Gordon W. Allport (1897-1967) created and taught the course “Personality: its Psychological and Social Aspects” at Harvard in 1924.

The course was the first at a U.S. college to treat personality theory as a discrete branch of psychology.

Allport joined Harvard’s psychology faculty in 1930, and, in 1937, published *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*, which became the standard U.S. textbook of personality theory.

Allport’s 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice*, which describes prejudice in terms of “In-Groups,” “Out-Groups,” “ego defenses” and “rejection,” arrived at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, and sold more than a half-million copies in the U.S. over the next 25 years.

When Allport’s *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality* was published the following year, it received more attention than a set of essays on personality theory normally would.

In *Becoming*, Allport elaborates the concept of the “proprium” (or self) partially through “Personalism,” a long-extant philosophical construct with multiple contradictory meanings.

Allport’s Personalism describes every mental function as embedded in “personal life”—there is no separable symbol processing or space perception; there are only people who have senses, feelings, and impressions.

The Personologist—a real Allport construct—asks “How shall a psychological life history be written?” and “What are the individual consistencies?”

Depth psychology “may plunge too deep”; “being in the moment” and “being present” are the keys to psychotherapy and to development.

Allport used the terms “proprium” and “Personalism” to distinguish his constructs from the nascent “Self” psychology of Heinz Kohut (1913-1981), and from work by Abraham Maslow (1908-1970).

In a 1943 paper titled “A Theory of Human Motivation,” Maslow adopted Kurt Goldstein’s concept of “self-actualization” and placed it atop a “hierarchy of human needs.”

Maslow defines “self-actualization” as “the desire for self-fulfillment, namely the tendency for man to become actualized in what he is potentially.”

Carl Rogers (1902-1987), in *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951), favors terminology whereby it is the “client” who “has within himself or herself vast resources for self-understanding, for altering his or her self-concept, attitudes and self-directed behavior,” which are resources that require “a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes” adding up to the “freedom to be.”

Allport’s “person” may have also been defined against Rogers’s “client.”

Frank O’Hara’s Personism: A Manifesto (1959) can be read as a parody of Personalism, of related strands of 1950s American psychology, and of the poetry that developed alongside them.

O’Hara, who graduated from Harvard in 1950, writes that he “founded” Personism “on August 27, 1959,” in conversation with Amiri Baraka.

“Personism: A Manifesto” was dated September 3, 1959 when it appeared in the magazine *Yugen*.

M.L. Rosenthal’s review of Robert Lowell’s *Life Studies*, titled “Poetry as Confession,” appeared in *The Nation* issue dated September 19, 1959.

Rosenthal chose the term “confession” to recall Lowell’s 1940 conversion to Catholicism, much discussed when

Lowell won the 1947 Pulitzer Prize, at age 30, for *Lord Weary's Castle*.

In his review, Rosenthal says that *Life Studies* contains the equivalent of "a series of personal confidences, rather shameful, that one is honor-bound not to reveal," and that Lowell himself "seems to regard" the book as "soul's therapy."

In interviews at the time, Lowell said the composition of *Life Studies* was part of his psychotherapy.

"Everything is in the poems," O'Hara says at the opening of "Personism" "but at the risk of sounding like the poor wealthy man's Allen Ginsberg I will write to you because I just heard that one of my fellow poets thinks that a poem of mine that can't be got at one reading is because I was confused too.

"Now, come on. I don't believe in god, so I don't have to make elaborately sounded structures.

"I hate Vachel Lindsay, always have; I don't even like rhythm, assonance, all that stuff."

The reference to believers creating "elaborately sounded structures" is probably a reference to Lowell and the highly-wrought *Weary*, and maybe to T.S. Eliot.

Vachel Lindsay, who committed suicide in 1931 by drinking Lysol ("They tried to get me—I got them first!"), was known as a socialist, and a moralist: "Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all!"

The parsing of poetic form using traditional metrics (rhythm, assonance) was a hallmark of the New Critics.

O'Hara often delivered similar ripostes to the generation just slightly older than his: "Memorial Day 1950" contains the line "Our responsibilities did not begin/ in dreams, though they began in bed," which inverts Delmore Schwartz's "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities" (itself a borrowing from Yeats).

Stephen Burt's reading of Personism looks past parody (and also notes its engagement with Surrealist manifesto).

Ron Silliman's term Quietism refers to a poetic that crystallized around confessional/therapeuticist readings of Lowell and others.

I think of Quietism as a poetic that takes the person to be a radically discrete unit, one that can transcend its embedded construction within particular languages, involuntary hierarchies, elective affinities, large-scale supply chains, and violence-enforced compliances and complicities.

It is a poetic that takes individualized transcendence to be a form, the fullest form, of self-realization, or self-actualization.

In *Self and Sensibility in American Poetry* (1984), Charles Altieri writes that a major track of such work is "The Scenic Mode" whereby poems evince "the concern for modest, highly crafted narrative structures producing moments of sudden illumination."

Altieri draws examples—mostly set "in naturally conceived scenes"—from the work of poets including William Stafford, Richard Hugo, Stanley Plumley, and Charles Wright.

For Altieri, the main goal of The Scenic Mode "is not to interpret experience but to extend language to its limits in order to establish poignant awareness of what lies beyond words."

In an 1842 address entitled "The Transcedentalist," Emerson defines a tendency that had already taken shape in New England:

"We have had many harbingers and forerunners; but of a purely spiritual life, history has afforded no example. I mean, we have yet no man who has leaned entirely on his character, and eaten angels' food; who, trusting to his sentiments, found life made of miracles; who, working for universal aims, found himself fed, he knew not how;

clothed, sheltered, and weaponed, he knew not how, and yet it was done by his own hands… Shall we say, then, that transcendentalism is the Saturnalia or excess of Faith; the presentiment of a faith proper to man in his integrity, excessive only when his imperfect obedience hinders the satisfaction of his wish."

Altieri's "poignant awareness" is a hedge on individualized transcendence.

Quietism and The Scenic Mode partake of individualized transcendence rooted in attempted autonomous "satisfaction of [the poet's] wish," while stripping out faith.

Saturnalia itself was a Roman solstice festival that was marked by a reversal of social roles, with slave and master changing places.

There is now, in Ardmore, PA, a publisher called Saturnalia Books, which has published Sebastian Agudelo, Calvin Bedient, Michael Earl Craig, Jennifer Firestone, Kathleen Graber, Bill Knott, Timothy Liu, Dana Teen Lomax, Sabrina Orah Mark, Kristi Maxwell, Anthony McCann, Joyelle McSweeney, Jane Miller, Catherine Pierce, Elizabeth Robinson, Margaret Ronda, Tomaz Salamun, Martin-Corliss Smith, Sarah Vap, and John Yau.

Ron Silliman, who lives in Paoli, has repeatedly said that the terms Quietism and "School of Quietude" would be replaced.

Another term for Quietism, one that incorporates possible founding ironies and doesn't emphasize landscape or affect, is The Personalist School.

It would be absurd to say that the poets published by Saturnalia Books are poets of Saturnalia, of the Ellipticist, Quietist, or Personalist school.

Some poetry is descriptive of conditions by reproducing them, or mimicking their forms of attention or desire.

Individualized transcendence is, in that sense, part of the master-slave dialectic.

At a time when Allport was still at Harvard (where he taught until his death), John Ashbery wrote his undergraduate thesis for F.O. Matthiessen on Wallace Stevens's "Chocorua to Its Neighbor."

The poem, first published in 1933, was collected in 1947's *Transport to Summer* (and is obliquely name-checked in *The Pisan Cantos*).

Ashbery's use of quotation throughout *Some Trees*, selected by W.H. Auden in 1956 for the Yale Younger Poets series, echoes the vatic emptiness of Chocorua's reporting of what it heard from within a "shadow."

Stevens and Ashbery have both, in somewhat different ways, been accused of being reactionary.

Stevens's poetry was, in contemporary reviews, denounced as something like, in the self-description of John Wilkinson, neo-baroque flummery.

Frost, probably thinking of Dorothy Parker's 1928 poem, said that Stevens wrote poems about "Bric-a-Brac."

And "Personism is to Wallace Stevens what *la poésie pure* was to Béranger."

The conditions that produced Wallace Stevens have disappeared; the postmodern of Ashbery, as Joshua Clover has noted, has disappeared, or is disappearing.

The mainstream, or mainstreaming process, remains the same regardless of the system to which it is hooked up.

Mayakovsky was a mainstream poet.

Every era really does get the poetry it deserves, but description is not always subscription.

Though accused of it in his moment, Stevens does not refuse what Clover, in a recent talk, calls poetry's task, or

obligation: to “figure a disposition” toward “possession and dispossession.”

Possession and dispossession are the poles of the “fundamental antagonism” described systematically by Marx.

For now, possession and dispossession are constitutive of, and inextricable from, the conditions in which poetry is realized, “not eternal and abstract but concrete and historical,” longstanding and contingent.

The fundamental antagonism, itself historically contingent, manifests itself through sets of appearances, which are concrete, and which have been called maya, the Matrix, and the 10,000 things.

Lyric, as the discourse of constructing or staging voice (or its lack), has material dependencies, even if invisio-neuronal, like any form.

Material dependency, as the condition of poetry, entails a disposition toward the fundamental antagonism.

Material dependency renders a work that emerges from a default position, that fails to figure disposition toward dispossession, an incomplete expression.

The positions Stevens’s work actually seems to take with regard to the fundamental antagonism, or the period and place incidentals in which it clothes itself, aren’t what moves me in his work.

I don’t respond to the disposition, or dispositions, as a possible modality (or affective modality, if disposition is affect) for our, and even his, now.

I do have a nostalgia for the particular sets of conditions that Stevens defined for himself, or isolated in his work.

At the center of the SoQ or Personalist or 3rd Way or whatever poetic is the desire to reject obligation or entailment of any kind, poetic or otherwise, including that

of staging a disposition, in favor of individualized transcendence.

Ashbery's non-staging of certain kinds of positions, as a refusal of any obligation of any kind, becomes a (well-documented) disposition in itself, one that refuses individualized transcendence as a final or outcome state.

That non-staging is what recent incarnations of the Personalist School are trying to mimic, but can't, partially because of where JA comes historically, but really just because 3Way cannot get at/to JA's work's absolute transparency as it moves, its indifference to individualized transcendence as an outcome state, its treatment of individualized transcendence as one state among many.

Individualized transcendence, with its particular history in the U.S., when made into a value or outcome state for poetry—poetry's end, or out, or, if unobtainable, horizon of meaning, of possibility—becomes something to hold onto as an alternative to conditions as they stand.

I can find that obstinacy, that stubborn clinging, beautiful.

It's part of what I like about Lowell's work, where power, as appropriable, becomes a kind of individualized transcendence, or Jorie Graham's work, which actually tracks the pathos of appealing to transcendence, or Louise Glück's, which can approach something elemental, in the Greek sense, in being denied spousal-dyadic access to it.

Rebecca Wolff, in a recent essay, reads the entailment of figuring a disposition to dispossession in poetry as a kind of recent fad imposed by specific people, rather than as falling out of a larger set of dependencies.

Her response is to reject the obligation, as a part of larger rejection of obligation of any kind, because she sees it as an impingement on her freedom.

I read her response as part of the continuing history of Personalism, of distorted Free-to-Be-You-and-Me-ism, of reactions against anything that appears to impede self-actualization through imagined individualized

transcendence, or, in Wolff's own work, its extinction or negation.

We all reproduce local systemic demands and appearances within our work and formations, inadvertently or otherwise, which can end up as a kind of depiction or description, rather than a disposition.

Recent movements in poetry catalogue manifestations of the antagonism, drawing on Ashberian (or Warholian) transparency in doing so.

Flarf's pleasure-in-disgust is a disposition toward dispossession, as is Conceptual Poetry's algorithmic ascription of available materials.

I read Rodrigo Toscano's permutations of "collapse" in *Platform* (2003) and *To Leveling Swerve* (2004) as part of the works' realization of a disposition that seeks a space beyond affect.

Spicer's "practice of outside," a name for a disposition, projects competing false sets of givens from multiple eras to block collapse into depiction.

Cutting forward, in the commuter train sequence of Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), talk of revolution, especially that lacking an outcome plan for governance, is staged against art-based model-state dramatizing, and against conventional reformism, as a set of stale-mated impossibilities for destroying the antagonism.

The conclusion that the film seems to reach is that "this situation must change."

The material sites of struggle between the possessed and dispossessed are subject to mistranslation along the very lines of struggle, of antagonism.

What it looks like to be dispossessed in Patna is obviously different from what it looks like in Passy or Paoli.

Less obviously, it is, always and at every point, difficult to communicate across manifestations of the 10,000 things.

Clover writes that “we need to clutch on to absolute antagonism (its essence)” in order to approach “[t]he irreducible kernel of solidarity.”

Toscano’s “Eco-Strato-Static,” from *Collapsible Poetics Theatre*, published by Fence Books in 2008, pulls out, like hitting the minus repeatedly on Google Maps, to show what micro-misunderstanding looks like at the macro.

Stacy Doris’s *Cheerleader’s Guide to the World: Council Book* (2006) shows the cyclical nature of appearance as human “formations/ and drills.”

Juliana Spahr stages the sex and death of sets of misapprehension and appearance in “The Incinerator” (2008).

In *Jejuri* (1974), Arun Kolatkar dilates the gap between appearance and maladaptive ideal.

The protagonist of *La Chinoise* returns to school and we never see her again.

On the subway, on my way to work, I watch everything flick back and forth between normalcy and mass effect, like a monstrous duck/rabbit.

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In a deleted Facebook comment, Jane Dark, in a kind of solidarity across strategy, recalls Buddhist loving kindness as a means to destroy the fundamental antagonism, but for the conditions of its full realization.

David Micah Greenberg’s *Kindness* tracks the multiple sets of forces in play, from micro-momentary to macro-historical, in a single instance of its realization and witness.

In “Eco-Strato-Static,” there is a word, “revolution,” that has been so disfigured by appearance that it cannot be uttered, and a word, “love,” that requires a special plea for comprehension.

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From: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/personalism/

The term “personalism” made its world debut in Germany, where “der Personalismus” was first used by F.D.E. Schleiermacher (1768–1834) in his book *Über die Religion* in 1799. Amos Bronson Alcott seems to have been the first American to use the term, calling it in an 1863 essay “the doctrine that the ultimate reality of the world is a Divine Person who sustains the universe by a continuous act of creative will.” The term “American personalism” was coined by Walt Whitman (1819–1892) in his essay “Personalism,” which was published in *The Galaxy* in May 1868. In 1903 Charles Renouvier published *Le Personnalisme*, thereby introducing the word into the French as well. The word “personalism” first appeared as an encyclopedic entry in Volume IX of Hastings’s *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* in 1915 in an article by Ralph T. Flewelling.

Personalists regard personhood (or “personality”) as the fundamental notion, as that which gives meaning to all of reality and constitutes its supreme value. Personhood carries with it an inviolable dignity that merits unconditional respect. Personalism has for the most part not been primarily a theoretical philosophy of the person. Although it does defend a unique theoretical understanding of the person, this understanding is in itself such as to support the prioritization of moral philosophy, while at the same time the moral experience of the person is such as to decisively determine the theoretical understanding. For personalists, a person combines subjectivity and objectivity, causal activity and receptivity, unicity and relation, identity and creativity. Stressing the moral nature of the person, or the person as the subject and object of free activity, personalism tends to focus on practical, moral action and ethical questions.

Some personalists are idealists, believing that reality is constituted by consciousness, while others claim to be realist philosophers and argue that the natural order is created by God independently of human consciousness.

The French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), though never identifying himself as a personalist, shared many of the concerns and interests dear to personalists, and both benefited from and contributed to the development of personalistic thought in France. Gabriel Marcel was one of Ricoeur's philosophical mentors, and Ricoeur was also deeply influenced by his contact with Emmanuel Mounier, especially in the postwar years, 1946-1951. Ricoeur drew on many of the themes most precious to Mounier, such as the nature of human freedom and the centrality of the human person vis-à-vis the state, though his own later development of these themes departed considerably from Mounier's. He also shared personalism's rejection of materialism and of Cartesian dualism, and a rejection of abstractions in favor of concrete human reality. Perhaps the single greatest element of Mounier's personalism adopted by Ricoeur, in fact, was the impermissibility of withdrawal from political and social engagement.

American personalism, best known as represented by such figures as Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910), George H. Howison (1834–1916), and Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884–1953), took a different tack from continental European personalism in that instead of a reaction to idealism, it is often actually a form of idealism, wherein being is defined as personal consciousness. Howison preferred the term "personal idealism." Contrary to twentieth-century continental European personalism, American personalism, in particular in its early representatives, is a direct continuation of the development of more or less personalistic philosophy and theology in nineteenthy-century Europe and its analysis and refutation of various impersonalistic forms of thought. The American and the stricter personalist twentieth-century school in Europe agreed in taking the person as their point of departure for understanding the world and in drawing all moral truth from the absolute value of the person, but while the latter derived these insights primarily from existentialism, phenomenology, and Thomism, the American school, while in some respects adding to them and developing them further, basically took them over from the European "speculative theists".

The work of leading Harvard philosophers such as William James (1842–1910), Josiah Royce (1855–1916), William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966), and Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) displays strong personalist elements. All of them, with the sole exception of Royce, even called themselves personalists. A third generation of American personalists, represented by such figures as Peter A. Bertocci (1910–1989) and Gordon W. Allport of Harvard, a student of William Stern, further developed the psychological dimension of personalism. Martin Luther King studied under the personalists at Boston University, and credited the experience with shaping his worldview: "I studied philosophy and theology at Boston University under Edgar S. Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf… It was mainly under these teachers that I studied Personalistic philosophy—the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality. This personal idealism remains today my basic philosophical position. Personalism's insistence that only personality—finite and infinite—is ultimately real strengthened me in two convictions: it gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality."

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Isola di quietisme: http://isola-di-rifiuti.blogspot.com/2010/11/arrant-bubble-of-quietude.html

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http://books.google.com/books?id=StE0AAAAMAAJ

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I imagine that if I had a gun, and Joshua Clover and Rebecca Wolff had guns, and Juliana Spahr and Steve Burt had guns, and we looked at each other, we would not revert to a get-off-my-farmist stand-off.

One interim state, one that builds upon recent forms of American Town Hall-ism, would be to bring the guns and

go to a state where it is legal to walk outside while carrying a gun, and to stand in an orderly manner outside of an outpost of, say, The Chase Manhattan Bank, and to talk to people as they come and go about how to acquire a gun legally, how to exercise one's right to bear arms, and how to engage in productive negotiation around group demand.

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http://www.cleartrip.com/trains/stations/JJR