. I know this because many common people in the States told me they had read him. Also, my Harvard graduate advisor, Arnold Gordenstein, said he had one of his books.

The term "avant-garde", as used by the Invisible Generation, appears to stand more for anti-establishment writing and "outside the New York literary circle" writing than for literary innovation on the whole, now in the 80's. The reason for this is that the prevailing emphasis in these three decades of avant-garde has been put on content which has been reactionary to the traditional precepts of the East Coast monopoly which is, in turn, a part of the U.S. establishment.

The avant-garde movement of the 50's to 80's has been an expression of psychosocial discontent, and might be considered a transitional process stalemating with the establishment but gaining ground through the proliferation of small presses.

Owing to the fact that so little has been written about U.S. avant-garde literature and the small presses of the 50's to 80's, one might conclude that these aspects have been irrelevant to the U.S. contemporary literature scene. However, if this is to be taken as criteria for exclusion of avant-garde writing from the study of American contemporary literature, only a limited and biased view can be had of what is happening in literature today and has been happening for about thirty years. Also, we might remember that many of the famous names in American literature got their start in small press publications, such as Hemingway, Pound, and numerous others. Moreover, considering that the processing and evolution of literature is as important as, and even more vital than, its structural establishment, recognition should be

given to the U.S. avant-garde and its small presses which have so experimented in literary expression throughout the past three decades.

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WINANS, A.D., ed. *California Bicentennial Poets Anthology*. San Francisco: Second Coming Press, 1976.

_____. *North Beach Poems*. San Francisco: Second Coming Press, 1977.

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OTHER REFERENCES:

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THE GHOST DANCE INTERVIEWS (Tapes), Hugh Fox interviewing the following avant-garde writers and members of COSMEP in different parts of the U.S.A. in the late 1970's: A.D. Winans, Dick Higgins, J. Robert Nash, Curt Johnson, Sasha Newborn, Richard Morris, Jackie Eubanks, Virginia Scott.

THE U.S. AVANT-GARDE OF THE 60'S IN RETROSPECT (Tapes). Anita Rebelo interviewing avant-garde writers in 1980: Noel Peattie (Davis, Ca.), Paul Foreman (Austin, Tx.), Doug Blazek (Sacramento, Ca.), Len Fulton (Paradise, Ca.), Charles Potts (Walla Walla, Wa.), Harry Smith (N.Y. C.), Hugh Fox (Florianópolis, S.C., Brazil).

SEEDS OF THE SIXTIES IN THOREAU (Tape) Anita Rebelo interviewing Richard Lebeaux, author of *Young Man Thoreau*, in E. Lansing, Mi., 1980.

A P P E N D I X

CHAPTER ONE

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the space was converted into a Center for Music Experiment, which obliged it to become a music studio. Two rooms at the back held the tapes, while in front of these rooms, but behind the panelists' table, was a fascinating collection of musical instruments old and new, of which the most interesting -- to us -- was a Chinese drum, about a foot wide and four inches thick, which gave a low D, with several overtones, every time it was struck. Curiously enough, the speakers, many of whom claimed an interest in jazz and Eastern art, never touched these instruments during the conference (except Gary Snyder, who showed us how to make a rattling percussion noise with a stick and the studs on the rim of the drum).



The panel that we missed included Marjorie Perloff, from UCLA, Albert Gelpi, Ron Lewinsohn and James Breslin, and was chaired by David Antin, author of Code of flag behavior, a professor of Visual Arts at UCSD. Evidently this was the panel not to miss, as Marjorie Perloff, having done only part of her homework, declared that the San Francisco Renaissance poets were a bunch of self-indulgent beatniks who had never read Milton. Allusions to this dispute crackled through the rainy afternoon air and continued throughout the conference.

The afternoon panel included Robert Duncan, Michael McClure, and David Meltzer, and was introduced by Michael Davidson. Davidson is the curator of the Archive for New Poetry at UCSD. The subject of this panel was "The various arts of the S.F. Renaissance," and it was plain that all of these people had been involved with some art besides poetry; Meltzer had read poetry to jazz (nearly everyone in the S.F. Renaissance was an early student of jazz); he remarked that Kenneth Rexroth's readings to jazz were not of poems written for this purpose, and so these did not harmonize with the jazz, while Meltzer's poems were designed to fit the music. Michael McClure had been involved in assemblage painting, and indeed started out as a painter when he arrived in San Francisco in 1956. Robert Duncan was involved with the theatre, and assisted at the first production of George Hitchcock's Faust (subsequently published as The devil comes to Wittenberg; cf. Sipapu, v. 11, no. 2, p. 29). Duncan proved to be a non-stop maker of epigrams ("You don't believe in God? Then what kind of a God don't you believe in?") and reminiscences of anyone and everyone in the poetry scene, which he could well express, since he was born in 1919.

The evening readings were by Duncan and William Everson (Brother Antoninus). Everson, whose seventieth birthday is this September, is now almost unrecognizable to those who knew him in earlier years, as he now has long white locks and a spreading white beard, which gives him the appearance of a tree-spirit; the man's mortal nature, however, was shown by the almost incessant trembling of one hand and side, which he himself attributed to Parkinson's disease. Nevertheless, although Everson had to stop sometimes when overcome by emotion or searching for the right thought, he showed that his mind was as keen as ever. We were glad that we had the foresight to give him a ride back to his hotel -- otherwise he and his friend would have had to spend the night on the UCSD hilltop!

Excerpts from article on Beat conference (Ca.), *Sipapu*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Connective Issue No. 25, 1982, pp. 2-9 (Appendix pp. 1-8): Comments on older Beats' reunion & part of interview about Archive for New Poetry at UCSD.

The morning panel on 10 February was devoted to Lew Welch, whose papers have just been acquired by the Archive for New Poetry. In celebration of this event, the present conference was originally designed to be a Lew Welch Conference, but expanded as it went on. Dan McLeod, of CSU/San Diego, chaired this panel, which included Gary Snyder, David Meltzer, and Michael McClure. MacLeod gave a short life of Lew Welch, from his birth in Phoenix, Arizona, 16 August 1926, to his disappearance from the vicinity of Gary Snyder's home in Nevada County in 1971. Gary Snyder described Welch's work as a teacher and student, emphasizing his linguistic studies and his "creative hedonism", by which Snyder apparently meant the open and relaxed approach Welch had to writing; what Snyder called his "shamelessness". McClure read passages from Gertrude Stein and Lew Welch and demonstrated their relationship, while also attributing some of Welch's style to his friend and poet Kirby Doyle. Meltzer also described Welch as teacher, stressing his purity and devotion to the art of poetry. For Welch, as for Meltzer, writing consisted of two things: listening to the tribe, and having something to talk about. He read passages from Welch's book, Ring of bone, and explained them.



The afternoon panel was devoted to "California -- place and proposition" and was introduced by Donald Wesling (UCSD). Robert Duncan described his own fourth-generation California background; his family had lived in northern California (Modoc County) for many years, but he was born in Oakland. The Duncans had also become involved with the theosophist movement (one of his poems is called "Ominous in Ojai"). William Everson described how hard it is to talk about California when you're in it, as it would be hard to get a fish to describe water; mentioned his own association with Robinson Jeffers; and finished by describing the West as the home of creativity and the East as the home of recognition.

Gary Snyder compared early to late Chinese nature poetry; the first was by local poets writing about simple things, the later by bureaucrats writing about

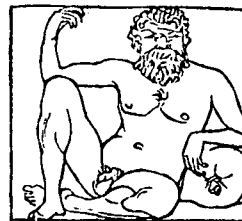
majestic landscapes. He described the California we have lost, the vast waterfowl marshes of the Great Central Valley, by way of example. Snyder's emphasis was on bio-regions as a foundation for poetry.

Todd Gitlin described his origins in the Jewish radical tradition in California, and his early involvement with radical labor activity. Donald Wesling, UCSD, concluded the panel by describing various myths current about California.

The poetry reading that evening was by David Meltzer and Gary Snyder. It was a pleasure, here as elsewhere, to be in the hands of poets who

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knew whereof they spoke, and in addition, knew how to speak. Subjected (as we have been) to rantings and ravings, the soft, eloquent, instructed voice has our total allegiance.



The morning panel on 11 February was on "Postwar politics and community". Jerome Rothenburg (UCSD) gave his recollections of the Fifties; Michael McClure described the anarchist circles in 1954-1960 which formed the earliest audiences of Beat poets. He alluded to the earliest reading of Ginsberg's "Howl" in December 1955 to these young workers (there seems to be some dispute as to the actual date of this incident). He read from his poem, "Listen, Lawrence", a reply to Ferlinghetti's "Populist manifesto", -- announcing, "Politics is dead, biology is here". He also read from his new book of essays, Scratching the Beat surface.

Todd Gitlin, UCSD, described the present as a rumor of the past, and the Sixties as having been subject, too, to the same rumor; i.e., much of what happened culturally to people during the Sixties, was based on what young people had heard about the San Francisco Scene in the late Fifties. He described the continuing tension between individualism and community in American life and letters, pointing out that communities were based on exclusion as well as inclusion. (We recalled Reyes Tijerina, of New Mexico, and mourned).

William Everson described his days in the conscientious objectors' camp at Waldport, Oregon; where he had some contacts with anarchists; there was a noticeable difference between the old atheistic anarchists and the new religious ones. He told an amusing story of his break with Kenneth Rexroth over his first wife; also he described the visit of the British critic Cyril Connolly to San Francisco. (For Connolly's all-too-brief summary of his visit to Beat California, see his last book, Previous convictions). Everson emphasized that the first major publication of the S.F. Renaissance writers, Evergreen review, issue no. 2, pointed to a community that did not have in fact, the validity that it appeared to possess.

Bennett Berger, a sociologist formerly at UCD and now at UCSD, described his Berkeley years as a graduate student during the period under discussion. He denied that his was the "silent generation", stated his position within the Jewish radical tradition, and denounced the kind of history written to suit radical stereotypes devised by the media. He differentiated cultural radicalism from political radicalism, suggesting that they rarely come together; but, when they do, -- the result is something like the San Francisco Renaissance.

The afternoon panel tried to place the S.F. Renaissance in American literary history; the speakers, this time, were all critics. Roy Harvey Pearce (UCSD) described the role of the academy as conservator, but also described his own life when Jack Spicer was one of his students: a fascinating eccentric Spicer turned out to be. Fred Moten described the problems faced by those who come after a generation of great writers; in this case, the writers are still living. Quoting Philip Whalen's description of San Francisco at that time: "O noble and funny beast!" -- he alluded to the first reading of "Howl" (giving it the date of 13 October 1955). And finally he described the writers which the San Francisco poets rejected and revolted against: John Crowe Ransom, the poets around the Kenyon review.



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Ron Loewinsohn described the role of marginality in American literature, the writer's role in giving the solitary reader freedom from the loony bin or the jail. He also described the difference in poetry readings; before Allen Ginsberg, the audience was passive, as at a classical music concert; now the audience is participant, as in jazz. Marjorie Perloff described the movement in terms of its primitivism, its projective verse (projective as a jazz performer projects outwards with his instrument, leaning into it and toward the audience), along with its interest in what she styled the pre-Raphaelite and occult. She made the point that in spite of what Duncan himself had said, there were serious differences between the two approaches of Pound and Duncan to poetry (Duncan had by that time left the conference).

James E. Breslin described three generations of American poets: the earlier modernists (Pound, Eliot), the middle generation, and the San Francisco Renaissance group. He also described very vividly the situation young poets found in the Fifties; with Pound, Eliot, Williams, Frost, and some others it appeared that there was no more work to do; these titans loomed over every writer's shoulder. The middle generation (Roethke, Lowell, Merwin, Snodgrass) offered no clear model to oppose to the modernists, and so poetry became a model of academic experiments. Scrupulosity and perfectionism inhibited the writers of the period. Now the S.F. poets, who revolted against that, are themselves the successful revolutionaries, just as the moderns first were; although William Carlos Williams wrote an introduction to "Howl", he was never really comfortable with Ginsberg and his contemporaries.

Albert Gelpi was fated to sum-up this summing-up; the last in a panel of critics. For him the S.F. Renaissance poem points to a world which is more than the sum of its parts. He made a distinction, originally Pound's, between perceptual and conceptual artists: the S.F. poets were perceptual and Pound, who had started out conceptual came to his perceptual period at last, while William Carlos Williams remained modernist and conceptual. Both kinds of artists are still with us.

Gelpi also repeated Denise Levertov's distinction between organic form vs. aesthetic form, in poetry, as apart from free verse; the S.F. poets had a form, but not just free verse.

The last evening's reading of poetry consisted of: Ron Loewinsohn and Michael McClure; but we were obliged to catch the last flight that night back to Sacramento. This reading, like all the day sessions, took place in the Center for Music Experiment.

THE ARCHIVE FOR NEW POETRY at the University of California, San Diego, represents an attempt to collect all poetry written in the English language since World War II. Located in the Central University Library's Mandeville Department of Special Collections, the archive has developed extensive holdings in rare and limited edition monographs, little magazines, broadsides, phono-tapes, records and ephemera. In addition to these materials, the archive has collected seven single-author files: the Marianne Moore Collection, the Paul Blackburn Archive, the Clayton Eshleman -- Cesar Vallejo file, the Lew Welch Archive, and the Joanne Kyger correspondence file; and most recently, the Charles Reznikoff Archive.

The originator of this project is Roy Harvey Pearce, a professor in the UCSD Literature Dep't., who began working with the Library's Acquisitions Dep't. ten years ago, collecting little magazines, small and fine edition monographs, poetry broadsides, etc. from the postwar era. His scholarship increased as the collection expanded, and he is now an important scholar in the field of 20th-century American poetry, while the Archive is one of the largest such collections in the country.



The Archive's main function is to collect the publications of small presses throughout the English-speaking world. The emphasis seems to be on American presses, as among the ones named are Black Sparrow, Capra, Cranium, Oyez, Shameless Hussy; there are some English ones as well. Serials are well represented: the Archive claims complete sets of Black Mountain Review, Caterpillar, The Fifties, Floating Bear, Open Space, and (we believe) Sipapu. (If they don't have it, they can buy the first eight volumes in microfilm, and so can you, dear reader; drop us a line).

The archival quality of the Archive, however, rests in its unique collections of a single author, including correspondence, published works with corrections and emendations in the poet's hand, newspaper cutouts, posters, drawings, notebooks, and memorabilia. Authors represented include Marianne Moore (published material only, but with corrections); Ken Friedman, artist and poet, chronicling the "Fluxus" movement; Paul Blackburn, major poet, tape-recorder of the works of others -- with his tapes; Eshleman's translations of Cesar Vallejo, manuscripts and books; and the files of Lew Welch. Welch, around whom this conference was originally planned, disappeared from the hill country near Gary Snyder's house, leaving a note which ended "gone Southwest"; he has not been seen since 1971, and is presumed dead, to the extent that poets die at all. Welch figures as a major character in Jack Kerouac's novel, Big Sur, and was a friend of Gary Snyder, Charles Olson, Marianne Moore, Kirby Doyle, and others. The Selected Letters are being brought out by Grey Fox Press; his collection of poems appeared under the title Ring of Bone; his essays and criticism as How I work as a poet.

Other recent archives include those of Joanne Kyger, former wife of Gary Snyder, and Charles Reznikoff, the Jewish lawyer-poet who was associated with the Objectivist movement. Donald Allen, publisher of the Grey Fox Press, published under an earlier imprint (Four Seasons) many of the San Francisco Renaissance figures for the first time; his correspondence, manuscripts, corrected proofs and reviews are here in the Archive.

A major portion of the Archive's activities is the poetry reading series on Wednesday afternoons in the Revelle Formal Lounge. During the past years, the series has featured John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Adrienne Rich, David Antin, and others. Of course the readings are taped and the tapes preserved for re-hearing, and of course the readings are free and anyone can use the tapes in the Library. The Archive also publishes a quarterly Archive newsletter, which includes news of events around town, a calendar of readings, art activities, &c.

Anyone interested in the Archive for New Poetry should contact its Curator, Michael Davidson, Special Collections Dep't., Central University Library, University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093.



The Poet and the Muses

MICHAEL DAVIDSON, HIMSELF, Curator or Director of the Archive for New Poetry, editor of its Newsletter, also of Documents for new poetry (a pamphlet series -- see below), and Associate Professor of Literature at UCSD, is a tall slender man with blond hair and blue eyes, very quick on his feet and soft-spoken. Born in Oakland, CA, in 1944, he got a B.A. in English from San Francisco State University, a Ph.D. from State University of New York, Buffalo, and was a post-doctoral fellow at UCSD until 1975, when he accepted his current appointment. He has seven poetry books out, a flock of papers, and is also co-editor of Credences (SUNY Buffalo). All this we gleaned by doing our homework, chiefly in the reference book Contemporary poets. Now we

talk to the poet himself:

SIPAPU: The question now arises: when did you first perceive your calling as one of the poets of the English language? Or did you start (metaphorically speaking) from some other place and come "here"?

DAVDSON: I have trouble locating exactly where or when it became clear that poetry was to be a life form for me, although I do remember an occasion in high school when I showed a poem to a local creative writing teacher (the poet B. Jo Kinnick, in fact) and she said "yes", it was, in fact, a poem. Having that permission (for what must have been a ghastly piece) was about as good a place as any to begin. But I think that I had always felt that I would be involved in the arts -- early on it had been music (my mother's influence) and poetry came to be the focal point during my student years at S.F. State. There I worked in Creative Writing (though that process and that program dis-educated me more than it gave me any actual information about writing). I gained my firmest sense of the direction in poetry that I had to follow when I worked in the Library at S.F. State as a student assistant, and worked under Robin Blaser, who, as a major San Francisco poet in his own right, showed me my first "experimental" poems -- those of Jack Spicer, Robert Duncan, Charles Olson, and others with whom he had worked. From that time on (say, 1965) I knew that one had to "dig in" with a poetics -- that there wasn't one "poetry" but many poetries, and that among them there was often internecine warfare. I stuck to the Black Mountain-San Francisco nexus pretty much from then on, at least until I completed graduate school. Blaser kept hearing me talk about Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden and the more civilized modern masters and promptly gave me copies of the Donald Allen anthology, Jack Spicer's poems, and the Kelly/Leary anthology; and that was the beginning.

SIPAFU: Roy Harvey Pearce founded this collection out of his interest in modern and post-modern writing (so say your Archive press releases): how did you meet him, how does he figure in your professional career, and what is his relation (official or otherwise) to the collection now?

DAVIDSON: I always admired Pearce's book, The continuity of American poetry, and had used it extensively in my graduate work. I came to San Diego to teach at the State College here (now San Diego State University) but didn't make contact with Pearce until the Archive job opened up here at UCSD. Prior to that, i.e. before 1975, a graduate student, Kathleen Woodward (now at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee) had run the Archive for New Poetry on a part-time teaching assistantship. I was the first regular "curator", and Roy Pearce has always been the "angel" of the collection, providing advice and support.



SIPAFU: What is the future of the Archive: its budget and collecting scope: and how do you see its role in the UC system?

DAVIDSON: I would have to say that we are continuing to grow. We just bought Jerome Rothenburg's papers and these interface nicely with our Blackburn and Reznikoff collections. I would like to do more publishing through the Archive. Documents for new poetry is a monographic series presenting interviews, unpublished essays, transcripts of lectures, correspondence, and other documentary materials from various of the Archive's single-author collections. We have published a long interview with Edward Dorn, a checklist of Paul Blackburn's published work and a collection of documents from the Objectivist group. This year we published The five songs, by Robert Duncan, in a handsome, hand-designed, holograph-reproduced edition, sponsored by the Friends of the Library. I would like to do other such books, but it depends on our ever-fragile funding source with the Friends. We have no trouble buying books since our budget is the same as that for the regular English/American Literature fund. This means that we can literally buy anything published recently, and practically anything retrospectively. Where we are somewhat constrained is in the purchasing of single-author collections, but the Friends have been very supportive so far.

SIPAFU: The Contemporary poets essay on you suggests that you see the world of fact and language as The Mutabilities (to borrow a title of one of your own books), that you see language as constantly changing, etc. To what extent is this a fair picture of "where you're at", today (as apart from then)? And since the changing implies the changeless, otherwise change could not be estimated, is there a big "constant factor" in your life and thought that the aforesaid essay took little heed of?

DAVIDSON: I don't have a copy of Contemporary poets handy, so I can't say whether or not it's accurate. Basically I would say that the "constant factor" in my work (this is your phrase) is the notion that art is a dynamic fact in life -- it is not a reflection, imitation, or projection of some prior, already constituted reality. Therefore I try to work, as Duncan might say, in the largest field of events happening in writing -- to include as much of what's going on as



can be incorporated. I think we have gone far beyond the expressive paradigm by which the poem exists solely at the behest of intimate, personal feelings, and by which language is "used" to transform, work-up, heighten, or otherwise "contain" those feelings. "Language is a prime of the matter", Olson said, meaning that it is productive rather than re-productive of meaning. And meaning is made in language, even though that language is no less produced by a social complex lying beyond it. That social complex is a profoundly linguistic fact itself and probably could not exist without its relation to the linguistic base (any more than it could without its economic base). In this sense, I

like to think of my work as being political in that it interrogates the linguistic contingencies between that social complex and my own experience.

SIPAPU: Finally -- what about your relation to the poets (Everson, Duncan, Snyder, McClure) in this S.F. Renaissance conference? Obviously you're much younger than they are (McClure, the youngest, was born in 1932). How do you see your work as relating to theirs? Are you more inclined to affirm your identity with them, or to state your differences?

DAVIDSON: Well, I did my dissertation (SUNY Buffalo) on Robert Duncan and am now writing a book for Cambridge University Press on those poets, -- so my commitment is pretty strong, at least to one aspect of the scene. I know most of them personally, although I relate to younger poets who live there -- Michael Palmer, David Bromige, Ron Silliman, Ron Loewinsohn, Leslie Scalapino, Bob Perelman and others. Duncan continues to be the grand master, although I don't think I take after him stylistically. "The Beats" were never much of an influence -- I distrust the bardic, vatic position, the poetics of unmediated participation, the two-dimensional populist stance. But I admire their energy, their public iconoclasm, their humor and satire.

Poetry books by Michael Davidson:

Exchanges, Prose and Verses Press, Los Angeles, 1972.

Two views of pears, Sand Dollar Press, Berkeley, 1973.

Mutabilities (including The foul papers), Sand Dollar Press, Berkeley, 1976.

Summer letters, Black Sparrow Press, Santa Barbara, 1977.

Grillwork, M.B.M. Monographs, Montreal, 1980.

Discovering motion, Little Dinosaur Press, Berkeley, 1980.

The prose of fact, The Figures Press, Berkeley, 1981.

IN THE GARDEN OF HERE AND ALWAYS:

A Look at the Literature of Charles Plymell

by Eric Baizer

I.

Suppose that every day you hear something special, like "the wind on the wheat or the grass speaking." You realize that you possess "a garden of here and always." What would you do? While a young man in Kansas in the early fifties, Charles Plymell decided that he had only one option: to become a poet. Not a poet-professor or poet-hobbyist. A full-time poet.

"Between the mafia and the government," wrote Plymell, "there is no place left to live." Like most countries, America does not make life easy for serious poets, especially those who believe it is their professional duty to speak out against anything that abridges freedom. Plymell understands that co-option is the glue that holds our corporate society together; buy off dissent and everything runs smoothly. A political scientist might take hundreds of pages to describe this genius of the American system, but poet Plymell needs only fifteen words: "We've labored for change, and in our time/can only see it in our clothes." Repeatedly he warns that we must not allow ourselves to be soaked up by the nearest cult or mob.

How does one keep from being corrupted? Retain the childlike qualities we all once possessed. In the introduction to *Are You A Kid?* he explains:

It was a coolcrisp day with the sun shining brightly. The children were bundled up for recess. Two boys were busy rolling around picking up the freshly cut grass and razing the piles constructed by the girls. They ate the grass, mocking the cows, and put some atop my head. I began to roll in the grass too. After a long studied look with the sun accentuating the pure space, the little girl asked, "Are You a Kid?" The overwhelming imagination as moments of poetry flash by while children hug and tug for more is quite overwhelming at times.

Plymell's journey has taken him through Kansas City jazz joints, San Francisco pads, rural towns in upstate New York and cities of the Northeast where streets are infested with "snakes/made of electric cords and broken glass/spilling from junk food palaces." In his universe you meet bums, nose inhaler addicts, small town yahoos, bugs, and dead pigeons. Many of his characters are on the emotional or economic edge. In his first novel, *The Last of the Moccasins*, we are introduced to an assortment of hipsters, such as:

Rapid Robert Ronnie Rasmusin Rannamuck,

thief, artist, con man; alias Barbitol Bob, was standing in the dim lights of the Mona Lisa Club. He wore a silk shirt with a picture of a tree with its branches reaching over his shoulder and down his back. He wore a dark blue suit with baggy trousers. He was a bell hop subterranean hood with an Artaudian paranoia signalling from behind his flames a watch chains, a Lamantia-like silvery image of Christ and alchemical junkies of the asphalt corner of Crux and Fixes. (Crucifixes struck into the long swan of eternity.) He was considering coming into a ring of petty criminals consisting of four pill heads, of which I was instigator and boss. We were layin' some paper in the form of hot checks. Bob wanted to go to K.C. with us. He was drawing cartoons of gangsters and gun molls on the table. He was dreaming of building a house on some great lofty hill and living close to nature. He wanted also to go to art school. He sat there in the club with his hat pulled down to his eyes recording every action centimeter of the scene. The pockets of his one button roll were full of phone numbers and dope. His cufflinks glittered in the mirage madness of the colored lights, he was dreaming of that hillside where everything is flyspecked with glory, and the light through the stained glass windows. The sun reflecting . . . illuminating his drawing paper with blotted gold . . . where thousands of faces formed without upkeep or care. . . .

Another colorful but quite different individual is described in a poem in *The Trashing of America*:

Christ Is Alive In A Mongoloid Child Who

turns his back
wiggles his ass
thumbs his nose
sticks out his tongue

Plymell's compassion for the down and out, the underdog, the misfit, those who either cannot or will not try to make it in nine-to-five commercial America inspires some of his most beautiful writing and prevents his poetry from being overrun with the kind of cute, self-conscious babblings which mar the work of so many other poets.

Plymell is a poet of the everyday. It's difficult to think of an American poet writing today who is more

Part of overview of Charles Plymell's works. The writer belongs more to Beat Generation and is old acquaintance of Ginsberg.

(Courtesy Plymell/1981)

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VIOLENCE

AINST RAPE

005 Market, Suite 207, SF 94103
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nd courts and will advise what
woman does report rape to

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POB 240 Berkeley 94701
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Oakland 94607

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OB 14614, SF 94114

If you're poor, don't get sick or into trouble at nite or on the weekends.

o. r. bail project

OWN RECOGNIZANCE BAIL PROJECT

552-2202 or 552-1495
15 Boardman Place nr Bryant (current cases)
850 Bryant, rm 302 (Hall of Justice)

Being released on O.R. means being released from jail without paying bail. Based on information supplied by the O.R. people, the judge can decide to release you on your "own recognizance" because s/he believes you'll show up for your court date.

If you're arrested, someone from O.R. will visit you, usually the next morning. It helps them if you carry your driver's license or have memorized the number. For O.R. to be able to present your case, they must have your exact address and the names of two or three people with separate phone numbers and addresses who can act as references to back up what you give as your address, place of employment, family ties, and means of support.

These references must give O.R. exactly the same info that you give O.R. The references will be called back by O.R., so it is very important that they have valid phone numbers.

O.R. works on a point system, but many people don't qualify, especially those new to the Bay Area, out of work, or who don't know many people. If O.R. doesn't work, apply for bail.

You have the right to be officially charged and to make a plea three court days after your arrest. Court days don't include weekends; if you're busted on a Thursday nite, there's a good chance you won't get to trial until the following Wednesday afternoon.

It's good to have someone on the outside working to help you. The more calls your friends make to the jails, police, and especially to the O.R. Bail Project, the better off you are. "They" are impressed if people are concerned with getting a person out of jail. **TO BE RECOMMENDED FOR RELEASE ON "OWN RECOGNIZANCE," A DEFENDANT NEEDS:**

- 1) to have been a resident of SF for the previous 3 months,
- 2) a current address where s/he can be reached, AND
- 3) a total of 5 points (verified by phone checking of references) from the following categories:

RESIDENCE

- 3 pts - present address 1 year or more
- 2 pts - present residence 6 months, OR present and prior for 1 year
- 1 pt - present residence 3 months, OR present and prior 6 months, OR 5 years or more in the 9 Bay Area counties

FAMILY TIES

- 3 pts - lives with family, and has contact with other family members in the Bay Area
- 2 pts - lives with family, or has contact with family in the Bay Area
- 1 pt - lives with a non-family person

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

SF TENANTS UNION

863-9191; 1539 Haight nr Ashbury
Mon-Fri 1-5, Mon-Thu 7:30-9 pm or lv
msg at 387-7000; counseling, tenant union
information and organizing; advice on
legal rights; publishes an inexpensive
tenants' handbook

SF NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION (SFNLAF)

626-3811; 870 Market nr 5th St
civil cases only, by appt; for low
income (\$3300/yr for single person)
residents of SF; **WELFARE RIGHTS UNIT**, 626-3811; **CENTRAL CITY UNIT**, 433-2535; **DOMESTIC RELATIONS UNIT**, 433-8741; **WOMEN'S LITIGATION UNIT**, 433-2535; for other matters call for appt at your neighborhood office:
- Western Addition, 567-2804, 2505 Bush
- Chinatown/North Beach, 362-5630, 250 Columbus
- Central City, 626-5285, 532 Natoma
- Mission, 648-7580, 2701 Folsom
- Hunters Point/Bayview, 822-8510, 1433 Mendell

SF LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR URBAN AFFAIRS

543-9444; 625 Market, Suite 1208, nr Montgomery
Tue 6-8 pm drop-in legal clinic at 101
Valencia; civil cases only, referrals for cases
they can't handle; for moderate income
people; no fee, but client must pay filing
fees; call for info Mon-Fri 9-5

CRIMINAL LEGAL AID COLLECTIVE

841-2129 (answering machine)
low cost legal assistance for people who
are incarcerated; fees based on ability to
pay

HAIGHT-ASHBURY SWITCHBOARD

387-7000
referrals to civil and criminal lawyers for
free advice

SF WOMEN'S SWITCHBOARD

431-1414
referrals to women lawyers

GAY LEGAL REFERRAL

621-3900
Mon-Fri 9-5; free legal clinic

PEOPLES LAW SCHOOL

285-5069; 558 Capp nr 21st St
low cost pamphlets and free workshops
on legal survival; referrals to lawyers

VICTORIA WOODHULL FOUNDATION

431-4863; POB 26354, SF 94126
legal referrals for people charged with
prostitution; Margo St. James provides
free private eye investigative service for
rape, brutality, and rip-off cases

MISSION COMMUNITY LEGAL DEFENSE

2922 Mission St
criminal legal aid assistance, 826-5333
welfare and immigration assistance,
826-0181; for Mission residents

BAYVIEW-HUNTERS POINT COMMUNITY DEFENDERS

822-6180; 6025 3rd St
free criminal legal aid assistance for area
residents

EMPLOYMENT LAW CENTER

495-6420; 693 Mission
employment problems relating to
discrimination

AY



FORMATION

INTER FOR HUMAN GROWTH
(toll-free from SF) or 841-6224;
Pablo, Berkeley
9 am - 10 pm; Sat 12-4 pm;
to serving the needs of all sexual
professional and peer counsel-
ls in all areas of sexuality; rap
gay men, lesbians, gay youth,
and some gay couples bl

The above is part of a newspaper directed to youth, especially those of discriminated or minority groups who are longing it or have no family ties. All in all, it is a reactionary response to the establishment as it still stands. (Courtesy a young anonymous poet from New Jersey living in S.F.).

KEVIN Michael Dougherty

MUSICIAN; Vocalist, synthesizer, Percussion
BIZARRE tones etc.

AUTHOR; Poet, novelist; ARTICULATE lover of
language

Philosopher;

OR

Humanitarian

OR

Theologian

I am a prophet - A new song
to dance to, and a new
step to learn. I Fly High
And people make me sigh

I am An Ink Bottle Filled with
Potential, Reverie, And Visions

A self-description written by same young New Jersey poet, in the drug culture, who accosted me on my arrival at the S.F. bus terminal. Notice the words "prophet", "high", and "vision" which point directly to Beat philosophy-the Ginsberg influence still in 1980 and from a teenager.

FREE · JIVE ALL AFTERNOON · BRING SOMETHING GREEN TO SHARE · FREE

No. 4-1

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This is a typical pamphlet invitation, passed out on the streets of San Francisco even now (1980), to a "grass smoke-in".

CHAPTER TWO

END OF A CRUSADE - 1980

In 1980, I did personal taped interviews with members of the original Berkeley/San Francisco circle of avant-garde writers. They are part of what has been called the Invisible Generation of the 60's, and are spread out over the U.S. "doing their own things" and, in general, seem to be immersed in a state of apocalyptic apathy.

The following are summaries and quotes from these interviews, containing philosophies, opinions, and general information regarding the writers themselves and/or the avant-garde movement of the past three decades:

1. Interview with Harry Smith in N.Y.C.

Harry Smith, now forty years old, was born in Queens and raised in N.Y. and Rhode Island. He lives in Brooklyn Heights and says he is a typical American mongrel, but mostly Germanic. He claims he got into writing in high school when he began to write poems to please the girls. In the late 60's Smith was active in the Civil Rights and Peace Movements, and organized the Anti-Civilization Movement.

"These movements weakened by the mid-seventies and became a reversal back to the situation in the early 60's... a more selfish or withdrawal attitude because of Nixon's administration. 'The selfish 70's' - people trying to find answers to how they should live their life, looking for ways to adjust themselves to the world as is, make life more pleasurable without changing the world. The anti-nuclear energy movement has become more important and replaced the issues of the 60's."



Harry Smith, editor of *The Smith* magazine, synthesizes his anti-civilization stand in his epic poem *Trinity*:

The drama of *Trinity* unfolds on Hardhat Day, 1970, when workers from the World Trade Center construction site attacked a peace march in downtown Manhattan. Historic Trinity Church, at Wall Street and Broadway, became a besieged Red Cross station for the wounded.

The author explores unorthodox trinities, Humanity, Earth and God; self, community and the depersonalized institutions; the "werewish" acting on our present, and our dreams into the future. The book has three movements, the first, "Order for the Burial," occurs in the churchyard; the second, "The Growth of the World Trade Center," the third "Day of the Earth"—bringing to life both the early history and natural splendor of Manhattan and the wistful pageantry of the Earth Day celebration on 14th Street.

- From Introduction to *Trinity*

Smith & Society:

"There's less unity with the organizational collectives in society than when there was more individualism."

Smith & Literature:

"To accommodate the urban chaos in literary work requires a renewal of form, to accommodate that kind of chaos and destruction which has become typical of people's lives. They act more in accord with the norms of their group than according to ethics of individual selves. Their lives are not continuous. Groups only act in their own interests (big monopolies). Society has become more fractionalized."

"Publishing has become a mainstream of American big business. These people were always bound by prevailing fashions about literature but did not have to be concerned with percentage of profit - it became big business with no literary value. They tell you how to get up in the morning, how to improve your golf game, show you pictures of sailboats, or 'Hollywood as your heart desires',... more utility than art... Another thing is TV, people look for more mere entertainment in novels".

"There are probably more writers today than in the history of the world. Many people living on welfare and food stamps, less menial work. People have got the leisure and discontent and they begin to question about life which people generations ago had no time to do. It's part of the search for the meaning of existence".

Smith & Writing As a Profession:

"You have to be your own critic. Compare to best authors. Starting out, relative obscurity is best. Detachment is better. Writing school probably does more harm than good".

Smith does not think that everything has to be subordinate

to your writing career, and that you get best results just by leading an interesting life.

"The experience of life is more important".

2. Interview with Douglas Blazek/ Sacramento, Ca.

Doug Blazek is from a suburban Chicago family and has wanted to be a writer since a child. He was one of the most active poets at Berkeley in the 60's. But he now exchanges works and identifies more with the Canadian small press movement. He says, "When I was young, I was filled with a tremendous amount of arrogance on shaping the world. Somewhere along the line I just matured or lost that energy." He also states that he cannot account for anything other than his own life... "used to want to control."

Blazek & the 60's Cultural Explosion:

"There was basically a cultural awareness. There was enough disillusion after the Second World War. Nobody trusting any longer government or that we were going to be on the planet much longer. About every aspect, politically and socially, a questioning... a general explosion of the accessibility of information, TV, presses, etc... the need for more personal expression".

"Everybody felt an urgency for communication and that if anything was to be done they were going to have to grab the wheel... a deep emotional necessity".

Blazek & Avant-Garde Literature:

"As far as avant-garde literature is concerned, it is a term I used to revere It's a great catch phrase to hang onto and identify



Douglas Blazek and family during tape interview with author in Sacramento, California, in 1980.

Great poets will no longer appear from an upper-middle class family that is financially comfortable. Poetry is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity! The struggling, fighting man is whose voice we will hear.

- Doug Blazek (in 60's)

(From *The Living Underground: A Critical Overview*, 53.)

with. It gives you an exclusivity - 'I'm farther out'. But it doesn't necessarily make for better literature. I'm sure that there's just as much mediocrity in it as in any academic writing coming out of the university. In fact, I think more has been gotten away with under the heading of avant-garde as any other aspect of literature".

"I was really very enthralled to become a part of avant-garde literature, but I became disillusioned with a lot of the avant-garde, even historically, as I grew up knowing it. There are elements of risk in that literature. Some of it was not finished literature. Perhaps avant-garde literature is not meant to be finished literature. It's more of a stimulus. It certainly does entail experimentation, whereby one can look at something differently. That's the only way to progress".

(In answer to the 60's generation's apathy now):

"Avant-garde grows out of dissatisfaction about or against something. It can be a force without an object to oppose. On the psychological side, there's that need to rebel as one gets older - to find one's values, identify. We grow up rebelling. The writers you're talked to have reached middle age and have probably found something of what they were looking for".

Blazek & Literature As a Profession:

"Find out who you are so you won't have to spend so much of your writing finding out who you are. There's too much self-indulgence in writing. I went through that myself, and it was really rehashing old history... same political race with new contenders".

(Question: What is most important in literature?)

"Content- not just an emotional thumbprint and what you see is just somebody's ego. It gets senseless to have everybody's ego ex-

pressed - a dead end".

(Question: Why do we need literature?)

"It has to do something to better mankind".

Blazek & the Beats:

"I was infatuated with Beat writers when I was in high school because it gave me the possibility to turn my life to literature. It was an acceptable literature. My life in the suburbs of Chicago... I was just another number on the board, without having historical sense of myself, lineage of artists or community in the arts. The Beat writers made me realize I could take my life and make something of it. They livened literature and took after W.C. Williams' using common American speech".

"But as far as Beat writing is concerned, it reached a dead end. If Whitman had been born in the baby boom following the Second World War, he would probably have been a small press poet. Without the influence of European poetry, American poetry would be pretty much at a dead end now, which it isn't".

3. Interview with Charles Potts/ Walla Walla, Wa.

Charles Potts, aka Laffing Water, was one of the draft dodging poets of the Berkeley/S.F. drug culture. An Idahoan of Celtic Mormon descent, he now shows no signs of the psychic split and mental breakdown he suffered in 1968. He slyly comments, "Now that I'm normal... if I had it to do over again, when I got out of college I would join the air force instead of running off to Mexico with a knapsack on my back, starting a small press and going to Berkeley and being revolting... I can barely tolerate the other writers I knew in the



Charles Potts taping interview with author in Walla Walla, Wa. in 1980.

"... no creative decision could ever come out of a committee because it would involve too many compromises, and when you start compromising with an idea then you don't have creativity - creativity is individual."

- Charles Potts (Interview/1980)

60's. Most of them have stopped writing and they're totally into something else." Potts says he has been doing oral readings at a college, and that he writes only about two poems per year since he is too busy working ten hours a day to support his family."

Potts & the Avant-Garde:

"I have a real serious doubt that there really is an avant-garde today, that you can find one. It never became public, never surfaced like Allen Ginsberg's in the 50's repeatedly in *Life* magazine. The question is, that with all that publicity, why didn't he sell more books? There was nobody around to do that for us".

"It is different from the 50's in that it developed in and has been going on all over the U.S. in small towns, rather than in the large urbanized areas as happened with the avant-garde which originated in N.Y.C., S.F., and other places in the 50's".

"I think we were always critical. Once I could appreciate it. Now I can't. I'm really too self-centered".

"Nothing has been avant-garde in N.Y. since e.e. Cummings and Frank O'Hara... it's more designated to get people away from the material, whereas I'm more interested in focusing it. The people in N.Y. have these little literary colonies... there are 300 or 400 poets who get these grants or subsidies. The real avant-garde is, as Fox would say, 'invisible'".

"Drugs were important in the 60's. They aren't anymore. Once you alter your conscious, discovered that...".

"The avant-garde in the U.S. is going to be avant-garde for a long time. There's no way for it to become public information. It's not published".

"...in Salt Lake City, several times I avoided being well-known. My peace of mind is worth more to me than fame... if I wanted

to do like a frontal assault on the system, (and I came close to it at times)... but something kept me from doing it because you become a kind of Ralph Nader after all that's wrong. Edward Smith once said that about Charles Olson: "All that concern ever misrule as if rule were order."

Potts & Literature As a Profession:

"Literature, as I understand it, is directed at making people feel holy by getting them in touch with their own feelings".

"You have to start where you are. Make independent judgments. If you don't know, read and find out".

"I don't think there is any way to survive economically as a writer. They don't want to let anyone else in. Charles Bukowski - his books are best sellers, maybe over four or five editions... He'll never get into that league where Norman Mailer gets a million-dollar advance to write another bad book on Marilyn Monroe. That culture's not going to let him in. It looks like a conspiracy but I think it just happens".

"I'm bitter as an artist. At the same time, why should the system support its artists? I resent the preposterous element of it - all these dandies who collect or own Van Gogh or Gauguin's paintings. It gives them a chance to get close to that art in a way... anybody would like to have a Van Gogh hanging in their livingroom, but how many people would be able to put up with Van Gogh? The art's neat but the artist's a mess".

Potts & Society:

"In order to achieve independence, you have to be able to walk through a big supermarket and realize how little you need of it. That's where you get your freedom... if you can avoid dealing with the

material at all".

"The commercial impulse is driving people apart. Each person has to have his own car, own washer, because it leads to more sales. Sharing puts pressure on the economic system".

"People are sexual occasions. Healthy people are supposed to be organized on the pleasure principle. The ordinary American, in order to get through an ordinary day, has to renounce his best instincts for pleasure and it's not healthy - the contradictions are obvious".

"In the mid-seventies, I became more interested in psychology and my own feelings and the body. That's going to be big news in the future, I believe".

4. Interview with Hugh Fox/ Florianópolis, S.C., Brazil.

Hugh Fox complains that he was raised under strict religious and moral codes in which sex was very taboo. He is now a middleaged disillusioned outsider whose wxperimentalism has led to psychic multiplicity. As a person and writer, he wavers between the roles of an established university professor and an anti-establishment avant-garder, and his male and female selves. Over the years, his search for identity has thrown him into a process of multi-dimensional expansion. He writes as Hugh Fox and as the female Connie Fox. The truth is that his writing styles have varied throughout his life and you never really know which is the real Fox.

Fox & the Beats Vs the Invisible Generation:

"I think the Beats are more media freaks... they're curvilinear to global, round, oral, tribal - oral communication centered. The Invisibles are more linear, print centered. In other words, Potts is more worried about how to spell things on the page, he's not just wor-



Hugh Fox, writer-editor visiting professor from the University of Michigan, in an interview with the author while teaching at the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Brazil / 1981. Fox is poet, novelist and critic. His books *The Living Underground: An Anthology* and *The Living Underground: A Critical Overview* are perhaps the best source for the study of "outsider" poets and poetry of the 60's who were not part of the avant-garde of the 50's. (Ref. Bibliography).



ried about how it sounds... like all these little plays by Morris, they're word plays but you have to see them, it's not just to hear them. I listened to Ferlinghetti reading to jazz accompaniment. I remember Ginsberg reading. The Beats really had a good sense of music. I think that Smith is typewriter oriented. I think most of them (Invisible Generation) are - even Potts".

(Question: Are you trying to say that the 60's avant-garde is squarer than the Beats?)

"Yeah, I think so... I think the succeeding generation has become more print-oriented".

Fox & Avant-Garde Now:

"I think that the sad thing about the whole situation is that everybody's stopping. I see that Potts has become a carpenter, Morris, in a sense, is stopping, Fulton is in the directory business. In a sense I have stopped - Hugh Fox died and Connie Fox was born. Plymell is still writing, but most have got into it to make money. In terms of younger poets getting in - it's a psychological problem of poets getting older. There's hardly any older poets, that's one problem. I think that if you're in a country long enough and ignored long enough you eventually say 'why?'. It seems crazy to leave 95 per cent of your work unpublished... it's the reward thing and the reward is money".

"There's been a great rupture with Western civilization's past. There's no sense of continuity. The avant-garde remains now an institutionalized minority".

5. Interview with Paul Foreman/ Austin, Tex.

Paul Foreman, now leading a quiet middle-class life with his



Paulo Foreman, author of *Sugarland* (novel about the Texas prison system) and editor of the literary magazine *Hyperion*, has gone back to his origins, Texas, and even named his bookshop for the Brazos River where he was raised.

family and little bookstore in Austin, has always been a very socially conscious writer. He says that the U.S. is "heading for society where individualism is crushed", and that "individualism is the mark of the best writers," such as Ezra Pound who Paul considers the American poet 'par excellence'.

Foreman & the Beats:

"Among the Beat poets, Ginsberg makes the first big impression with his two long poems *Howl* and *Kaddish*. But very quickly the political and social aspect behind Ginsberg's poetry degenerates, and it degenerates, I think, into a set of ideas that have very little focus and strength... His poetry becomes weaker and weaker as years go by and it becomes just a dull repetition of his own early outrage and strength. And, I think the reason for this probably is the amount that Ginsberg immersed himself in drugs... And I think the drug culture, on the whole, it's long-range results, has been to stupify the American poets and to render them less capable of perceiving and speaking out or speaking for the larger question of reality and culture".

"The one poet out of the Beat movement that has survived and gone stronger over the years is Gary Snyder. He's the epitomy of the West Coast poet, the one who is very close to nature, very influenced by the Chinese poetry,... by Pound".

Foreman & Writing:

Paul Foreman has Marxist leanings in his view of literature. He also says that "there is something in that sensibility of a writer that is opposed to war."

6. Interview with Len Fulton/ Paradise, Ca.

Len Fulton has become a methodical businessman with his small press directories and *Small Press Review*. To him, avant-garde is "experimentalism" and writing "the good use of words". Presently, he is more involved with his directories which are in line with the elder magazine *Trace* that has circulated since the 50's recording the small press movement. Fulton is the typical all-American man from the mountains with no apparent psychological hangups. He is very language conscious and has preferred Western settings for his novels. He received his Ph.D. at Berkeley and was involved in the Free Speech Movement in 1963. His First International Directory came out in 1965 (40 pages, 250 listings - latest has 512 pages, 3,000 listings). He says he intends to establish a publishing company and write when he is in his mid-fifties.

Fulton & the Beats:

"Ginsberg seems to move along with the times but he can no way, in my mind, be called a Beat poet. He's very good propaganda to poetry".

Fulton feels that "the Beats have been important only insofar as they mark a certain period in literary history."

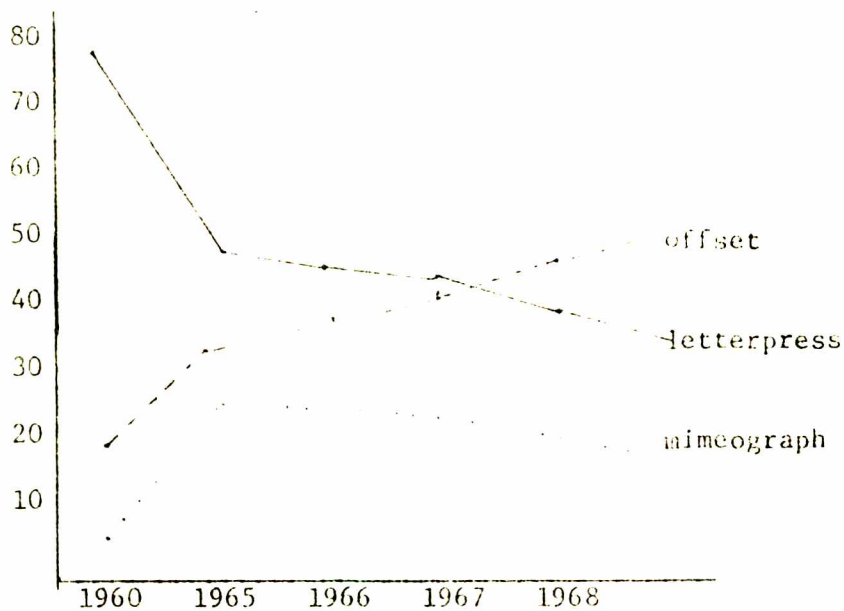
Fulton & the 60's Explosion:

"The early 60's were a sudden discovery of the self. There were underground press newspapers all over. The Free Speech Movement was on and small presses... Then there was the 'mimeo revolution' in the mid-sixties. It was a time of spiritual rebellion. In the late 60's certain movements began to take form - the women's movements, Blacks, Chicanos. In the late 60's and early 70's, the small presses began to

TABLE I
Magazines by Year and Printing Process; 1960, 1965-69

Year	Percent of Total			Number of Magazines in Sample
	Letterpress	Offset	Mimeo	
1960	78	17	5	311
1965	46	31	23	230
1966	44	34	22	426
1967	42	38	20	593
1968	35	45	20	465
1969	31	54	15	487

FIGURE A
Changes in Printing Process in the Small Presses, 1960-68
Percent



SOURCES:

Directory of Little Magazine and Small Presses (Dustbooks, 1964-69)
The International Guide (Trace, 1959-60).

- From Len Fulton's *Little Magazines in the Sixties*.

The above table shows the technical evolution of small press printing in the decade of the 60's.

take on a more serious form - more attention paid to printing as a craft".

Fulton & the Avant-Garde:

"I don't see any giants, I see some good writers, and I see people who have survived like Bukowski (50's to 80's), people like Marge Pearson (60's to 70's). To me, it was a time when there were no real giants. Blazek, (1964-66), and Levy, who killed himself in 1968... I don't see any of these people as giants, certainly not Bukowski. There's really no Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot. Those were what you might call giants of their time. It's not that we don't have people who can write as well as they could. We have people who can write better, in my estimation. But the time is different and we simply do not have the hero worship that we once had... in the context with having so many poets, and so many good poets. We've had an explosion of poets. We don't have just one person, a Dylan Thomas... it seems to me it's too early".

Literature in the Eighties

by Ellen Ferber

SMALL PRESS REVIEW is 14 years old in this first year of the eighties, and in its chronicle of recorded time are the histories of issues and controversies long resolved and soon forgotten. Some issues remain with us, however, and where there is a gap, new ones emerge with each day of the emerging future. The function of this special issue is, first of all, to identify these issues, old and new, and then to provide a range of perspectives from which to consider and evaluate them. We found, perhaps because we deliberately solicited comments from writers and readers as well as editors and publishers, some surprises, many of them coming from editors and publishers who, fortunately, are also writers and readers and who wrote to us from these perspectives. One of the surprises was a somewhat diminished concern with "distribution" as the catch word for success and an emphasis, small but significant, on "audience" instead. More people talked about readers, and fewer proposed distribution schemes of one kind or another. Another surprise was the diminished concern about grants; we did receive comments about grants, complaints and strategies, but far fewer than in previous years, which may suggest that because there are more of them, people begin to see the flaw of using them as a solution to any but the most immediate and short term problems of small press publishing. We discovered that our suggestion that inflation might be a concern proved true, but interestingly, as many publishers seemed to think the small presses would either hold their own or even make gains despite or even because of it, as thought it would be harmful. And, it was a pleasure to learn from some of the specific plans of individual presses and magazines that the issues of concern, aesthetic, economic, ecological, social, political are at the center of many publishers' proposals for the coming decade and that the real literature as well as the real "issues" will still be in this most vital area of the culture. We are sorry that we don't have space in this issue to print the individual plans some of the presses sent, but we will keep a running record and try to make a kind of forecast for a future issue.

Since we made a special call to readers and writers for this issue, it seems appropriate to start with their perspective. Cynthia Rymer-Jmes of Appleton,

WI sends a kind of five point program outlining the changes that would make her reading life more satisfying, and it is a plan with which most of us would agree.

1. Greater access to small press publications. I live in Appleton, WI, and my only contact with most small presses is through the mail. I would like to browse, for a change, instead of ordering books from a one or two paragraph summary. (I realize, though, that this is probably a pipe dream.)
2. Lower prices. I buy nearly all my commercial press books from the remainder outlets (Marboro, Barnes & Noble, etc.) and used book stores, which definitely limits my choices. (Again, I realize that this change is virtually impossible.)
3. Criticism that makes sense. I always thought that fiction and poetry were written to move, enlighten, and entertain. When I read a novel or short story or poem, I read for pleasure, not out of a sense of duty. Most in-depth criticism, however, ignores this "pleasure principle" and instead analyzes a work of literature as if it were a laboratory specimen. Furthermore, I'd like to know the critic's standards **before** I read the criticism, instead of having to decipher them while reading.
4. Critical magazines that are readable and yes, even lively. I am so sick of reading literatureese! It seems that the only authors published in these magazines have PhD's in unintelligibility and boredom. I gave up reading the *New York Review of Books* six months ago, after throwing out the last 4 issues unread.
5. More dialogue. This is probably the most unrealistic suggestion of all. I wish there were a network of readers who could discuss the literature they're reading and, in the process, create, perhaps, a set of reading critical standards. So much of what is written about literature is written about the **writing** process instead of the **reading** process. Yet isn't the purpose of writing to be read?

I have no suggestions about what is being written; I assume that authors are writing what they feel they have—or want—to write. I do hope, though, that the small presses will continue their tradition of publishing eclectic and provocative

work. Those bundles I receive in the mail have become my lifeline to modern literature.

There was a fairly insistent disavowal among readers of the value of criticism, either because it no longer seemed relevant to the literature, or because it ignored the reader and spoke only to a limited and self-interested audience. J. Lawrence Lembo of Live Oak Press reports: "For the most part, I shy away from Book Reviews, Bestseller Lists, and other literary dictates—while choosing to take the advice of Henry Miller: 'Just follow your nose.'" Many readers, writers, and editor/publishers made reference to Miller, an appropriate tribute to him in this year of his death. In addition to Miller, Lembo cites another hero of independent publishing. "...let me say that the two greatest influences in my reading life have been Walt Whitman and Henry Miller. To me, they are the true American Bards of poetry and prose—oozing with vitality, human understanding, busting at the seams with real life, exuding optimism. And if there is anything we need these days it's optimism." Two themes introduced here recur in the responses: Walt Whitman, Henry Miller, and optimism. Rochelle Holt Dubois refers to her own ability to believe in herself, like the ability of "literary giants of the past, i.e., Walt Whitman and Gertrude Stein," and Jack Saunders reminds us that Henry Miller didn't need big publishers, New York grants, or the like. Angela Peckenpaugh, who writes as publisher and writer as well, has this to say as a reader: "I am still shocked at the poor quality of a good deal of work I see winning prizes and getting published in big magazines like *American Poetry Review*. Some of it must get there via the old boy network because it is terribly long, rambling, prosaic and subjective. ...I hate to see talent serving to speak messages of despair and defeat." And the final note: David Gershator, in the true spirit of the small press reader calls for "...experimental poetry and prose that make me wake up to what I know or thought I knew. Viva metamorphosis."

Those who wrote to us from the writer's point of view were, not surprisingly, concerned with the nature: form, style, content, of the literature of the eighties. Some predictions, prayers and

October, 1980//Small Press Review/3

Comments about avant-garde writing & the small presses in the future years of the 80's, "Special Issue/Literature in the Eighties", *The Small Press Review*, pp. 3,4,6,9,10.

prophesies came from publishers as well, but it was primarily the writers themselves who attempted to describe not only the direction their own work was taking, but the trends of literature in general in the coming years.

Carol Berge reports of her own work:

I am more than ever absorbed with the possibilities in fiction—though I continue to work in poetry, I find the challenge lies in fiction, majorly innovative forms such as the one-page novel, the collaged prose-poem, the new short fictions and in general the area between poetry & prose. For me, the act of creating a successful (i.e., interesting and satisfying) piece of short fiction is more challenging and more demanding by far. (I would like to see a cessation of encouragement for poets who have been writing the same poem for the past 20 years, or even 10, by withholding grants until progress is evident.)

She predicts in general "a move...toward more capable literary production," and she hopes for "less bathos, pathos and self-glorifying poetasting and more erudite social satire." Norman Moser of *ILLUMINATIONS* predicts "that both poetry and fiction will get closer to situation, character, narrative in the 80's, and get away from all this silly stupid academic surrealism, just the latest version of the Imagist movement anyway. And if it doesn't happen in as widespread a way as I'd like, I'd surely like it to, and will, along with some few friends...be out there giving it all a push and shove or two in our direction, clearly a saner, more solid, earthy genuine one in my view." Moser also cites Whitman in his reference to the significance of small press work.

One fairly extensive prediction about the eighties comes from an empirical source. John McBride wrote the following as part of his editorial for a special poetry issue of *INVISIBLE CITY*, called "1980."

This reportage of activities, performances, visuals and jokes questions the 'making of poetry'. If, as one poet has suggested, avant-garde writing 20 years ago fostered certain experimental actions, perhaps now a poetry **specifically verse** can be written amidst such performances. Or, as an American has suggested, **intermedia** can imply works of **media**. For all its graphics, *INVISIBLE CITY* does center on questions of writing—what Niccolai (citing one of *I Novissimi*) termed "the internal tension of language". No wonder that Adriano's "Fly Hunter" forms the center of Euro-

pean reportage and, by extension, the virtual focus of the issue.

In a statement drafted, but never released, for *ONE WORLD POETRY* (Amsterdam, October 1979), we questioned the role of such counter-cultists as Bukowski, P. Smith and Dylan (thankfully, not another rock band) who, in our opinion, continue to present "icons of poetry (ie the poem as a sophisticated hybrid of publicity and gospel)...instead one must notice how a poet manipulates the collision between the making of verse and the language he is trying to inform. If we want the poem to be something more than a cultural press release, let's treat language as a fundamental perception, not as an instrument of cultural exploitation..." Hence: admit the artifice of the poem; then write.

The European reportage (pp. 12-21) places the scan of "1980"; if its works are lodged in the archive, nonetheless, they invite the reader to consider the notation and documentation of poetry. If linear poetry or verse (for want of better terms) appears tangled endlessly in its own means, then perhaps these "other-informations" can call it into question and may provoke new rigor in verse.

Adrian C. Van Dyk, responding to our suggestion that social, environmental and economic concerns might influence the state of writing, asserts that in times of crisis the poet becomes more respected than ever;

In ages past, particularly during classical and the Medieval periods, the poet and his poetry were highly regarded and reflected a common means of portrayal. The poetic literature of those times was accepted and esteemed.

This should see a revival in the 80's. As the world comes closer than ever to possible catastrophic events, the idealism of man will bring about an even greater appreciation for the poetic form. The hope we would hold would be for the poet to bring about some means of understanding among his fellow men.

Whether or not contemporaries agree as to style, content, or the use of literary devices in the composition of poetry is not really going to be an issue. Rather, it will be the acceptance and enjoyment for the craft itself that will bring about its new popularity.

Readers of 'good' literature will see this quality more and more in the poetic form. Editors and publishers then would hopefully be more open to taking on the works of poets, and realizing the true value

of poetic expression.

Daniel Brady of *BIRTHSTONE* magazine has an extremely pessimistic view of the

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write more impersonal, surrealist poetry because that seems to be what the "name" magazines are taking.

In the Milwaukee area, there are numerous public readings and so alot of poetry that is narrative or sound oriented gets produced here too. Fortunately, such public presentations bring out humorous poetry as well.

Jack Saunders, who signs himself Poet Pretender of the State of Florida, and predicts that every state will soon have a Poet Pretender of its own, lays claim to the decade.

The 80's are going to be my decade, the decade of the stack writer, when journalism, fiction, prophecy, merge, go round and round, more publishers than ever, more readers than ever, more possibilities than ever, more craven assholes than ever, more organ-grinder's monkeys, more grant recipients, more targets. New York, off to one side.

New York is a joke. A PhD in anthropology is a joke. There's too much to be taught, too much to learn. Too much to stir up.

People don't listen to one kind of music. They switch from station to station. They mix them up.

And, again the salute to Henry Miller:

Henry Miller didn't need New York. He didn't need a creative writing grant. All he needed was a typewriter and a portable radio, a jake leg press to get him started, an open letter to all and sundry.

He took it from there. Him and his readers. Him and his publishers.

Richard Kostelanetz, a leading experimentalist, and a writer known for his exposure of the politics of literature, chose this time to talk about his plans as an experimentalist.

My creative work is moving in two directions: The first involves the incorporation into the purposes of poetry and fiction of material other than printed horizontal lines of type (like this essay). Thus, I have done words that were visually enhanced, fictions composed exclusively of words spatially arranged or of line-drawings that metamorphosed in sequence, and poems and stories composed exclusively of numbers. The second direction, based upon my recognition of the limitations of conventional publishing, involves the exploration of alternative media of literary communication. Thus, I have made audiotapes, videotapes, large prints, books that are art objects, films, holograms and, most recently, proposals for art in public places. I expect to spend the coming decade pursuing both these fertile trails.

Penny Harter, poet and fiction writer (associated, too, with From Here Press) turns our questions into one of her own: Why write in the eighties, and answers it.

I begin to feel like I am reading a write-over of *Wisconsin Death Trip*.. but it's in New Jersey in 1980. I must deal with this sniper, the neighbor who murders his wife, the old lady at the shore who freezes because the utilities cut off her power when her bill was not paid, the recall of chicken pies because of chemical contamination. I will write

a series of poems called (tentatively) *Newsprint*. I think of Lester's found poetry. But when I pick up the pencil to do it I can not. It is too awful. I can not stomach it. These poems will be freaks. And I have kept turning away recently. I think I will cancel the paper. But I do not cancel it. I am compelled to look, to read, as we are compelled to look at roadside carnage.

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LIBRARY JOURNAL

buy up the big publishing houses. See the rush of the oil companies to buy satellites. See the Post Office in its death throes. Eventually, this will have serious effects on independent publishers as well. (In increased paper prices and postage costs, it already does.)

If, as the computer freaks envision, homes and neighborhoods have computers the way they now have TVs and electronic games, what's to prevent us from sending poetry directly through the networks connecting these computers? As a poet, I would enter my poems in a common Poetry File. As a reader, I would list my name in the People Interested In Poetry Directory. As a poet, I would send my poems to the people listed in that Directory. As a reader, I would review the poems sent to me, &/or the other poems in the common file, and maybe print out the ones I liked so I could re-read them in bed or at the beach. Hmm. Where does this leave the Publisher?

Well, all this won't happen in the 80s. But this revolution is in process, and I think it behooves writers/readers/editors/publishers of poetry and fiction to take note so we won't be left behind scrambling after scraps and wondering where everybody went.

The economic concerns we raised in our set of questions—inflation/recession/depression—seemed to strike a nerve in a number of publishers. In the majority of cases the depressed economy seemed also to depress the publishers. Gary Busha, who with Chris Halla runs Wolfson Publications writes to say that Wolfson has published its last chapbook and he cites the economics of the 80's as the cause.

Inflation continues to hurt the Small Press, particularly constantly rising offset costs. Personally, one of the main reasons for the last howl of Wolfson is ever-rising offset costs coupled with the more postage for less service concept of the U.S. Post Office. Unlike commercial presses that rely heavily on subscriptions and advertisements, the Small Press editor/publisher bears the brunt of inflationary hikes alone. Many can no longer afford the luxury of publishing. In the long run this will hurt the Small Press the most. The old American ideal of a fair price for a service no longer applies. Everybody is ripping everybody else off. I'd like to see a return to the barter system where goods and services can be exchanged. It's something I've been trying to find

with a printer for a long time.

Arthur Knight of THE UNSPEAKABLE VISIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL sees "rising costs and tight money" as the heralds of a totalitarian atmosphere in the 80's. He notes this in college students and predicts dire consequences for the small press publishers.

Publishers, I'm afraid, will become even more cautious than they are now—dissenting voices, such as Ginsberg's, will be more needed than they have been since the fifties—and grant money will be sought even more competitively than it currently is. All of this will have a demoralizing effect on literature; the provocative, even within the small press, will be replaced by the mundane. There will be a tacit kind of censorship. One editor I know who is getting out of the business after ten years told me that the head of a state arts agency complained about a double issue that she'd produced because it didn't quite have double the number of pages that a regular issue would; when she took his complaint seriously, she knew that it was time to fold-up. I think, unfortunately, she is ahead of her time.

Mad Anthony Summers of IMAGE MAGAZINE fears for the survival of both writers and publishers.

I think the eighties are going to be very problematic for both beginning writers and small presses. Inflation will finally catch up to small presses. Although printing costs and related services are less expensive overall than they were in the fifties and sixties, because of new technology, the trend of inflation in the late seventies clearly shows that there will be no relief in the Eighties, at least immediately. Inflation will make it harder for new presses to start and maintain their publications; the cost of spiraling postage expenses are enough to prohibit this already. More and more presses are ceasing publication, and I think that statistics may show that the average life expectancy of a small press has shortened.

Some publishers do not see the situation as dire. Some, in fact, conclude that the result of the economic situation will be to foster the growth and development of small presses. Cliff Martin of Nighthawk Press:

Changes? Certainly there have been changes, but the enemies recession

and inflation are not new to small presses. This evil pair have been nibbling away at the general ledgers of well-intended small publishers for decades.

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Despite these hazards, (and as your own roster of names must tell you), independent publishing is alive & well. There is a definite trend toward more good and sincere publishing—from poetry to music, from underground homes to secrets of the ancients, somehow we're all surviving.

As manuscript submissions to the "big daddies" become statistics of staggering proportions, so the undercurrent of small presses grow in a manner unequalled since the fertility of the sixties.

Madge Rheinhardt an intrepid writer and publisher of Back Row Press

I believe that inflation and recession are already bringing politically conservative trends into the social and institutional structures of the '80s which may close down so-called "liberal" lines of communication within the institutions which touch our lives. In such an event, the small independent presses may play a vital role in restoring a sense of balance by giving alternate views from outside the more monetarily-controlled presses or politically-controlled presses of our various institutions.

And in the same vein Rick Stanek, publisher of TOTAL ABANDON:

The independent publisher may appear to be running into hard places with the economic problems of inflation and recession, but an over-riding factor inherent in the current movement of small presses is their proximity to reality and the true voice of humanity unadulterated by the homogenization of mass media. Up to this point the alternative lower class artist has maintained confidence in the ability to seek creative satisfaction. Recognition of the uncompromising will which fuels vital artistic expression cannot now be easily sacrificed to a system which fears racial evolution.

C.L. Morrison of FORMAT:

I find that when materials and monies are scarce, as in the current economy, much can yet be done at minimum cost, if one will aggressively, creatively research alternative means of supply and production. When large amounts of money are available, publishers clearly select the least efficient means of operating; I am thinking of budgets I have seen for individual issues which far surpass the budget for a whole year of 12 FORMATS. No doubt, in considering one's place in the eco-socio-environment, a slick, commercial esthetic must logically be replaced by the more functional, "little" look, a good substitution of content for packaging, which is the forte of "small-press."

Marvin Smalheiser of T'AI CHI:

I feel that there will be considerable growth for the independent publisher in the 1980's, not only growth in those existing but in the

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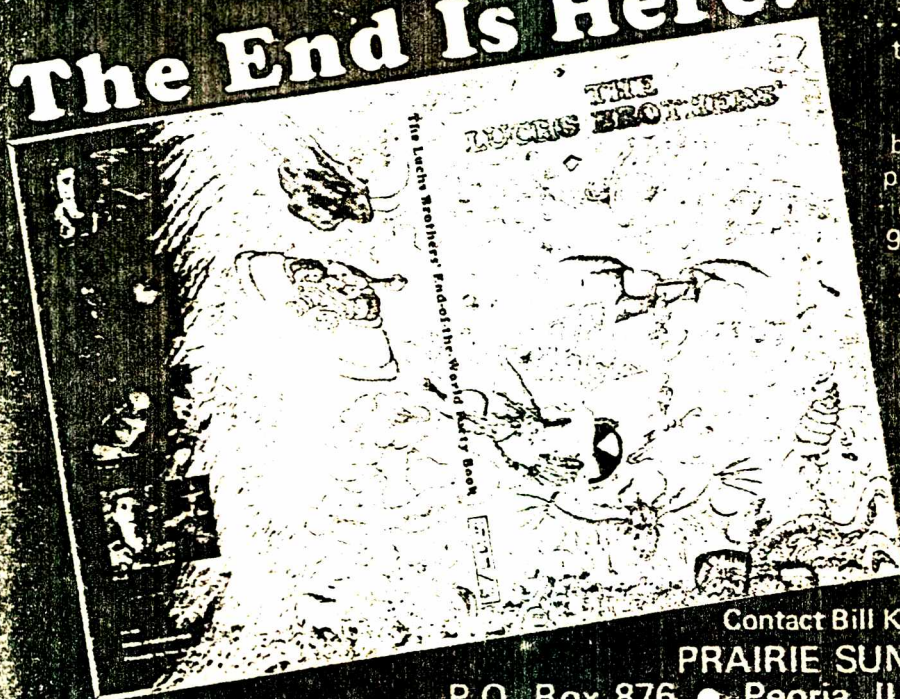
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August 16, 1981

Dear Anita,

Its always a pleasure to hear from you. I can't quite follow the significance of your request for hot spots in San Fransisco. I will mention maybe 10 spots relevant to what I was doing in San Fransisco in the 60's and note them on the map. The map is rudimentary.

1. 21st and Noe, in the Mission District. Home of the Tenth Muse bookstore, the most sensitive advance guard store in the country in those days. I worked there, was introduced to the work of Charles Foster there, etc. For all of these elements, see Valga Krusa.
2. 800 Cole st. in the famous Haight Ashbury district, not shown on this map.
3. Oak and Guerro, where people (hitchhiking) caught the ride for the Berkeley and East Bay spots. Freeway On ramp.
4. Seal Rocks, inspiration for passages of poem "Uproar".
5. Glide Church, Methodist scene of many readings, I can't remember where it was, perhaps Mason and Ellis?
6. There's always the North Beach area, we didn't hang out there, mostly beatnik relics. We did go there to try to sell books.

Infinitely more of our scenes were in Berkeley. And I believe they're covered amply in VK. If they are not, then no amount of site seeing will help. Too bad I didn't write till now, make that wait till now, to write Valga Krusa. I think of how much funnier and more ruthless I would have been with everybody.

as for my biography, I was born in Idaho Falls, Idaho on August the 28th at 8 pm, the son of a manic depressive school teacher and famers wife, who was under sufficient stress to have raised a schizophrenic. After 25 years of suffering the illness unbeknownst, I cracked up over the solstice in 1968 in California. Subsequently I have healed myself, I study psychology, I'm in the real estate business, I am becoming a song writer. I lived to be over 90 and my last address was a condominium on the Hawaii Island of Maui. There are published and unpublished explanations of considerable detail. My interests remain in fresh food, music and sex in no particular order.

I hope your disertation goes well. I met for the first time 2 weeks ago the American poet, Len Chandler, also a musician. He is just another great unknown poet, of which there may be as many as 20 in the United States at this time. out of some 10,000 who would make the claim. So you can see what a large winnowing process is still to be gone thru. Not my work, thanks.

sincerely Yours,



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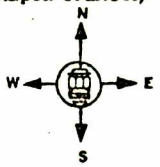
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 the individual directly or by
 making of suffocating iniquitous laws.
 against all these
 maledictions &
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Ezra Pound
 7 May 1930

* * * *

8 May
 Paris

Dear Judge Beals

I'd rather you framed it &
 hung it up in
 court. but
 perhaps it is a
 bit too lyric.

Cordially
 E Pound

*Courtesy of Robert D. Monroe, Special Collections
 Head, Library, University of Washington, Seattle*

(Editor's note: Judge Beals was a Supreme Court Justice in the state of Washington and had sent Pound, as well as other notables, a blank sheet of fancy cloth paper clipped out of an old French legal text asking Ez for his autograph. Pound wrote the fine lyric poem on the foolscap and the other letter to accompany it.)

- From *Hyperion*, (special issue dedicated to Ezra Pound), 1973, part of general preface. Note similarities between profane anti-establishment tone of this poem and poems by Steve Richmond, Doug Blazek, and Paul Foreman in 60's.



Courtesy of The Free

THE EXPATRIATE POET

Ezra Pound, who describes himself in "Who's Who" as "poet and back writer," receives the *Intel* award for 1927 for "Service to Letters."

C H A P T E R T H R E E

PARTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH FOUNDING & EARLY MEMBERS OF COSMEP REGARDING
SMALL PRESS MOVEMENT & COSMEP

1. Harry Smith:

"The small press movement has become so large that the big publishers begin to complain about it because it's cutting into their sales."

Smith himself is moving out into big publishing format yet preserving strict literary content (fiction, drama, essays, poetry).

Smith & COSMEP:

"Originally we were just trying to act for this small press movement in general, without coping with the particular needs of particular groups."

Smith says that in the first COSMEP meeting there were nine people, and one of their first efforts was to contact big publishers. The first chairman was Len Fulton, and in 1974 there were about 200 members. In the early 70's, there were a lot of "contentions" (about 1974 with about 600 members) - "there were collectives of gays, lesbians, publications about ecology... they were representing things which were beyond literature".

"The women's movement directly affected how the organization was run in the future. In Lennox, in about 1977, there were just little groups in the conference - bestiality workshops, freedom fighters, gay caucuses and workshops, political meetings... We were just losing the common cause. The organization, at that time, had over a thousand members. It had become so various it was hard to represent the membership - no longer homogeneous".

"Now, it seems ironic, in a way, that the small press movement itself has become institutionalized, and the availability of funding for it through the public dollars".

"There's a clutter of mediocrity subsidized... Paul Foreman and myself are trying to move on from this overpopulated ghetto".

2. Hugh Fox:

Chaos in COSMEP exploded in the mid-seventies' conferences. Fox, who was in the middle of it, comments the following:

"Bennett walks out on COSMEP without notice. No chair one. Judy Hogan was next in line (a real southerner) - from then on the feminists took over. It got to the point that I was the only man on the board, (totally female dominated). There were all these way-out crazies like Virginia Scott, who was always saying 'Let me speak', and Anne Pride".

"So COSMEP, up to the last conference that I attended, (it had a radical group from the American Library Association), it had got to the point that in 1977 Judy Hogan said there wasn't going to be anymore meeting, and that's when I organized the whole thing, and that was my tenth year in COSMEP. It wasn't bad. I went around like Connie Fox and that changed things a bit. There were workshops and no time to make trouble".

But conflicts continued from 1977 on, "everything was this way - every time you opened your mouth you were wrong". It had started in Lennox, Mass., with a picture that had been published by the small press. It was a broom shoved up a woman's vagina and coming out of the top of her head. It was a satire of macho chaining women to household tasks, but the women took it to be an insult to womanhood. So they were going to censor books going into COSMEP's bookvan. We were going to



Noel Peattie, writer-editor of small press review magazine *Sipapu* and head of special collections library at University of California at Davis.

Peattie is one of the best known librarians in the States because of his *Sipapu* critical reviews. He says that he collected material on the streets during the 60's protest movements - walked around in a big-pocketed overcoat receiving pamphlets, etc.

Though still a member of COSMEP, he comments the following:

"Distribution hasn't worked out in the Small Press Movement... I see much of small press activity as inventing the spaceship before we have invented the wheel... Basically, the small press scene is rampant individualism and it's rampant in part because it is a cottage industry not heavily rewarded, and also because it is a poetic vision."

(From tape interview with author/1980)

become a fascist organization with books reviewed by a women's board... I said, 'then we gotta worry about the Gays, Blacks, and even the white middle-class partisans too'. In 1978 I got out (of the meetings) after the Chicago meetings."

"Sometime back, I wrote to Fulton saying, 'a silent prayer for the survival of COSMEP', and Fulton wrote back to me and said 'COSMEP is only a small fraction of the entire small press scene - it's not that important anymore."

3. Doug Blazek:

"The small presses managed to help iron out the kinks in distribution. But there's a taint of bureaucracy about in now, a settling into a certain mediocrity."

4. Noel Peattie:

Noel Peattie, ed. of *Sipapu* and librarian at the University of Ca. (Davis), was once on the COSMEP board but resigned in 1979 after a quarrel with A.D. Winans, then head of the board. Though still a member, the incident has marked his opinions.

"I'm very reluctant to go over the history of this organization. Let others spend the rest of their lives discussing the business. There are other things I have to do with my life".

"Basically the organization is in a vacuum".

"Stop trying to publish books. Get one poem out - that's for the generation of 2500".

COSMEP

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Official COSMEP envelope received by author in 1981.

Information on COSMEP activities

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an annual conference (in San Francisco in 1981).

COSMEP is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization founded in 1968. It is the only national association of independent publishers. Membership, currently over one thousand, is open to any press or periodical, including self-publishers and presses or publications still in the planning stages.

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Stony Hills ¹⁹⁷⁹

The New England Alternative Press Review
Box 715, Newburyport, Ma. 01950

Diane Kruchkow, Editor

Dear COSMEP,

When I received the May COSMEP Newsletter, I was in the midst of analyzing (on another front) how bureaucracy separates organizers of organizations from the constituency they are supposed to represent, perhaps the prime example being the Federal Government.

And now it seems, given a little time & a little more effort, the same is going to happen to COSMEP.

"Let each thing act according to its own nature, and it will eventually come to rest in its own way," said Lao Tzu so many years ago.

COSMEP has given me a lot, & I have given a bit of my life to it, precisely because I have found people & an energy there which appreciate the fact that we are living matter with souls and that many of us have challenged the computerization of these souls, & that making contact with that energy--Lao Tzu's "nature"--is precisely what life is about.

John Pyros is talking about more than "comraderie." The farther we get away from that primary contact, the more insulated our lives are, & the more, ironically, as nearly every writer worth his salt has noticed, we fit in.

I never joined COSMEP to fit in. I never began ZAHIR or STONY HILLS or NESPA or wrote poems to fit in. I joined to contact that certain energy--that "perpetual source of everything else" (the old Chinese master, again)--my own way & found there other folks vaguely doing the same thing. Many of them have lost interest in COSMEP by now. "Natural attrition" perhaps. But they'll survive

RUENKOW/2

in the end.

And I don't want to be taught how to fit in. I don't want to genuflect to Mobil Oil, Etc. for money for advertisements--a step at least one literary organization has taken & others are contemplating. I don't want to sell eggs, & if I did, it would be to my neighbors. It would hurt to see COSMEP go the route of an impersonal bureaucracy. Although I realize it will--that is the way organizations 'grow'.

And life, as Jerry Brown says, is made of such paradoxes.

A word about Richard Morris. He has done one hell of a job. Richard has never let me down as a COSMEP member, Director or Chair. And I have not always agreed with him myself.

I would much rather have a Coordinator who answers letters than an Executive Director who gets grants. Some of my best friends are bureaucrats. It is easy to see how money produces the need for more money. And soon the bureaucratic job (even as outlined in Kornblum's article) is to find money to fund a job to find more money. And that, in the books, is meaningful.

I have found the newsletter continually informative, and would rather read up-to-the-minute notes & letters than long articles. There are so many books out now on "self-publishing" that people are saved already from thinking & exploring and can, if so inclined, merely follow instructions.

But then again, I'm just an 'occasional publisher.' I am strictly unprofessional. I will never own a 'publishing company.' And I'm naive enough still to hope the small press will speak out politically, as it can on

'Intelligence,' Lao Tzu also said, 'consists in acting according to Nature.' I'd just as soon work towards that as anything else.



Stony Hills

The New England Alternative Press Review
 Box 715, Newburyport, Ma. 01950

Diane Kruchkow, Editor

9/15/80

D. Kruchkow
 Weeks Mills
 New Sharon, Me. 04955

Dear Anita,

I'm afraid this looks like a giant ego-massage, but reading thru all this will say it as well as I can here, esp. it being midnight, raining, & tomorrow I got to deal with reality again. What I have to say is in my letters. What I try to show the world is in the articles. I'll send down a copy of #3, famous "810 decision" issue, too. (Harry must have mentioned that).

Basically, here goes:

I hit the small press at the right time in my life, & the right time in this nation's history-@ 1969. A guy who used to work with Fulton lived nearby and showed me his magazines, his poetry and his life and I was impressed. Bear in mind I was a senior in college, one of them "excellent students", taking English Honors in which I decided I'd read all the gossip books I could find on the expatriates of the '20's (Paris) & once a week go in & tell the juicy stories to my prof. Needless to say I got an A.

But I got much more than that. I got a bit of insight into a ~~xxx~~ way of existence I found fascinating, & wondered what was happening in my own time. So I hit up on the local small presser, mentioned above.

I also hit upon the bk. THE LITTLE MAGAZINE (Allen, et al, now avail. in reprint from Kraus) which led to a semi-religious experience & has since sat on every shelf in every apt. I've had like a Bible. I never had many ambitions in life except to become a theoretical scientist (heavy into science in HS--Sputnik-time etc.) , then a theoretical mathematician (was a math major for 2 years, even got advance placement in it (extra credits upon entering college)), then sat in set-theory class one day watching the leaves changing color outside & said screw it, went & read L. Fielder's bk. on mod. literature , convinced myself that the truths of literature were more important to me than the truths of science (altho' they're basically the same) & switched to English. Figured I'd teach, got a Ford Fellowship for Future Profs. of America, got involved in the '69 student strike, taught in the experimental college (a course on the small press) (began ZAHIR there), & dropped out of grad. school end of the year. Hightailed down to New York City to find out the names of the streets, hit on some poetry readings, art exhibits, movies, walked down Lexington Ave. one day & said this is ridiculous & was back in Maine the next Monday (stayed in NYC 4 months). Haven't left New England since.

So COSMEP was exciting to me then, it embodied the spirit I was seeking. First Conference: 1970 in Buffalo. Met Hugh & many others.

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Hit most of the other Conferences, hitchhiking to Madison (WISC)--the last of the great anarchistic conferences. Got elected "Chair 2" of COSMEP, then "Chair 1" in NYC in a Board meeting in Central Park. I don't think I did very much that year except keep things in order. But it was good for me, & I hope good for COSMEP.

The change was just starting then, tho. A few years later ~~it~~ it came out in full force. COSMEP was changing from a group of dedicated energetic (if egotistical) poet/publishers to a trade org. '75-'78 or so were transition years. Seems to be pretty settled in that direction now. In the change, it's lost a lot of the original energy, but has picked up a steadier growth. I'd just ~~like~~ as soon have some of the original energy back, and I think right now a lot of folks are missing that, and somehow it will emerge again during the '80's. But if you look at where this country is headed right now (every day another inch to the Right), COSMEP seems to be right in tune. I still support it, pay my dues, buy mailing labels, read some of the letters in the Newsletter, etc. But I can't fully give my energy & belief to it as I once did.

I very ^{rarely} if ever represent the woman's point of view. I'll support women's causes to the hilt, but I can't get plugged into any role like that. The important thing to me is literature, the pure energy of literature & trying to live a life immersed in as much of the pure energy as possible. Which ain't easy.

Bought an old run-down house in Maine, real cheap, planted a garden, cleared out a room for an office, etc. Man I live with is fixing up the house. Getting ready for it all to come down. Don't know what "it" is or "come down" will be, but everyone I know senses something in this country is going to collapse, very soon. There's not too much we can do about it, except be aware that the rug will be pulled out from under us perhaps when we least expect it. There's a lot of frightened people in this country, which is why its going way Right. But the American flag in their lapel ain't going to solve their problems.

Well, there it is. Hope possession of this doesn't get you arrested. If you need any specifics, let me know. Good luck with the dissertation.

Best,





Stony Hills

The New England Alternative Press Review
Box 715, Newburyport, Ma. 01950

Diane Kruchkow, Editor

6/5/80

D. Kruchkow (I'll be changing Stony
Weeks Mills here next yr.)
New Sharon, Me. 04955

Dear Ellen,

STONY HILLS will bring you the NY Bookfair (#7).
STONY HILLS is TABA-free.
And there ain't a conglomerate in sight.

"If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost;
that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them."
--WALDEN.

You know back in the old days, I was always looking for that glimmer of some kind of positive alternative. Knocking the establishment was easy & sometimes too much fun. God knows it should be knocked, but I've never felt quite right about knocking to get inside.

Needless to say, you're a good writer with a good perspective & I, and I'm sure many others, appreciate the information you present. But for some reason I feel an editorial as yours (June issue) belongs more in The Nation than in SPR. There's still a fight there, still a lot of people to make aware (although that particular mag. does a pretty good job on making folks aware). But SPR, STONY HILLS, SMUDGE, etc., --not to lump these together or in any way dictate editorial policy--these mags. I've always felt ought to be more of a celebration of the small press building some new & different foundations than any type of "trade magazines" following in footsteps. Not that you & Len haven't helped build foundations, a lot of very solid ones; & not that SPR is becoming a trade magazine. But there's a fine line I'd hate to see the small press cross, & I see toe-holds being put down on the other side daily. Probably do it myself even.

I agree that the NY Fair was a fine job & worthwhile & by some quirk the tone of NY that weekend was one of dancing on the old cumuli. (all the thermally unstable air masses probably ganged up out of the way in those cumuli.) But if you watched closely, you would notice that many of the befuddled browsers were attracted to & responded most to many of the same things they respond to anywhere else--bright colors, & relatively fancy displays ("fancy" may be a little heavy here) or familiar names. Your press is pretty well known & so is Pushcart (see where Saroyan says Pushcart Prize ought to be the short story book of the year?*-NYTBR) & the Knights publish the latter day gurus, so I'm sure business was brisk. But I felt toe-hold after toe-hold being put across that line, making indentations for others to follow in. Trouble is, the path that's being made at times doesn't seem too different than the paths being forged by any new business, probably even by the very pawns of the conglomerates when they began as independents.

Len & I & perhaps you & I might have a basic disagreement here, about becoming businesses. Perhaps I am one, but I dread it. It kills the spirit. (Notice the corrections--a small press/mag. I think is so much a part of the owner that if it becomes a business,

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the owner becomes a business, too. A business-person. And that, despite CODA, is a long way from being a poet.) And perhaps the question is, should small press people be aligned with a business sensitivity or a poetic sensitivity. I think the latter can handle the former quite well, yet not kowtow to it. I don't think the former can accomodate the latter (Eliot & Stevens might equally prove or disprove the point).

I'm sure I've digressed. The question is one of spirit, I think. The foundations are those of cooperation. I feel like an anachronism at times, saying this, but I do believe it. My 60 year old neighbor comes over with his tractor, plows the field, has a few beers, spits, & talks carpentry a while. "How much do we owe you?" "Eh, \$15." Now if we have to do business, I'd just as soon keep that spirit.

I've gone on too long. Be aware that I've been called both dreamer & bureaucrat. I know which side of the line I'm on, but I get a little nervous when I see the old Great Adventure becoming the Great Chase.

Take care, & appreciate yr. time

James



Ted Gay

Diane Kruchkow

Motherroot Journal— Borrowed Money, Stolen Time

Motherroot Journal, sub-titled "A Women's Review of Small Presses," published its first issue last October. Eight tabloid newsprint pages featured Jure Arnold of Daughters, Inc. reviewing A Guide to Women's Publishing, essays by Judy Hogan of Carolina Wreer Press and Felice Newman of the Motherroot Collaborative, news of some grants and publication awards, and a dozen other detailed reviews on women's fiction, poetry and nonfiction.

In her introduction to the first issue, editor Anne Pride said, "The idea for a publication of women's reviews has been around a long time. I can't remember the first time I sat with another feminist publisher or writer and said, 'I wish I had the time...the capital...the energy...'" The idea was discussed once again at the June 1978 COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers) meeting. Pride and Paulette Balogh, both members of the Motherroot Collaborative in Pittsburgh, then discussed it with that group. The other members agreed the need existed, and the first issue got to the New York Book Fair--after an all-night collating session by Pride.

"The capital is borrowed," wrote Pride in her introduction, "and the time and energy stolen." Books reviewed in Motherroot Journal will be "books by women, of special interest to women, or about women. Some male-run presses may be represented (for instance, in this issue, Dustbooks) but they must be presses which have a good reputation concerning women's issues."

Motherroot Journal is planned as a quarterly (the second issue came out in February) with a print run of 1,000. Motherroot Publications began three years ago with a \$300 loan from a feminist credit union in Pittsburgh and \$100 from a Collaborative member. It has "floated" since then, says Felice Newman, paying for new publications from the sales of those in print and with occasional cash from Collaborative members. The Journal's first issue brought in a large cash gift plus editorial help from feminist writers and publishers such as Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich. Reviews and essays are invited (enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope) as well as books for review.

New Boston Review—No Quickie Reviews

New Boston Review, now in its fourth year of publication, is a tabloid-style journal that features a mixture of reviews, poetry, and essays from well-known and unknown writers on major and small press publishers. Editor Gail Pool (co-editors are J.M. Alonso and Lorna Condon) says, "We have tried to put together a review that combines a number of elements

but gives special emphasis to the arts. We wanted an arts journal that would be serious and intellectual but not academic. We pay attention to what's happening in Boston, but we don't consider ourselves a regional publication."

Each issue of NBR carries a dozen critical essays covering books from all kinds of publishers, reviews of arts performances and exhibitions (in a national context), plus original poetry and fiction. "We're trying to provide a forum for intelligent, well-written criticism on the arts," says Gail Pool. "We're not looking for the quickie review."

Originally a quarterly, NBR now comes out bi-monthly with a print run of 12,000. \$5,000 from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities helped with the transition.

"NBR is almost five years old," says Gail Pool, and it's arrived at the point where its existence no longer depends on any one person. What we need though, is money for a few staff salaries." All three editors earn their livings from other jobs. "I feel sure that if NBR could get salary money for a year, so the editors could work full time on it, at the end of that year it would be self-supporting."

Stony Hills: Filling the Gap

Stony Hills, a sixteen-page tabloid edited by poet Diane Kruchkow, does consider itself a regional review. Billed as The New England Alternative Press Review, and published three times a year in Newburyport, Massachusetts, Stony Hills concentrates primarily on small press activities in New England. It features reviews, articles, interviews, essays, editorials, and some original poetry. It also carries a comprehensive listing of New England small presses and magazines.



Anne Pride



Pamela Beach Plymell

Diane Kruchkow says, "So many small press books and magazines come out and never get reviewed. I decided to fill the gap with a magazine. In Stony Hills we try to review about thirty publications--both books and magazines--in depth in each issue. Since we can't cover everything, we discuss mostly New England writers, publications, and subjects. We try to review books and magazines that aren't mentioned elsewhere and to report on new writers."

In this vein, Kruchkow is proud to have published the first interview with poet Larry Eigner and "the first inside reports ever published on the CCLM (Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines) grants committees." She adds that "most of the reviewers are small press editors, but we accept unsolicited reviews as long as they have a New England focus."

Published since mid-1977, Stony Hills' first three issues were produced and paid for by Ritchie Darling's Rat & Mole Press in Amherst, Massachusetts.

from GODA

International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses

16th Annual Edition—1980-1981

More than 3,000 independent presses and
magazines worldwide

For sixteen years now this Directory has been used the world over by poets, writers, librarians, students of contemporary literature, creative writing classes and others as a guide to the ever-increasing community of small and independent magazines and presses. It contains such important data as: name, address, phone, editor(s), price, circulation, frequency, type of material used, payment rates, rights purchased, discount schedules, size, personal statements by editors, number of issues/titles published in the previous year and projected in the coming year, etc. The Directory has been called "the first and by far the best. . ." by Bill Katz in *Magazine Selection* (R.R. Bowker). ALA's *Choice* says it's "the most comprehensive and detailed listing of non-establishment periodicals. . . that rarity among reference books, a directory that is a delight to read." *The Wall Street Journal* claims it's "the Bible of the business." Over 500 pages.

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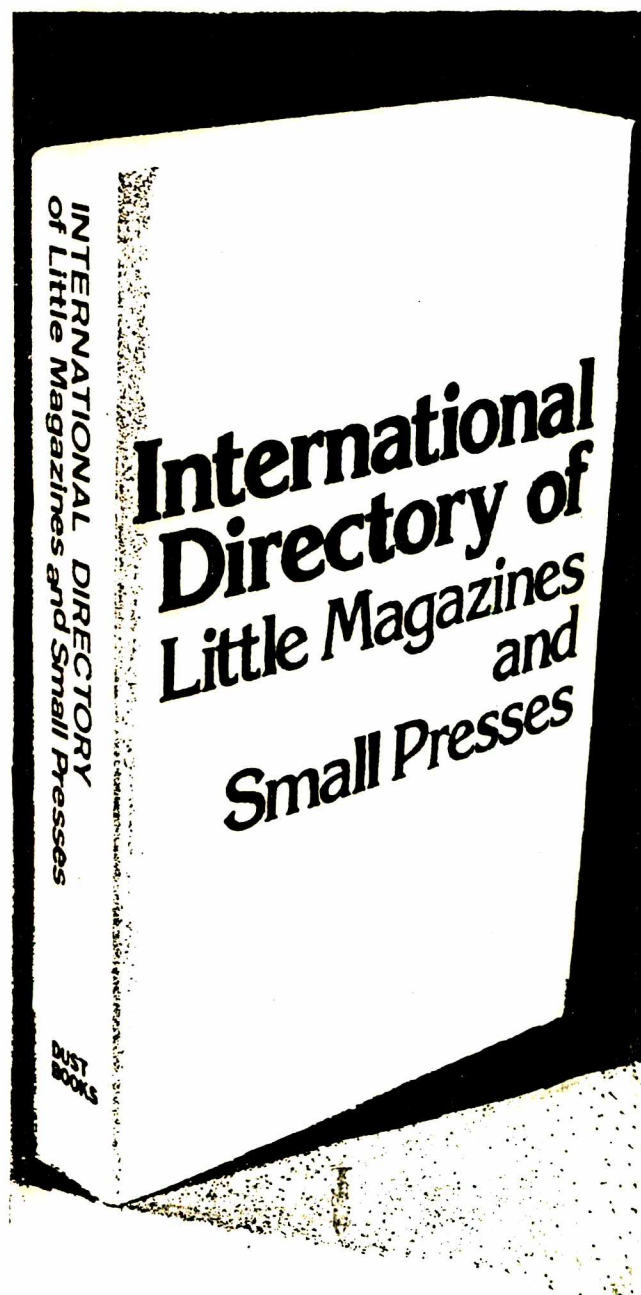
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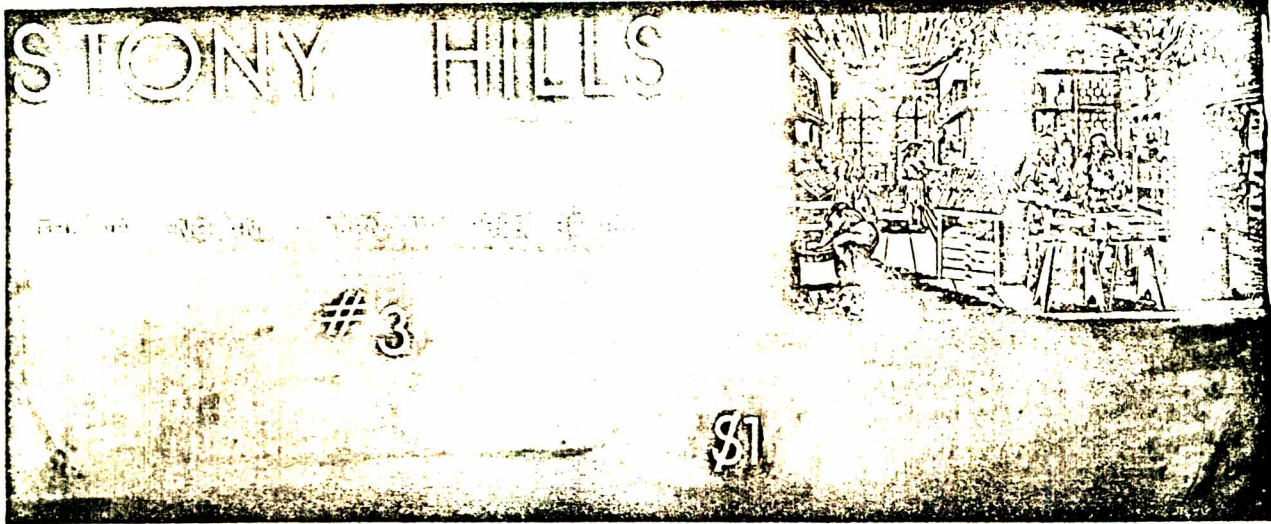
Small Press/Mag Information

16th Edition



In the 14th ed., 1978-1979, the above directory already contained the following:

1. A 380-page title index with 6 to 8 items per page.
2. A subject index with 151 headings (plus subdivisions).
3. A U.S. regional index with 50 headings (plus names of publications, the greatest number of which being located in California, New York, and Massachusetts).
4. A list of some 140 book distributors, book jobbers, & magazine agents.



INTERVIEW WITH LARRY EIGNER

Larry Eigner, b. 1927 in Lynn MA, lifetime resident of nearby Swampscott, 'palsied by a hard birth' is known internationally as perhaps the only major paraplegic poet, and is perhaps the leading open-form imagist writing in English today. Strongly influenced by Cid Corman's radio program from Quincy's WJDA in the late '40's, Larry connected with the Black Mountain School in the '50's and their stylistics still show in his short, vital microtypical open spaces. He has been published and translated widely in the US and Europe, and has an active international correspondence and following. He is an avid FM radio listener (WGBH-FM) and TV watcher (WGBH-TV), and is up to the minute on world cultural events. Though Larry's poems float on the white page, his letters overwhelm it with 1000s of words, packed 4-sided margins, all single-spaced, proof that he has 2 styles, one for poetry, the other for prose. This interview mediates them.

Part I of the interview here focuses on Larry's thoughts on writing and publishing. Part II, to be published in *Stony Hills* no. 4, will center on the poet in the political sphere. The interview was conceived of by Peter Bates and Bill Costley, and was edited from a series of talks with Larry by Peter Bates between 5/77 and 8/77 at Larry's home

Q. Do you think your work has been influenced by the march of world events?

A. That might be the drunk stagger of human affairs, the impact one thing and another has had. James Earl Ray sure hit me, that is King did, and in the few days after he was killed—April 2-5 '68—there was a 50-line piece which had just come off, no work to speak of involved, just King, Rosa Parks and the Memphis garbage workers and all, and then one or two others after that, and one the night Robert Kennedy lay dying, "golf/boys//...". And then for instance (it's the same book with those from April, THINGS STRIRING/TOGETHER OR FAR AWAY, Black Sparrow 1974), on the radio about a fire in Viet Nam there came "Listening to the wind/how it may change/a bird opens to fly/the other side of the world/is pulled down/the car lot burning". I got physics in there too. As much as words or thinking (it takes exercise and impartial interest), a poem can do two things: integrate—get things together: and assess them—evaluate them as they're come to. There's the emphasis line-and-stanza-break, modulated by indents. You can't expect anything in particular that you've got to last, any integration or essay. Other than windfalls, there's the big conglomerate the universe, of course. It's that that endures, the conglomerate

Q. Why are your letters so dense: you use every inch of space, even the margins, while your poetry is so spare, so open?

A. Well, letters get crowded just from my attempt to save time, i.e., cover less space, put another sheet in typewriter or a few more words as I at least hope they'll be. There's always been so many things to do. For instance, with only my right index finger to type I never could write very fast—to say what I want to when I think of it, before I forget it or how to say it; I sometimes say 2 things at about the same time, in two columns. It'll be from not deciding or being unable to

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GROUNDBREAKERS

Merritt Clifton

Like a proud farmer, *Stony Hills* surveys the New England scene, pointing out a small press bumper crop in Massachusetts, strong growth in Vermont, fertile pastures in Maine, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. Labors past may be forgotten with the flush of present success. Yet more than anywhere else on this continent, small press health here today is product of long, difficult cultivation. Our "Groundbreakers" series shall endeavor to illuminate those figures and publications from our past who cleared the rocks and built the barns, so to speak.

No author, editor, or printer came over on the Mayflower in 1620, but ten years later the 18-year-old Anne Bradstreet arrived in Salem with her 26-year-old husband, Simon. Simon would become governor of the Massachusetts colony, winning widespread fame within his lifetime, but unsuccessfully opposing the major actions shaping American political destiny. Anne, on the other hand, won only passing notice in her lifetime except as wife and mother, yet helped shape American letters immeasurably. Our first published poet, when unknown to her, her works appeared from London in 1650, she may also be considered our first feminist poet, allowing for the moral and social strictures of the times, and the first, if unconscious, Transcendentalist. Of her eight children, she wrote:

*I had eight birds hatch't in the nest;
Four cocks there were, and hens the rest;
I nurs't them up with pains and care,
For cost nor labor did I spare;
Till at last they felt their wing,
Mounted the trees and learned to sing.*

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THE STORY OF SEATTLE

Diane Kruchkow

(Note: CCLM (Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines) was established in the late '60's to funnel monies from the National Endowment for the Arts to little magazines. This process is now enacted twice yearly by 5-member grants committees, of which 3 members are elected by the little magazine community, and 2 appointed by CCLM. CCLM is located at 80 Eighth Ave., NYC, NY 10011.)

It all began as I was waiting for a seat for a Salmon dinner in St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, overlooking the mighty whirlpools of the Reversing Falls. For it was then that I called CCLM to find out if I had been elected to the fall '77 grants committee. Indeed I had.

I was excited. It meant a trip to Seattle and a chance to become part of the intricacies of an organization and granting process I had followed with great interest for years. Perhaps now I could add my own input.

Soon after one gets elected to a CCLM grants committee, one receives numerous large boxes of magazines and grant applications. One hundred and forty-eight magazines had applied this time, and we received two different issues of each. We then had 6-8 weeks to sift through, read and judge these approximately 300 publications, and determine what to do about funding them.

Usually a CCLM grants committee meeting is a free-for-all, each member pushing his or her individual judgements (see article by Hugh Fox, following this). Great stories and scandals have emerged from such events.

The story of Seattle follows. It is an important issue, this funding of the arts. It is a subject even close to the gut of anarchists. Back in 1970, Lawrence Ferlinghetti sent a resolution to the national COSMEP Conference that we refuse government funding. But the National Endowment for the Arts, established in 1965, has grown and has given impetus to many aspects of the small press. The Literature Program and its Director, Len Randolph, have helped move the small press from a movement of the streets to the threshold of a viable alternative to the monopolistic publishing industry, which may soon bury itself in its own pulp. No longer does the small press community see itself basically as rebelling against the large publishing conglomerates; it is now an accepted

newsART

THE SMITH



75cents

How a Major Poet Is Ostracized By Lit Cliches: Eli Siegel in View

By WILLIAM PACKARD

When Eli Siegel's poem "Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana" was awarded *The Nation* poetry prize in 1925, there were a lot of exclamations over that award: Critics were sharply divided on whether the poet really knew what he was doing in the poem, or whether it was all some sort of monstrous literary imposition. The critics could have relaxed about the whole matter, however, as Eli Siegel was never really a threat to any of their comfortable enclaves. Instead he seems to have quietly retired into as ambiguous a literary reputation as any American poet has had to endure during this century.

I believe *The Nation* exercised rare good judgment in awarding its poetry prize to "Hot Afternoons." This a remarkably original long poem, and it may be one of the very few effective long poems in American poetry. It is, however, philosophical in import, which automatically restricts its popularity. It is very deceptively philosophical, however; it is written in an appealing plain style, using a colloquial American diction which is still very much tuned in to our time. That is why you'll sometimes hear sports announcers refer to the title of the poem, during a long hot afternoon in Yankee Stadium or Wrigley Field.

The poem exemplifies a way of seeing reality which is sane, humorous, and casually artful. Here is a part of the poem:

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Hell as Literature, Holocaust as Fodder

By DR. HARRY JAMES CARGAS

Holocaust literature questions the very reality of history, and one of the basic challenges it serves is this: Does history have the kinds of meanings that we have heretofore imposed on it? In their published works survivors of death camps have given literary form to a question which most survivors privately ask: Did this really happen?

This phenomenon occurs not only in Holocaust literature, but in world fiction in general—particularly in France's *Nouveau Roman*. In this subgenre we are given a novel with a plot in which the novelist (Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute, Queneau, for example) then makes us doubt if any of the events actually happened even within the agreed upon traditions of the make-believe.

Implied is the great doubt: Did Auschwitz actually happen in the non-make-believe world? Hiroshima? My Lai? And what of Catholic France's betrayal of Christian ideals? And Poland, and Germany, and . . . ? We who call ourselves Christians have been taught love for human beings for two thousand years and then came up with ovens for human beings. If that is true, then perhaps everything else that we have been taught is questionable as well.

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Robbe-Grillet Syndrome Paralyzes Literary Paris

By KRIM

To remind you that writing has its fading international pop stars, also, consider this. Alain (*Last Year at Marienbad*) Robbe-Grillet's new novel has been out since the second week of November, 1977, and this may well be the first review you've seen. Even people who were exasperated by his famous film were compelled by it. But the same excitement and controversy no longer attaches to his fictions. The well-known dreamlike quality, the cool and catatonic repetitions, the perpetual present "which makes recourse to memory impossible"—his words—add up to a humorless, grueling trip. It all seems forced and strained, even the poker-faced lack of emotion.

continued on page 6

CAN WORLD SURVIVE AMERICA'S NUCLEAR HOW-TO HAND-OUT?

By S.P.R. CHARTER

Despite an overly developed mechanism for mashing a critical news story into bone meal through sheer rehashery, U.S. media coverage of the 3-Mile Island nuclear breakdown remains incomplete even at this late date. Not so much in the detailing of events as in the investigation of the impact of proliferating Yankee know-how on developing nations, and the punch of Harrisburg events on the American psyche.

America, since its founding, has prided itself on its mechanical and technical skills. And the builder of the 3-Mile Island reactor, and other

reactors, is one of many highly regarded American engineering and construction companies—with years of experience in this area. The nuclear industry itself, compared with other industries, has especially high standards in the training of operational and maintenance people. The technical staffs of the electrical company, of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, of other agencies concerned with nuclear power generation, are equally skilled technical people.

continued on page 9



Can you spot downtown artist Christy Rupp's portrait of Beekman St. rats, routed out of Theatre Alley, hard by Mavor Koch's turf after clean-up. See story page 31.

Old Klan In? New Klan Out?

By MICHAEL PLEMMONS

MURFREESBORO, Tenn.—It had all the elements of an office picnic: marshmallows over an open fire, beer for adults and Kool-Aid for the youngsters. Yet, this gathering shunned the sunlight.

While white robed Ku Klux Klan members arranged a makeshift public address system on the back of a weather beaten red pickup truck, another group of men put the final touches on a huge cross of cloth and other flammables.

Then the speaking began, as night fell.

Don Henson, Grand Dragon of the KKK's Tennessee chapter, told the several dozen spectators that Communists were infiltrating America and that "It's just a matter of time until they completely take over your country."

continued on page 48

Fed-Car Offers

Safe Economy: Your Move, GM & Ford

By TOM TOLNAY

General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—take heed.

With all eyes steered toward the gasoline pumps, Uncle Sam proved it knows how to play the game of one-upmanship—developing a car that will not only squeeze 32 miles out of every gallon of petrol but will also get the driver to his destination in one piece.

U.S. Dept. of Transportation commissioned Minicars Inc. of Goleta, Cal. to design and build a prototype vehicle that would incorporate, in the words of the Federal "fact sheet," "substantially improved safety, good fuel economy, low exhaust emissions . . . in an attractive, comfortable and affordable four-passenger."

From what we could see in the rapt crowd at the unveiling of the RSV (Research Safety Vehicle) at NY's City

continued on page 9

Neatness Counts in Grants Pay-Off . . . The Sexual Power Struggle . . . Nuclear Fall Out . . . State of American Literature . . . Really Bad Books Page . . . Radical Funk Weekly Takes Off . . . Hats on Parade . . . Poems & Short Stories in the News . . . Jazz Jottings . . . The Book Judge . . . Mother Nature & Papa Hemingway . . . Conventional Non-Conventionals . . . Billy Martin Mayhem . . . Books by Women . . . Master of Flesh Frescoes . . . and much, as they say, much more.

Some budgets make the grants pay to increase in improving productivity of quality of production."

Subsequent grants committees have reverted to "qualitative judgment," but it appears that the debate is far from over.

the 13th YEAR!

March, 1981
Vol. 13, No. 3
Issue 98

Small Press Review

Common Reader

Alembic #6, edited by David Dayton (1744 Slaterville Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850).

A vision of the Common Reader has long preoccupied writers and editors of serious prose and poetry. The usual medium for such literature is the quarterly review, a magazine of limited circulation and resources, largely read by other poets, fiction-writers and editors.

The Common Reader, meanwhile, is supposed to feast on a starchy diet of Books of the Month, supermarket soft-porn and pop psychology manuals. Publications available to him include *People Magazine*, *The National Enquirer*, *Playboy*, *Cosmo* and the daily papers. Magazines focusing on specialized pursuits, such as *Fly Fisherman*, *Gourmet*, *Popular Mechanics* or *Sports Illustrated* also attract subscriber dollars.

Apart from *The New Yorker* or *The Atlantic Monthly*, most publications that use quality prose or poetry are inaccessible to this Reader for several reasons.

1. Promotion is restricted to specific mailing lists for reasons of economy and because the publisher has a prior concept of his audience.
2. Numbers. Relatively few copies of a literary quarterly are printed.
3. Reliance on grants has made many reviews discount the importance of attracting individual subscribers.
4. P.R. failure which results in the publication being talked-up only to interested parties—potential contributors, reviewers, English Department faculty members, students *et al.*

Nonetheless, in the mindscape of many editors there looms this spectre of the Common Reader—the proverbial man-in-the-street. With nothing but gut reaction to vindicate his belief, the editor feels that could he reach this man, could he pour the contents of his magazine before him like a libation, our Reader would rise up a born-

again convert, and embrace The Word.

The tough part is getting The Word around. Not having revival meetings at their disposal—although some poetry readings evoke the spirit—editors are forced to cast about for ways to get their wares into the marketplace.

Poetry on the Buses is one such idea and a fairly successful one, albeit a necessary stressing of brevity and easy access over complex imagery or experimentation with language.

Another is Dial-a-Poem. Again, selection tends to be made on the basis of oral comprehensibility, prejudicing against the subtler piece of work.

Still another is via the newspaper. It's not a new idea. Many editors have presided over a weekly or monthly poetry column, many have even used work of the highest caliber. However, some of the large newspapers which once sponsored such cultural doings, becoming obsessed with circulation figures and their own assumptions of what contemporary man wishes to consume with his coffee and O.J., have dropped longstanding poetry forums on the basis that they weren't read. A small flurry of protest followed such terminations, but geared to the TV rating system, the public speedily adjusted.

A new voice in the media wilderness is David Dayton, editor and publisher of the fine literary review *Alembic*. With grant monies from CCLM, the NEA and the New York State Council on the Arts, Dayton has taken a four-page insert in the *Cornell Daily-Sun* which constitutes the 6th issue of *Alembic*.

The same attention to typeface graphics and positioning that won praise for *Alembic* in its initial small-book format has been continued in the tabloid presentation.

The Common Reader—or Daily Sun subscriber—has, in this first selection, been treated to a series of translations of poems by Odysseus Elytis, 1979 Nobel

Prize laureate; a sequence of riveting poems excerpted from "An Exile from Silence" by Patricia Wilcox, another wonderfully illustrated group of seven poems by John Tagliabue from "Egyptian Notebook/Metropolitan Museum," four brief imagistic poems, in translation, of Rose Auslander and a representation of each of the following: M.R. Doty, Mildred Seydel, J.W. Culum and David Swanger.

The poems chosen do not patronize our Common Reader by focusing on "now" themes or featuring the most conversational of tones. Rather, they presume the Reader possesses the intelligence and sensibility to appreciate literature that is both intense and profound.

In his dream of contacting this Reader, Dayton exemplifies the dream of all artists and writers, who expose themselves in an outreach to that mystical other who must indeed exist if anything of value is to endure. Who must in fact be out there, this average man with feelings and ideas like our own—or who the hell are we talking to? Ourselves? It is the great fear that we may be talking to ourselves, that what we are saying has no usefulness, no means of empowering and enabling the lives of ordinary persons that inspires the dream of the Common Reader.

For all our sakes, I hope he does exist, this Common Reader, that in the guise of the readers of the *Cornell Daily-Sun*, some 15,000 strong, he will take pen in hand and write to the publisher commending this incarnation of *Alembic*.

Three future issues are planned for 1980-1981. Dayton concludes his introduction to the section by inviting the reader to "salvage this portion of the day's paper and to savour the poetry herein distilled."

—Joan Colby

THE NEWSLETTER

58

on the state of the culture

November 9, 1979

Roving Editor's report: THE RETURN OF THE WOODSTOCK COMET

Woodstock finally did come home. A decade later on the hilly sand landfill, Battery Park City, big as three Sheep Meadows, that abuts the Hudson River. Here great throngs showed up on a bright, September Sunday afternoon for an antinuke rally, rock concert, and speeches by the movement's "heavies." And as Woodstock was the end game of the 1960's hope and alienation, the Battery Park City event can be seen as a litmus of the 1970's simmerings. Further, the event might well be the acorn that foretells growth of the tree of the 1980's politics of dissent.

Picture two humpbacked hills, between which flattened sand that stretches for a good mile or more, with the old West Side Highway and the Twin Towers (and other Manhattan industrial cubes) to the east, and the calm glinting Hudson waters with Liberty way down river captured in an eye-scan to the west. Thousands poured over the flat sand and hills by the hour starting at 11 A.M., cut out space for themselves in sitting, standing, and even camping positions; and kept pace (while basking in the sun) with the rapidfire comings-and-goings on the huge stage: quick sets of rock 'n roll from such hitters as Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, Crosby, Stills and Nash, etc.; sandwiched by quick-paced speeches from such as Dr. John Gofman, Barry Commoner, Ralph Nader, Bella Abzug, Fonda & Hayden, among others.

The music was mostly low-keyed, forest murmurs with a pop beat that limned soul and protest in about equal measure. And they knew whereof they played--calling alarm in the rock drum rolls and hope of nuke-less U.S. in the soft register of strings and clean-toned lilt of voice. And when Crosby, Stills and Nash, at the closing hour of 5, did their short riffs (including a moving "Teach Your Children"), the sea of standing bodies flowed with the music, swayed to and fro like the tumbleweed that cut across the site in the calm breeze that was coming off the river all afternoon.

The speeches were also low-keyed, and had the same clearly-stated urgency as the music. From Barry Commoner's brief but detailed indictment of the nuke fuelers to Ralph Nader's charge that the movers and shakers of the dream technology "can't stand solar energy because it's free." With Nader coming out of the shell of his wonted reticence, wherein the facts alone state the case of his beliefs, he reached the point of political emphasis that drew the sideline comment: "Give him one more minute, and he would have declared for the presidency." And from Bella Abzug's rousing pitch, where Bella went the route of a Sally (Salvation Army) in her sing-song plea, "Put the money on the drum/ Halleluiah, I'm a bum/ I'll be saved!/ I'll be saved!"; to Tom Hayden's knife-edged reminder: "10 years ago, several of us were on trial [in Chicago], and those who tried to jail us, themselves went to jail"; to Janē Fonda's bouquet for the handful of rockers "who had a dream one year ago for just this kind of event and made it come true today." The Tom-Jane sit-pol show of the democratic left; and the crowd gave it the Palace Theater roar.

As the message of a nuke-less America came across loud and clear, so too might it be said that the sweep and daring of the rally (spectacle as spectacle) was on a par with the biggies of the past: the Be-ins in San Francisco and New York, the Martin Luther King anti-Vietnam "coming out" in Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, the Moratorium in Washington, and indeed Woodstock on that rainy weekend in the Catskills 10 years ago. And going farther afield, call the rally Felliniesque in color and shape, in the sheer numbers lacing into the big, open space via subway, ferry and bridges, and out-of-state wheels by the hundreds: cars rolling into the downtown canyons, parking freely and in mile-long ribbons, after journeying from New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, North Carolina--and as far west as Illinois. (Maybe the out-of-staters should have "stayed home", socked it to OPEC-Exxon to the extent of thousands of gallons of fuel saved. And that too might

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5 Beekman Street

NYC 10038

732-4821

(The above is a sample of Sidney Bernard's work as Roving Editor - he and Harry Smith collaborate in N.Y.C.)


Back Row Press 1803 Venus Ave. St. Paul Minnesota USA
55112

Dear Anita,

July 17, 1981

Enclosed articles by myself were published in The Cleveland Press and in several other U.S. newspapers. Encircled material refers to ^{my} ~~my~~ small-press* feminist novel ~~of mine~~ under name "Madge Reinhardt." The novel had a rather delicately-described lesbian episode in it, which episode mainly showed a person searching on every level for a more "feminine" or humanhood-accepting view of ourselves and of God in contrast to the macho and often cold Aristotelian logic which so often rules our society and our sense of being -- and of our view of what we call God.

Sincerely,


Madge Reinhardt Ritter
Back Row Press

P.S. I do my own printing and binding.

Enclosure

* Back Row Press
1803 Venus Ave.
St. Paul, Mn. 55112

A CHURCH IN TURMOIL — No.2

'More love in show biz than in the church'

This is the second of two articles written by Madge Reinhardt Ritter, a member of the Christian Science Mother Church, in which she chronicles the upheaval going on in the Christian Science Church today.

Mrs. Ritter, a novelist and playwright, resides in St. Paul, Minn. She has written this two-part series exclusively for *The Press*.

By MADGE REINHARDT RITTER

Much of the current dissent in the Christian Science Church has centered around a series of letters to the Christian Science churches during the past six years by a former executive of the Christian Science Church Center in Boston, Reginald G. Kerry.

Kerry, now excommunicated, has circulated to the denominational field charges of immorality, corruption and fiscal mismanagement at the church headquarters. (The board is required to answer to no one in the membership and church members are not privy to financial dealings of the church.)

Kerry has also made a public plea for opening of the church archives to rank-and-file members so that church-suppressed writings of earlier writers in the denomination may be

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOSTON)

Harvey Wood, chairman
Hal M. Friesen
Jean Stark Hebenstreit
David W. Rennie
Michael B. Thorneloe

made available to all members. This is necessary, Kerry and his followers feel, if the troubled church is to regain its earlier pioneering spirit and vigor.

According to the "independents," the Boston church has sunk into a conservatism which is mainly concerned with maintaining official positions and the status quo and that the "watered down" church magazines are a part of this ultra-conservative mental atmosphere.

A question being asked by Kerry and other "independents" is whether or not the Boston organization rightly has the authority which it exercises over the denomination. This question may be foremost in the months to come as the Plainfield case moves toward trial.

(The Plainfield case, discussed in last week's article, involves a law suit brought by the Mother Church against an excommunicated branch church in Plainfield, N.J., which continues to use the words "Christian Science" in its name.)

One event which will be closely watched is the recent publication of a 1910 edition of the denominational textbook, "Science and Health," by Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the church. This edition is more recent than the 1906 edition used by Christian Science

Haldeman allegedly twisted the arms of individual members of Congress, canvassing them to pass the bill extending the Mother Church's copyright, saying, 'President Nixon wants it.' The bill passed.

and authorized by the Mother Church.

Eric W.W. Taylor of West End, N.C., managed after many years of searching to obtain a copy of the 1910 edition written during the last year of Mrs. Eddy's life.

After her demise, the church circulated the copyrighted 1906 edition of the textbook as the authorized edition.

In 1971, by a special act of Congress, the board obtained a copyright extension after the book's two protective copyright terms had expired — an action which brought accusations of illegality both from within and without the Christian Science community.

It was charged that the congressional act was brought about by the undue influence of Christian Scientists who were aides of President Nixon — principally John Ehrlichman and H.R. Haldeman.

According to a quarterly newsletter published by Myrtle Stewart of Washington, D.C., Haldeman "twisted the arms of individual members of Congress, canvassing them to pass the bill (Senate Bill 1866, extending the Mother Church copyright), saying, 'President Nixon wishes it.'"

There were objections from Sen. Jacob Javits, among others, but the bill passed.

The board currently claims that the congressional act which renewed the expired copyright on the 1906 authorized edition also gives the board the copyright on all other editions whose copyrights had long ago expired and on subsequent editions which were not copyrighted at the time of their publication.

Taylor, by re-publishing the 1910 edition, hopes to provoke the board into suing him. He is confident that the church's copyright on the 1910 edition will be ruled unconstitutional.

The widespread unrest in the denomination reflects the feeling that the board has placed itself in such a position of authority that there is little room for individual rights among Christian Scientists.

The artist or writer cannot have full fellowship in the church unless his works are subjugated to board opinions and tastes.

I myself was banned as a writer for the church's religious magazines because the board ruled that a novel of mine, "You've Got to Ride the Subway" (written in my capacity as a professional writer and not directed in any way to a Christian Science readership), was "emotional" and "sensuous" and not written from the "standpoint of a Christian Scientist."

When such a judgment is made by the church, when a judgement is made by the



Alan Young achieved his top popularity in the TV comedy series, 'Mr. Ed,' about a talking horse. He later became an official of the Christian Science Church.

board regarding any person or on any issue, the case is closed. There is no channel for dialogue about it or for presenting another opinion.

One former Christian Science official who left the church over disagreement with the board is actor Alan Young (who achieved his greatest fame perhaps in the "Mr. Ed" television series about a talking horse). Young left show business to become head of the TV and radio operations for the Mother Church in Boston.

He was also a practitioner and lecturer who filled the halls wherever he spoke. As many as 5,000 would come to hear him.

"Yet," says one of the Kerry letters, "because of the treatment he received while in

My own opinion is that the 'underground' is what will bring life back into the Christian Science denomination.

Boston, Young left his post and has given up lecturing and his practice and has gone back to show business on the West Coast."

Young is quoted in one newspaper article as saying, "I've found more love and brotherhood in the entertainment business than I encountered in the church."

Still, the church faithful, when they speak of Young, do so in the belief that there must be something terribly wrong with him: "Well, he was in show business and that's an egotistical business which undoubtedly didn't mix well with Christian Science."

But, in fact, Young (like others who have left the church and who have been explained away as harboring some character fault) is still an active student of Christian Science and works in the Christian Science "underground."

My own opinion is that the "underground," which is so much more exciting than the church, is what will bring life back into the Christian Science denomination.

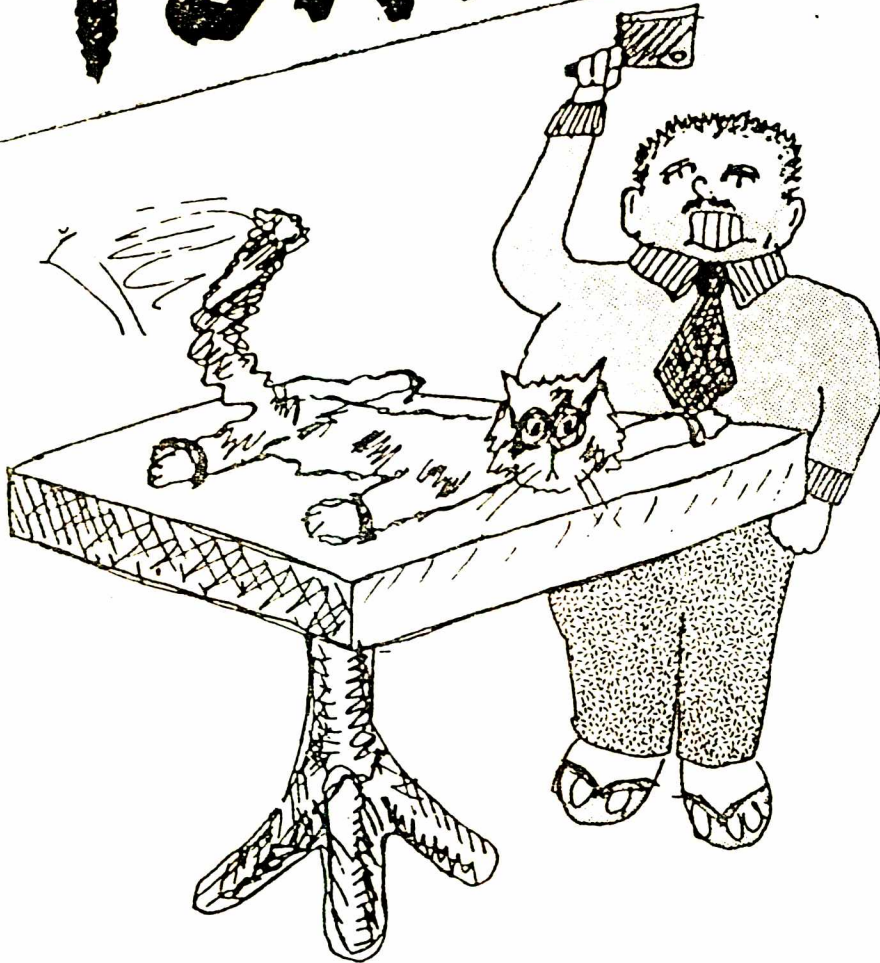
Meanwhile, in the months ahead, while litigation against the Plainfield church is pending, there may be a gathering of forces in the denomination (on both sides of the issue) which will bring new fires of passion to a church which has always presented to the world an air of impenetrable propriety.

OVER

Some pages from a popular "underground" literary magazine, *KITTY TORTURE*, S. & S. Press, Austin, Tex., 1979, pp. Cover, 4-7 (Appendix pp. 61-66). It is not copyrighted & most contributing writers remain anonymous:

KITTY TORTURE

\$1.90



by D. S. Phantom
and Bosco da Gama

ISBN 0-934646-01-5
S&S How-to Series #1

ASSORTED ACCOLADES

"Awful. Purely awful."
(Tom Reagan, *cat fancier and owner of Toms
Terrific cattery--Baptown, Texas*)

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(Werner Rufwun, *national chairman of SPCA:
Society of Preeminent Cat Annihilators*)

"The *Crime and Punishment* of kitty belles-lettres.
The only perfect book I have ever read."
(Rix Rood, *famous critic of most everything*)

"Highly recommended by the Inhumane Society."

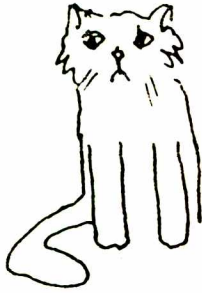
THE PERPETRATORS



D. PHANTOM
tortured a kat
at this tree



FORMERLY
TORMENTED
MICE FOR
SCIENCE



cat, *n.*

a soft, indestructible automaton
provided by nature to be kicked
when things go wrong in the do-
mestic circle

(Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's
Dictionary*)

A Brief History of Cats

Many years ago God invented cats for no apparent purpose other than His Own whimsy. They were useless from the beginning; and God, quickly noticing this, kicked them out of Paradise for numerous transgressions . . . many of which are enumerated herein.

Several years later, but still long ago, because God did not like Arabs very much, He visited a plague of cats upon the Egyptians who, in their limited knowledge of the true workings of the Divine, thought cats were neat and missed the whole idea of God's punishment. The Egyptians designed sculptures of cats and drew pictures of them, cluttering walls everywhere with feline figures. But again, except as superfluous adornment, cats were useless. (They might get rid of mice, true, but a good 12-gauge shotgun will do just as well.)

During the Middle Ages, cats . . . especially the black variety . . . came to be associated with the sordid practices of witchcraft and devilry and evil in general. Frenchmen in the Ardennes had the right idea when they burned or roasted cats in Lenten bonfires; being immersed in the smoke of these flaming felines supposedly helped repel sickness and witches. Frenchmen in Paris had much the same idea: they burned barrels, baskets, or sacks full of live cats in their Midsummer fires; the ashes were then used as a token of good luck. Oh, those crazy French.

Nowadays, cats just loll about and do TV commercials. Some modern era cats have become famous: Morris and Sylvester, for instance. But wouldn't you in your wildest secret dreams and desires like to pinch off Morris's finicky head (God rest his soul!) or silence Sylvester's slobbery soliloquies nonetheless? Think about it, neighbor.

An old legend holds that cats are really a superior race that subordinated itself to man to escape the drudgery of toil and responsibility that life metes out to seemingly rational beings. However, this legend is untrue: a fabrication created by cats and propounded by those weak-minded individuals known as cat lovers that cats prey upon, spinning a spell of cuteness when young and flair when mature that controls the soft brain of the cat lover, allowing the superior mind of the cat to enter the mind of the cat lover, much on the order of the Martian brain waves you often hear about.

However, to set the record straight, once and for all time: cats are essentially useless animals that serve only to irritate normal humans. Cats are only good for torturing.



A Very Brief History of Kitty Torture

Hypocritical Helen



Now Helen at this crucial stage
Kept two canaries in a cage.



And here is Minzi, Helen's cat.
One day, to make a social call,
Comes tomcat Munzi, smart and tall.



At once the cats are quite agreed
On the activity they need.



Each pulls a little head outside
And perpetuates canaricide.



Then quite refreshed, feeling able,
They leap up on the coffee table.



Blindly, Munzi smashes
to the floor.
Crash! The pitcher is
no more.



Here see him panic-
stricken race
Aloft upon the fire-
place.



Alas, poor Venus! It
was she,
Not Milo, but de
Medici!



Now Munzi dashes for escape,
But finds he is a bit too late.



Munzi's caught! See Helen fetch
Means to punish the poor wretch.



The paper cone is twisted, right,
Around the tail, till it fits
tight.



Then with a candle, set afire,
The flames mount, quickly
higher.



Now Munzi's free to run--at last.
Mee-ow! The heat is rising fast.

(Wilhelm Busch, 1832-1908)

FOUND ART: A Collection of Publishing Quotes Designed to Illuminate the Future by Muddying the Present

"What effects do conglomerates have on publishing lists and authors? What pressures exist to drop fiction, to drop the novel, to get very commercial? This is the toughest part of publishing to cover, because you're not going to get many top editors or publishers to admit that the heat is on from the conglomerate. But it is. The fear is there at the very top. I've seen it."

—Herbert Mitgang of *The New York Times Book Review* in *Publisher's Weekly*, 2/8/80

*"There are indications that publishers are beginning to see the error of producing so many new titles. In 1976 *Publisher's Weekly* counted 2,067 new and newly re-issued mass-market paperbacks. In 1977 the figure was down to 1,813. Preliminary figures for 1978 indicate the number will be smaller still. But the total number of paperbacks published—the higher-priced trade editions as well as mass-market editions, including imports—has decreased only slightly. Between 1976 and 1977, the total went from 12,575 to 12,569. This is 241 titles a week, 34 a day, a new paperback went every 42 minutes."*

"But what kind of book is being left out? Quite apparently many books of literary merit have been pushed aside as the publishers obey the instincts (sic) of their computers and growth demands of their new bosses, the conglomerates that have bought up all the major paperback publishers."

—Clarence Peterson, *Chicago Tribune*

"The American Book Awards promises to be nothing more than a popularity contest, another ratification of the bestseller lists...The new prizes reflect an emphasis on marketing and industry public relations offensive to anyone concerned with the disinterested recognition of literary merit."

—Aaron Asher & Roger W. Straus of Farrar, Straus & Giroux in a letter to the Chairman of TABA

"We find that eight publishers have over 80 percent of the paperback market and the two largest general interest book clubs have a market share of over 50 percent."

Senator Howard Metzenbaum, Chairman, Senate Judiciary Subcommittee investigating conglomeration in publishing

"There is a tendency of the publishing industry to be absorbed by the entertainment industry, with all its values of pandering to the lowest common denominator of public taste coming to bear...(traditional publishing) always reflected the tension between the need to make money and the desire to publish well...this balance of pressures within a publishing firm is upset by the conglomerate values—the need for greater and greater profits."

—E.L. Doctorow, author of *Ragtime*, testifying before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee

"In the world of bestsellers, not all the bestsellers are books. One of the fastest growing areas in bookstore sales is sidelines: calendars, games, posters, records, globes, maps, art prints, datebooks and book accessories."

*"*Publisher's Weekly*, serving the book world for over a century, has played an important part in this development by continually providing its bookseller readership with the most comprehensive roundups of the latest sideline items available, as well as creative ways to market them. PW's editorial coverage has expanded from a few pages five years ago to some half dozen special focus issues during 1978."*

"This year PW is expanding its sideline coverage even further."

—*Publisher's Weekly*, Advertisement for Itself

In one corner of a room already spilling books is a small backwater of newspaper columns, raggedly torn; magazines opened to anonymous, gray pages; news releases; the flotsam and jetsam of our daily reading tossed there for future reference, often lying unexamined for months. It is a pool whose general drift might be titled, "contemporary publishing," but on further examination would reveal a narrower current: "conglomeration," and would shortly be seen to contain numerous copies of *Publisher's Weekly* (the bulk of the anonymous-looking pages).

The pool has often been the source of editorial matter in the past, and it has been some time now since we have sought to make waves in Xerox Corporation's tributary. What stirs the current again?

It takes a lot more these days to cause us to give space to the old arguments—for one thing, small publishers are doing rather well, swimming nicely, sinking less often, despite unfavorable tides. *The American Bookseller's Association handbook* will contain a chapter on the independent (small) publisher which asserts that the bookseller can no longer afford to ignore these presses. Thus, the old arguments seem academic, to be matters of principle rather than practice, of style rather than survival.

But every now and again some concatenation of circumstances stirs up strange eddies of feeling and this latest is a combination of two things: an article in *Publisher's Weekly*, March 21, 1980, and the absence from all issues of news of a significant book event.

George Brockway, Chairman of W.W. Norton, prepared a speech on conglomerates for delivery at a meeting of P.E.N. devoted to that subject. It was not delivered, and an article based on his remarks appeared in the issue of PW mentioned above. In it Brockway has, it appears, two points to make: conglomeration doesn't do any damage to American publishing and the mass market distribution system does. He seems to have sound, if scattered arguments for the latter, but his choice of one villain over the other remains largely a mystery—as though we can have only one bad trend at a time and, having

SIPAPU 1980: JAN. = JAN. V. 11, NO. 1. = Q1. NO. 2).

A newsletter for librarians, collectors, and others interested in the alternative press, which includes small presses, "underground" presses, Third World, feminist, and dissent literature in general. Price: \$4.00 for two issues a year (new price effective 1/1/1978). Free to exchange papers, library school students and prisoners (but library schools and prisons themselves, pay the full amount). Canadian subscribers, please remit in U.S. funds. Californian subscribers, please add 6% tax (applicable on periodicals coming out less than 4 times a year, and that's us). No stamps, please; Federal law prohibits the use of stamps in lieu of currency. Editor and Publisher: Noel Peattie, Route 1, Box 216, Winters, CA 95694; also, Peter J. Shields Library, University of California, Davis, CA 95616. (Not a publication of the University of California). Member COSMEP, APS. ISSN 0037-5837. Copyright Noel Peattie 1980.

AS WE FINISHED OUR LAST ISSUE, we considered the possibility of closing down this publication. Besides the fact that costs rise while our subscription list remains stable or slowly declines, we have found that as the years go on, we were becoming victims of our own modest success. In the early seventies it was the Third World in America that was calling for attention; librarians were begging for awareness-lists and information on Afro-Americans, Chicanos, etc.; while feminism emerged as a leading topic later in the decade. In the later seventies the small press took fire, COSMEP became well-known, and book fairs and panels impressed the importance of small press activities on librarians. In all of these stages of consciousness, Sipapu had a tiny part to play. Now, all our readers know about the Third World and the counter-culture; feminism is widely discussed; and there is an annual review of small press publications

(Interesting ideas on publishing in this issue of *Sipapu*, this cover page & pp. 2, 3, 5. which follow).

in Library journal. In our race against obsolescence, we needed a new theme. Ecology? Radicalism? Fine printing? all very interesting themes, and not to be neglected, but already well voiced and to some extent the domain of professional writers and publishers in the field.

At length it occurred to us that there is one theme which is familiar to all, and superficially very popular, but which when actually discussed seriously, raises the hackles of many citizens otherwise outwardly peaceful. That theme is peace. The events of the last few months have alerted us, in common with others, to the fact that another world war could indeed break out, and that it would cast other concerns, group or private, into permanent irrelevance. The literature of peace is still scattered, books and periodicals urging disarmament are not well known, and at peace rallies the people seeking peace are apt to be surrounded by other special-interest groups with their own particular axes to grind. In addition, there are large areas of the country in which a public stand for peace is still considered equivalent to appeasement or simply "unpatriotic", i.e., in bad taste. These facts suggest that, without losing contact with our friends of the past, and while continuing to welcome ethnic and small-press publications for review, we should try to round up and present to you serious works on the peace movement in America today. We're less interested in leaflets or rally announcements than in bibliographies and substantial reference works, as well as periodicals and series on the subject.



OUR OWN SMALL PRESS, the Cannonade Press, may seem ill-titled to any who have read the above remarks, but actually this Kelsey 6x10 is so styled because it fires off broadsides -- poetry broadsides,

obviously; harmless verse (if you can believe there is such a thing). You can get our "Green poem" for free, along with other broadsides from Konocti Books, while they last, just by checking the appropriate space on the inside back cover. Also catalogs from Western Independent Publishers; the catalog is still valuable as regards publishers, even if the warehouse is no longer in operation.



¡PARACAIDISMO! Is this the name of a revolutionary movement in Paraguay? The name of a theological tendency among the worker-priests of Brazil? Not at all; it is simply the Spanish title of of a book on parachuting, or skydiving, the subject-matter and sport of what is certainly the most unusual of small-press publishers. For every thousand poets, and every hundred genealogists, there can be only ten who have something to give the world, in the small press scene, that is more than a reflection of themselves; and this most courteous gentleman with a fringe of gray beard, whose very house above Goleta, California, invites a skyey leap as far as Santa Rosa Island, -- turns out to be neither a dreaming poet nor a self-sustaining hobbyist, but a businessman with a head hard as nails and a considerable willingness to share his time and talents with others; his book, in the original English, is the bible of every skydiver. We introduce you to Dan Poynter, publisher and member of the COSMEP (Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers) Board of Directors:

SIPAPU: Birth and education?

POYNTER: 17 September 1938; grew up in San Francisco, moved East for 11 years, got smart and moved to Santa Barbara five years ago. I studied economics in college (University of the Pacific, Stockton) and spent the next two years in law school. Spent the next 15 years in marketing and became a hardened businessman. As a parachute user, designer and salesman, I came to understand all sides of the picture. Now I am applying what I have learned to publishing. The competition in this field is easy, since most of the people in publishing are not marketing-oriented. They publish what appeals to them, not what might appeal to the consumer. Instead of promoting a book once they have published it, they go on to the production of a new book.

SIPAPU: Your occupation, before skydiving and parachuting?

POYNTER: After school, I worked for or ran parachuting companies in Oakland, CA, Flemington, NJ, Orange, MA, Manchester, CT, Boston, and

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library. Then it's more letters and usually a second trip or two to fill in the holes.

SIPAPU: We note that you operate your publishing business out of a very nice home on a hill overlooking the Pacific, just up the coast from Santa Barbara. Just how successful has your publishing business been?

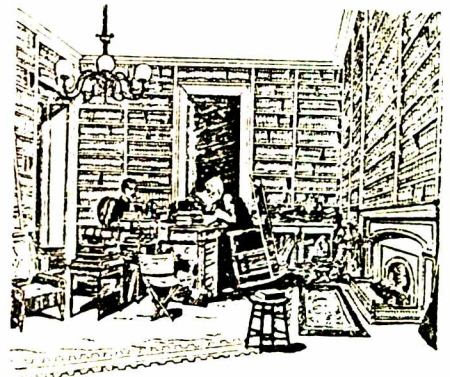
POYNTER: One bestseller is in its ninth revised edition with over 125,000 copies in print, and I have several books which sell at a steady rate of ten to twelve thousand copies per year, -- year after year. The titles with a lower volume (1000 per year) carry a higher relative price (\$9.95). So far, I've moved over a quarter million books for more than 1½ million dollars in sales. Annually, the business grosses in the low six figures and last year I shipped 66,000 books.

SIPAPU: A tad more than most COSMEP members are making these days. Yet here you are on the COSMEP Board. What have you learned there, and what have you taught?

POYNTER: In serving on the COSMEP Board, I have learned about a side of publishing that is new to me, -- the literary side. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve with the present Board. While I understand that some past Boards did not function in complete harmony, this one is cooperative and hard-working. Without exception, they have enthusiastically accepted every program I have offered for their consideration. I have served on numerous other Boards for many years, and it has been a great challenge to propose the better programs for COSMEP.

SIPAPU: What do you see as the future for self-publishing?

POYNTER: Very positive. In fact, it will be the only way to get a manuscript into print. 300,000 book-length manuscripts go unpublished every year. Now that the big soap and oil companies are buying up the New York publishers, they are concentrating on the hot sellers. Unless you have published successfully before, or are a political or Hollywood personality, your chances of even having your manuscript read are close to zero -- and decreasing all the time. Therefore, the only alternative is self-publishing. Self-published



Indexing Small Magazines

Dear SPR:

It's taken me all this time to send you an answer to the question posed by Rick Peabody of *Gargoyle* regarding indexing of small press publications in the standard library media. He sent you some eleven periodicals, from which I culled three standing publishers—publishers who could be expected to continue doing their indexing, no matter who they might incorporate. Actually there were four, but Chicorel Library Publishing Corporation did not choose to respond, and at least one took a long time to answer.

Basically, the problem that Peabody set was this: How does one get listed in "prestigious" indexes? Or, to put it concretely, suppose I publish a poem in Peabody's own publication, *Gargoyle*, how is this retrieved through indexes of which librarians have any knowledge? I sent indexers a number of letters (all beginning, "I'm doing an article for *Small Press Review*, and I'd like to know...and got the following replies, which I abridge:

Index Of American Periodical Verse. County College of Morris, Denver, NJ 07801. "The selection of periodicals for inclusion in **Index of American Periodical Verse** has never been easy. The decision of selection and inclusion also produced exclusion and sometimes occlusion...I continued to rely on Bill Katz's *Magazines for libraries*, Len Fulton's *International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses*, and later *Small Press Review*, Diane Kruchkow's *Stony Hills*, and *Coda* for news of new magazines... The decision to include a magazine is not scientific. We think of two things, primarily; the quality of a magazine's contents, and its availability. If a magazine shows signs of being editorially alive, we make an effort to include it. If our efforts are successful and the editors cooperate by placing the **Index** on their mailing list so that we don't miss anything they publish, we include the magazine. Unfortunately, that necessary cooperation does not often happen; therefore, some very fine magazines are omitted....

The problem of occlusion is great, too. In spite of making every effort to keep up with new releases, there are some excellent magazines we never see. We try to correct this by inviting magazine editors to send stuff to us to see. ...Our operation is virtually a two-man show... The total number of periodicals containing poetry that we now index is 200. The time it takes to do this is enormous..." Sander W. Zulauf.

Index To Periodical Fiction In English.

"...We list all magazines in English that publish fiction **except** those 1) that publish only student work (i.e. college and university magazines that are devoted only to student work); 2) that are devoted to special—and primarily popular—topics such as detective fiction, murder fiction, etc.; 3) small and regional magazines that we are unable to obtain in libraries such as the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, Temple University's Contemporary Culture Collection, ..."

ARTbibliographies. "Our selection of periodicals for ARTbibliographies is based on evaluation of their historical interest or relevance to students of art history, design history, or related fields, covering the period 1800 to the present..."

My own feeling with regard to these answers is that they are disingenuous, i.e. that they are concealing the truth about indexing systems. *Slpapu*, my own publication, has never been indexed in **Library Literature**, and indeed has no Library of Congress card. I now see why: it has never been cited in any library periodical. Such, indeed, is the likely fate of most of the periodicals mentioned in Fulton's **International Directory of Small Presses and Literary Magazines**. Citations of the kind I allude to, are citations in university-based critical publications. Let us say, for example, that some graduate student were to do a study of *Gargoyle*, or indeed of *Slpapu*, quoting these periodicals issue by issue, or volume by volume; or indeed, if said student were to illustrate a point regarding modern journalistic or poetic theory, citing these periodicals footnote after footnote, then suddenly the aforesaid publications would appear in library indexes. However, don't get your hopes up: as soon as the citations to the periodicals mentioned dropped off, the indexers would drop you, Rick and me, from the appropriate indexes. We would become back numbers—ex-President Fords of the indexing scene.

My own solution has been to index my own periodical. It's a time-consuming procedure; but at least you can say that you have your own index; in Ulrich's **Directory of Periodicals**, the word "Index" will appear, meaning that although no one else indexes you, you at least have a name/subject (or author/title/subject) index to your own periodical.

I'd like to ask all small publishers to make this effort. It may seem a waste of time, but if at intervals of five or ten issues, you make a title/author index of the poems you publish, they—the poems and the poets alike—won't disappear into limbo. Making a collection of poems will be a lot easier if you choose to do an anthology of poets from Sand Hills, Nebraska, or East Orange, New Jersey. Above all, you will avoid the whine of librarians who complain "We can't subscribe to it—it isn't indexed." It's a whine, all right, but imagine yourself trying to run down a poem that you saw once, years ago, but you can't remember where—and there was no index to the periodical (whose name you have forgotten) in which it appeared.

However, the real shockerooney is still to come. Some of you may be acquainted with **International Directory of Small Presses and Little Magazines**, published by somebody named Len Fulton. Sound vaguely familiar? OK. Now dig this: there exists a **Guide to reference books**, which has been published by the American Library Association for many years. It's a listing of all kinds of reference books—dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, bibliographies, in every form of human endeavour. It is published with the assistance of the Columbia University Libraries; that is, it has the same relation to Columbia as the Pope has to Rome. He may travel anywhere, but Rome is, so to speak, his home base. And this **Guide** has gone through nine editions, each with three supplements, known by the names of the several editors; thus librarians will refer to it, from generation to generation, as "Kroeger", "Mudge", "Winchell," and "Sheehy." OK, are you ready? In the seventh edition, edited by Winchell, there is an entry for "Fulton, Leonard V." and another under "Fulton, Len" in the third supplement for the eighth edition (Winchell). Turn now to the ninth edition, published under the name of Sheehy, and you may search indeed in vain, for the name of Fulton. Len, you've been dropped out of the **Guide to reference books**, on which 20,000 librarians, from Miami to Nome, daily rely. Why?

I haven't the foggiest idea. I have two copies of the entire **dustbooks** stable of reference publications: one at home, one at the office in the UC Davis Library where I work. Along with **Alternatives in Print**, Westreich's **Second International Directory of Private Presses**, **Alternative America**, and some others, I can't

September, 1980//*Small Press Review*/3

Article by Noel Peattie: "Indexing Small Magazines", *Small Press Review*, 3 & 4.

imagine functioning without. The Library of Congress proof sheets with which I work never give exact addresses for any small press publication (I would never myself appear only with imprint as "Davis—or Winters—Cal." in a listing of **Sipapu**, which would be insufficient to get me a single subscription).

The least hope I can offer is that the British equivalent of the **Guide to reference books** is **Guide to reference material**, edited by one Walford, and so casually cited in the professional literature. Len, you're in that one, although teamed up with James May. The information is out of date, no doubt, but at least you haven't been superseded. You now begin to see why (aside from clearing up WIP matters, and getting my own periodical back on its feet) I have been reluctant to accept your assignment. I must say, as the editor of a publication which has, for eleven years, attempted to bring unusual publications to the attention of librarians, that the dropping of Fulton's handy **Directory** from the **Guide** appears as a setback. "We are like children in the marketplace, saying, 'We have piped for you, and you have not danced; we have sang for you, and you have not wept.'"

Cordially yours,
Noel Peattie

Editor and Publisher
Sipapu/Konocti Books/Cannonade Press
Route 1, Box 216
Winters, CA 95694.

LETTERS

Fine Arts Council
Department of State
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Fine Arts Council:

It isn't metre that makes a poem, Emerson writes, but a metre-making argument; I am a poet and I write one stack.

Not a poem or book of poems, but a stack, one stack: I have been at it ten years now and the stack is getting kind of high. Novels, groups of related novels, novels and the anti-novel principle, locked in carnal embrace—ten years worth and picking up steam.

I have been getting my stuff out to my reader in dribs and drabs. I hear back the same way: in dribs and drabs. I hear back

good things. Yowls and gnashings. An occasional dollar.

The more money I put into getting my stuff out to my reader the more encouraging response do I get. I feel that I am on the verge of being able to support myself as a writer by writing and selling my stuff to my reader. But I don't have any money.

I work at a job. It's a low-paying job, however. And I am in debt from all the periodicals in the past when I didn't have a job—didn't have a job because I am an artist and pay more attention to my work, my real work, than I do to my public work, my job.

Writing is my work. I have dedicated myself to it hammer and tongs for ten years. If I could once get shed of bills and obligations which have nothing to do with writing, I could get on my feet and then take my burden up again as a writer. To do that I need a grant.

I can't save up the money. Not at the only kind of job I can get. I don't have friends or relatives with money. Commercial publishers won't touch the kind of thing I write until I have proved, on my own, it sells. What would I need them then for?

Do you give money to artists, so that they can become self-sufficient...as artists? How does one apply for such money? Do you put individual artists in touch with private donors? With other agencies?

I feel I would be eligible in two categories.

One is I need enough money to publish and distribute and promote my last book. The other is I need money to live on while I write my next book. And one reason I am having trouble raising it is THEY ARE THE SAME BOOK. Stack. I'm a stack writer. Do you have a category stack?

Not only are they the same book: they are my book and my life. I'm devouring myself. I'm immolating myself. And leaving a hard, fine ash. Jesus, you ought to see it, man. A great long continuous screed about a wild man who calls himself Poet Pretender of the State of Florida, pit himself against poscurs and cultural commissars, through the mail, in the newspapers, what do you say?

This is just my opening salvo.

Just kind of picture me on a motorcycle, with goggles on, this huge stack beside me in the sidecar. I raise up to crank the starter. Will it fire off? Will it throw me ass over teakettle? Will nothing happen?

Don't count on me quitting. Don't count on me getting tired. It's all I know how to do.

Jack Saunders
Poet Pretender of the State of Florida
Mixed Breed, Box 42
Delray Beach, Florida 33444

Some Notes on Pirate Radio in Indianapolis and Points East

"The only difference between underground publishing and underground broadcasting is that one's legal and the other isn't. 'Underground' simply means anything that the major media moguls won't accept—no holds barred phone-in programs, weird juxtaposition of paragraphs (as in our novel **Anti-Matter**) or weird juxtapositions of records (how about alternating progressive rock with classical as Jolly Roger did?), and of course satire." —S9, Feb. 1980.

Technically speaking, there are three types of pirate broadcast stations operating in North America (broadcast as distinguished from two-way communications); AM (more correctly known as Medium Wave), FM, and shortwave. Jolly Roger Radio has operated on all three frequency ranges. It evolved out of the extremely active 1960s Indianapolis pirate scene which began with flee powered, politically non-aligned AM transmitters and climaxed during the early 1970s with the well-publicized (in Indianapolis) Radio Free Naptown (on AM & FM)—subsequently busted by the FCC. Radio Free Naptown did return to the air after that FCC raid but the station's chief operator became increasingly paranoid, more and more alienated from other members of the Indianapolis free radio community (at one point RFN was deliberately jamming Jolly Roger) and eventually committed suicide.

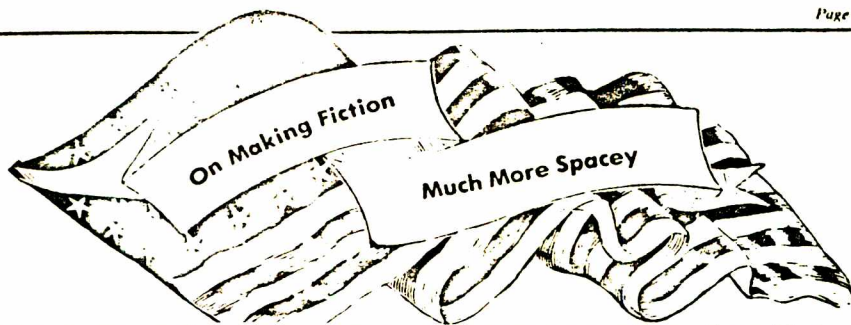
As the only functioning member of the Indianapolis pirate radio sub-culture (with the exception of a bogus station using the same name supposedly in the northeastern U.S.), it is not hard to understand why Jolly Roger is the most "serious" pirate operating in North America (except for anti-Castro transmitters broadcasting to Cuba on Amateur radio frequencies). By "serious" we mean a primary interest in program form and content rather than merely attempting to see how far the signal can be heard. Distance ("DX") represents a major temptation for shortwave pirates, less so for the AM variety, and is probably of no interest at all to those transmitting on FM.

But beyond this simple distinction, it is difficult to say what is serious pirate programming and what is not. On New Year's Eve 1980, WENJ, an AM operation in New Jersey, played Jackson Brown's "Running On Empty." Isn't that a more pertinent statement than a satire aired by the bogus Jolly Roger in which "the captain of the ship made Donna Summer and her disco walk the plank"? Well, however one would choose to answer that question, the mainstream of pirate broadcasting has to do with pop culture: no matter how "serious" its

C O N C L U S I O N

THE STATE OF AMERICAN LIT

By PETER EDLER



The paperback Random House Dictionary gives a primary definition of literature as: "writing regarded as having permanent worth through intrinsic excellence." This same dictionary does not list the word "shit," and it defines mustache in typical sexist fashion as: "the hair growing on the upper lip of men," utterly ignoring those dignified, Sicilian ladies in The Godfather II and their upper-lipular adornments. Still, this narrow definition of literature obliges me to withdraw to a more manageable title, so that The State of American Literature becomes a prologue to:

ON THE FUTURE OF FICTION

My hope is that an attempt at divining fiction may delineate a thin thread by which stately literature may feel its way out of a fictional labyrinth. At the same time I'm trying to develop a perspective on proletarian writing which forms the thickest roots in fiction in America during the Thirties. It was at that time the ruggedly romantic individualist hero was transformed to fit the newly shaped mold of the ruggedly romantic mass hero. It was then that the great flying leap from Poe to Hemingway had been accomplished in America.

Religious gospel was followed by aristocratic elitism, to be replaced by proletarianism which is still with us, though in severely atrophied form. If one still wonders how Studs Lonigan ended up—World War II made a deface out of him. But he did not escape injury. He was halved and emerged in the fiction of Mailer and Jones. Jones walked into a dead-end street of fiction, while Mailer tried to keep his soldier-boy alive through the Fifties. It didn't work, but some interesting new characters of parapeacetime desperation emerged. Mailer, too, realized at last that his future lay in futuristic fiction and finally, or so we were told, contracted for a great epic space saga for a million or two dollars. This effort has not yet been published but remains promising, for here a seasoned novelist with a strong hand may breach and perhaps fuse the domain of science-fiction with that of the proletarian-bourgeois novel. It could be exciting.

Interesting though their work has been, I should imagine Messrs. Cheever, Bellow, Salinger, Roth, Heller, et. al. have been shunted to the sidelines of this great railroad station from which the train of fiction departs almost daily for parts unknown. Alcohol has something to do with it, though some of those writers never touch it. Alcohol consumption has worked in American fiction not only directly, but indirectly by causing some writers to become so vehemently recalcitrant that they missed the mud-breach of the Sixties altogether, refusing to imbibe LSD 25, for example. I call to mind that the children of the first LSD experimenters are now teenagers and hence new readers and, potentially, writers of fiction as well.

The last romantic, muddled, in-sheddable cynic fiction writer was perhaps Nabokov who, while tending

to overwrite, dominated American fiction of style with his ideas and whimsy. As Picasso's death liberated half a century of art, so Nabokov's recent demise in a sense has liberated young writers of fiction. At least now they know that he can't come up with another depressingly erudite masterpiece.

If, not so long ago, the novel appeared to be dead, salvation came from the unexpected quarter of science-fiction. Herbert, Leiber, Asimov, Pohl, Bradbury, Clarke, and Burger and many more working in that specialized medium have received great encouragement and energy from the accomplishments of science and parascience in recent years. Landing on the moon was like reading the opening chapter of a modest sci-fi yarn. Science had finally proved itself worthy of fiction. Astronaut Edgar Mitchell became a supporter of the early Uri Geller in parapsychological experiments. Technological science had begun to merge with psychic phenomena.

This development of the late Sixties and early Seventies amounted to the construction of a new line out of that old railroad station. The difficulty in fiction now is that there is a shortage of trained laborers and technicians to work on this line. I mean by this that trained novelists, that is novelistic writers of fiction, have difficulty employing their craft-skills toward mutational themes, and skilled writers of mutational themes, such as writers of science fiction, either have trouble developing novelistic skills or face an even subtler wall. The top science-fiction writers are challenged by the unexpected realization, at least by popular acceptance, of some of their most imaginative advances. If, for example, it is true that Uri Geller was teleported from downtown Manhattan to Ossining, up on the Hudson, in the fraction of a second—then—, well then science-fiction was no longer fiction, and so anyone who tried to write fiction incorporating such new realities had arrived at the very edge of Terra Incognita.

This is where we are today; the bulk of writers of fiction are either stuck with skills they continue to apply to obsolete realities, or are still developing such skills.

Perhaps the simplest way of putting it is to say that science-fiction has come home to earth. All those starships with their highpowered hyperspace jump-guns and heroic crews that set out for Krypton after World War I have been out there, shipped into and out of space curls, gone through the Great Warp and, not quite astonishingly, found themselves approaching a familiar-looking planet which they soon identified as Earth. Naturally, after half a century (for some more than a century) out there, there was great jubilation. But the returning space cadets found the planet greatly changed and not for the better. So what we are really talking about now is the colonization and pacification of fiction of Planet Earth.

Fiction, from religious, via aristocratic, romantic and proletarian bourgeois to the current mutant period, has always concerned itself

with reality—real or supposed. When reality and fantasy begin to merge, as they are now merging, the very term fiction needs a bit of re-definition. Reality is becoming more and more fantastic in all directions, outpacing the imagination. But fiction has been based on imagination. It is not so much that the magic carpet of the imagination no longer flies, no, it flies as before. But it no longer flies over a contrasting, concrete earth and its towns and lands. It flies over a dissolving molecular mass in which random phenomena are becoming the dominant principles. This means that the magic carpet itself is more stable than the earth over which it flies. That is now the position of the modern fictioneer: His imagination, that diaphanous and intangible thing, has become more tangible than reality itself.

It is clear to me that American fiction (within American literature) must pioneer once again in the field of educational entertainment. In that sense fiction of the future, and the future of fiction, is becoming more serious than ever in its potential effect. It is becoming more of a toll for educating the people to the emerging realities of present and future. In that sense it is becoming more propagandistic.

It is no longer a farfetched assumption that humanity is in contact with intelligences from other parts of our galaxy. It is no longer farfetched even to imagine that officially verifiable contacts with spacial intelligences have either already occurred or will occur in the near future. On the part of writers of fiction there will obviously be the impulse to romanticize such possibilities. This has been the trend of the pre-mutational science fiction literature and the trend continues. Just as Jules Verne's stories romanticized the possibility of a trip to the moon, so we are now romanticizing the possibility of direct contact with extraterrestrial beings.

Verne was not concerned as much with space suits, elaborate preparations and ground guidance, as he was with the dramatic potential of the trip. Similarly, being still unaware of the detail of space-contact, it is the dramatic idea that intrigues us. The reality will no doubt be more gritty. The history of the few contact cases that have withstood debunking shows that the participants were severely affected by these contacts. It is no exaggeration to say that, to varying degrees, their minds were blown. Those pioneers of fiction (that which we will no longer be able to call fiction very soon) who seriously work with such premises realize that they are doing important preparatory work. It is in the U.S., where technological science is the most advanced and social experimentation continues vigorously, that such new advances in fiction are possible.

Consider for a moment (don't imagine, consider) the ball of Earth as the mass of fiction. In such an analogy it would be easy enough to liken odd-rhomed conservative novelists to miners, others to farmers, others again to carpenters, architects, builders of the World Trade Center towers,

then to rockers, technicians and finally—the most exalted position—to cosmonauts. But the opposite direction now is the more relevant. Jules Verne realized this when he wrote *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. We went to the moon and were turned back. Economics—a social condition—prevents further advances beyond the Lsolar system. Already our current rocket technology is hopelessly out-moded and the entire space trip has been no more than a diversionary maneuver to keep the people's spirits up while orbital, armed space stations and missiles could be developed for the next potential war.

In the writing of fiction now there are basically two choices. One writes either about the possibility of World War 3 or about the possibility of surviving it. Just as in the Thirties Orwell and Huxley addressed themselves not to the possibility of World War II, which both men saw coming, but to the possibility of a world after World War II, so today fiction in that classic tradition addresses itself to the potential of the world after a coming war.

Orwell and Huxley wrote out of the pre-mutational era and this limited their dramatic alternatives. Both novels, one recalls, ended disastrously. 1984 with the final integration of the individual in the manipulated mass, and *Brave New World* with the suicide of the individual. In different senses both writers predicted the end of the individual. The prospect in mutational fiction has not changed. But there is now a new alternative, in fact, a number of new alternatives. The first is that of the reaffirmation of the individual by integration into a creative society—remember that 1984 was a destructive-totalitarian society which naturally swallowed up the individual making him/her a zombie of evil. The opposite would be a socialistic concept of the individual as fully conscious and self-recognized part of a new society. If it is true that "we are not alone," this is no longer a utopian fantasy.

That such fiction—fiction toward such future potentialities—is emerging is unquestionable. The mass of readers are no longer unprepared for such challenges. Fiction transmuted for films has been the ramrod to break open public consciousness. Still, there are commercial considerations in publishing which have prevented publishers from acting with alacrity, to put it mildly. Part of this problem has been that publishers are human and not necessarily above the "man-in-the-street" when it comes to sophistication of ideas and imagination. In commercial publishing the terms: literary, romantic, idealistic . . . and many others like them have been declared synonymous with the words: loss, defeat, bad. We live in an era in which it is increasingly difficult to generate ideas whose time has come. Ideas have become public property and seem frequently to be engendered by the public. In that sense the mutational change is that we live in times whose ideas are coming. Once this change is recognized, a new era of prosperity in fiction (for writers and publishers) may begin; renaissance, rebirth. With it, too, American literature may be born again.

William Packard Interviews Sidney Bernard

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Sidney Bernard by William Packard. The occasion is Bernard's book, *Witnessing the Seventies* (Horizon Press, 1977). The excerpt begins with Bernard's discussion of the events he chose to represent the seventies.

SB: I guess I should start by saying that I follow my own interests, however wide the range, my sense of a given event giving off certain exciting impulses of the moment. Now, it's easy to relate that to an Abbie Hoffman appearance at the Electric Circus where he's ducking in, around and through a bunch of nares—New York nares and Washington nares trying to bust him, specifically, and others on the scene. I think the answer then is very direct. In that case, Abbie Hoffman is being not only archetypal, but live and running and kicking all the things that were happening in the 60s, the rebellions against the establishment. As to Warhol, that's the underside of what Hoffman was aiming at. Warhol, in his own way, was outraging, as it were, against similar kinds of postures—the decadence of the upper world coming from the decadence of the lower world, if that's not too pat. As to the Small Press conferences, they were most related to what I sensed about the 60s and 70s. There was a total break in values, and the Small Press movement was a way of trying to discover new values against, again, the rather starchy, ingrained and straightlaced values of the American culture. I always get a very live and very physical, not to say emotional or spiritual, response in going to a place like Madison, Wisconsin, and meeting up with maybe 100 people whose names I know only through the mail we get at the office of The Smith; and it really becomes a kind of solid sense of connection—that these people do exist. They are real people. They are writing poetry or they're editing Small Press publications.

WP: Let me ask you another question. You're describing two cultures: the Small Press culture, which you say has immediate relevance to you, and new values and the official culture. Some of these official events that I just read off strike me as nostalgic of another decade: Norman Mailer, Abbie Hoffman, Yevtushenko, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Lowell, Leopold Stokowski. Is it one characteristic of the 70s that there is a nostalgia for values of another decade in the official culture?



Photo By Filingham

SB: Well, I don't sense that separation. I don't make a separation. I think the biggest dilemma about the 70s could be illustrated with a little incident that happened in the early 70s: I was at Hunter College, where they had a weekend of anarchist people, anarchist philosophers and activists. It was quite a fascinating weekend. Between sessions, I ran across four or five students from Columbia, and we got to talking about the 60s. In fact, the kids brought it up. They said, "Gee, you know all about the 60s and that big event at Columbia where the students sat in and took over the University. You know all that. We're at the same campus and we see nothing. There's nothing happening, and we're disturbed about it."

And I went into a kind of analysis of the fact that it wasn't so much that there were no politics or there were no causes, it was just that all these things stalemated. And I said to them, "Rest assured that the very contradictions of university life one day are going to surface with some pretty strong challenges, things that you people don't like; and you're going to pick up on where your brothers and sisters were in 1968. You in fact are going to have your issues." So in that sense I called it a stalemate. One student replied that it all went away and hid. All the issues had just disappeared. And I said, "Well

no, I don't think it's that. I think the 70s, are a long, drawn-out stalemate burying, but not destroying, the conflicts of the 60s..."

WP: Would the image be a cemetery or a compost heap?

SB: Well, a compost heap would be very good, because in effect, what is filling in the deep rifts of the 60s is indeed this big mound of compost of the typical things of the 70s. Going from front to back, it's a Sid Vicious kind of punk rock which has the facade of defiance and anger; but in effect, has no direction. And phenomena like, Studio 54, where you make a major confrontation as to whether you can get in or not, if you're wearing the right clothes or come from the right side of town. The compost is all of that.