

Autoportrats from an Earlier Era

1. The *res poetica*
2. The stomach in Coriolanus
3. Huyghe downtown
4. My erotic double
5. Camping
6. Value
7. Whistle-blower
8. Transparency
9. The world's energy problems
10. Doubt on the part of scientists
11. Agonistics
12. Positron Emission Tomography
13. Untitled (David Marr)
14. J.L. Godard's *La Chinoise*
15. What did they use to cut paper in ancient Rome?
16. Nocturnal threshing
17. Second Schädel
18. Neo-Malthus
19. Zero point
20. A month of Sundays
21. Koop!
22. Full derivation with an opaque vowel
23. Bouleversemte
24. The prince
25. A footpath
26. Junction
27. Redistribution
28. John Jay
29. Whimsical packet
30. Movement
31. Why it seems strange to you
32. Cerberus
33. Circumspection
34. The personalist school
35. Cat Washington
36. Commuter Train

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The *res poetica*

1.

A *relation* is a real thing, i.e. has a physio-neuronal instantiation between minds and in brains, traceable through Positron Emission Tomography.

The *res poetica* is a relation realized through poetry.

It's a space akin to what George Oppen had in mind when he, following Shelley, called poets "the legislators of the unacknowledged world." It's not like "a city upon a hill" (which "cannot be hidden").

2.

Poets are real: poets make poetry, or its algorithms; they think of themselves, and represent themselves, as poets.

Poets can't help making poetry.

The *res poetica* is the set of relations poetry creates, affirms, or destroys.

In defining the limits of the *res poetica*, place Wallace Stevens' claim "We live in the mind" beside Elaine Scarry's demonstrations of the ways mind can be reduced, with violence, to body.

3.

Poets come out of what Bishnupriya Ghosh calls "local struggles" which cannot be represented from any one perspective.

The poem constructs a perspective on local struggles through the *res poetica*, which brings together medium, author and author function, reader and readers, reception conditions, text, performance, and other poems.

It's a model state that is momentary, fragile, propositional, temporally continuous or discontinuous, but materially real.

It is not different in kind from what happens within the nationalisms Benedict Anderson describes in *Imagined Communities*, or during the prayers Warren L. D'Azevedo describes in *Straight With the Medicine*, or within constructs such as "The United States" or "India" (which Narendra Modi describes as having a "natural relationship").

It's just differently realized, and enforced.

FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT, and it is thus open to evaluation.

4.

Anne-Lise François, following Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, calls an *open secret* "[a] gesture of self-canceling revelation [that] permits a release

from the ethical imperative to act upon knowledge”
in environments of threat.

An open secret is “an essentially preventative or conservative mode of communication
that reveals to insiders what it simultaneously hides from outsiders,
or, more specifically, protects them from what it is in their power to ignore.”

Poetry can be an open secret,
“a way of imparting knowledge
such that it cannot be claimed and acted on.”

As an open secret, poetry “makes nothing happen.”
“No
one listens to poetry.”

Poetry can recycle existing control structures.
The *res poetica* can take oppressive forms.

The *res poetica* can also transmit and maintain knowledge
in the face of tacit or explicit threat,
through articulation, or non-articulation,
within poetry.

5.

Vivek Narayanan characterizes Shrikant Verma’s *Magadh*
as “one of the most highly regarded books of Hindi poetry from the 1980s”
and “among the best books of poetry I have ever read.”

Magadh contains “ambiguous invocations of half-mythical South Asian cities”
that remind Narayanan of Borges and Cavafy, but
“there is also a canny and even bitter political outrage”
that makes me think of Mandelstam, and of Robert Duncan’s *Passages*.

Narayanan reads *Magadh* as an open secret:
“Bizarrely, Verma was a senior Congress Party functionary
under Indira Gandhi in the late 70s and early 80s”
which entailed mortal complicities.
“It’s hard, for me at least, to resist reading *Magadh*
as his way of speaking about some aspects of that close-up experience
in the only way he could.”

6.

Corpses in Kashi

Have you seen Kashi?
Where corpses come and go
by the same road

And what of corpses?
Corpses will come
Corpses will go

Ask then, whose corpse is this?
Is it Rohitashva? No, no
all corpses cannot be Rohitashva

His corpse, you will recognize
from a distance
and if not from a distance

then from up close
and if not from up close
then it cannot be Rohitashva

And even if it is,
what difference
does it make?

Friends, you have seen Kashi
where corpses come and go
by the same road

and this is all you did –
made way and asked,
Whose corpse is this?

Whoever it was
whoever it was not
what difference did it make?

— Shrikant Verma
trans. by Rahul Soni

9.

Despite Auden's epithet and Spicer's uncharacterizable lament,
the *res poetica* is a state discernible
as what Mina Loy called “the level of cool plains,”
a kind of transcendence that David Kyuman Kim identifies as religious,
but that can also be sexual, political, or otherwise determinate.
Like sex, political action, and religion, poetry, and the agency it affords,
is not the province of the individual.
It's always built on local struggles, even when poets attempt
to contract their perspectives.

8.

According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,
“[t]he nebulous core shared by all cosmopolitan views
is the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, do
(or at least can) belong to a single community,
and that this community should be cultivated.”
Seyla Benhabib contends that “since the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948,
we have entered a new phase in the evolution of global civil society,
which is characterized by a transition from international to cosmopolitan forms of
justice.”
Benhabib notes that “whatever the conditions of their legal origination,”

cosmopolitan forms of justice “accrue to individuals as moral and legal persons in a worldwide civil society... their peculiarity is that they endow individuals rather than states and their agents with certain rights and claims.”

Cosmopolitanism seeks to transcend the state via ideas of individual natural rights.

10.

Bishnupriya Ghosh critiques Arjun Appadurai’s opposition of “ethnic collectivists who lack... global imagination” to cosmopolitans who, by contrast, “relish non-national nomadism and celebrate migrancy, hybridity, and mobility.” Ghosh cites the critiques of Revathi Krishnaswamy and Aihwa Ong, who find such formulations of cosmopolitanism reflect the experience of “transnational elites” who “fetishize their marginality as migrants, while synchronizing the global flows that underpin the new world order.” Addressing a body called “The International Agency for Cities of Refuge,” Jacques Derrida, elaborating an idea of cosmopolitanism, at a conference on “The Charter of Cities of Refuge,” finds that the conference-goers have defined for themselves the task of “bring[ing] about the proclamation and institution of numerous, and, above all, autonomous, ‘cities of refuge’, each as independent from the other and from the state as possible, but, nevertheless, allied to each other according to forms of solidarity yet to be invented.”

12.

Sheldon Pollock writes against “what often seems to be the single desperate choice we are offered:

between, on the one hand, a national vernacularity dressed in the frayed period costume of violent revanchism and bent on preserving difference at all costs and, on the other, a clear-cutting, strip-mining multinational cosmopolitanism that is bent, at all costs, on eliminating it.”

Pollock wants to “conceive of the practice of cosmopolitanism as literary communication that travels far, indeed, without obstruction from any boundaries at all, and, more important, that thinks of itself as unbounded, unobstructed, unlocated — writing of the great Way, rather than the small Place.”

At the same time, Pollock wants to “think about cosmopolitanism and vernacularism as action rather than idea, as something people do rather than something they declare, as practice rather than proposition (least of all, philosophical proposition),” and also as a *choice*, one which in turn “enables us to see that some people in the past have been able to be cosmopolitan or vernacular without directly professing either, perhaps while finding it impossible rationally to justify either.”

At the time of its dominance, Latin was a cosmopolitanist idiom, and English, Spanish, German and Italian were vernaculars.

At the time of its dominance, Sanskrit was a cosmopolitanist idiom, and Hindustani Tamil, Kannada, Javanese, and Marathi were vernaculars.

7.

Monolingual speakers of English can access re-representations of vernacular FORMS
but not the chains of meanings associated with them.

One recent response to lack of access to the conventional meanings
of, for example, Tamil film, is to use the tools at hand
to appropriate its forms into a superordinate neo-cosmopolitanist idiom,
via, for example, heightened cuts, homophonic subtitles, and pasted voice-overs,
which are forms of, among other things, simulating
accessibility and discursive mastery.

The failure of global capital to fulfill its implicit promise of total access
is not quite ironized in the work like this that I've seen,
which is more like a fetish.

The failure of a vernacular to signify outside of its domain
is made out, in this work, to be the vernacular's problem,
its amusing deficiency.

The author function of the work can incorporate the ironies of that reading,
and try to make them reflect back on communication failure
within dominant modes, which produce (and this is what makes it lyric)
a kind of pathos, which can be beautiful.

The negotiations take place within the *res poetica*.

8.

I once published a poem that contained the following three lines
The Asian woman sat eating Tam crackers.
I laughed.
This stuff is endless.

When I first read the poem at Halcyon in Brooklyn in 2000,
a member of the audience had a visible visceral reaction,
and the *res poetica*, running like a current through that moment,
was damaged and reduced.

Poetry can, I guess, attempt to recapitulate and reiterate racist thought
without the poem's author function seeming to be a node
for drawing pleasure in discharge from the thought itself,
but it requires permission, which can only be rendered
within the *res poetica*,

A whole movement in poetry developed out of that premise.
Or maybe it developed out of an ironic effort to drain the stereotypes of charge
by the act of drawing pleasure out of disgust in re-iterating them,
as a sign of self-implication.

Pleasure in disgust, and pleasure generally, can freak people out,
but deriving pleasure from disgust and deriving pleasure from re-iterating racist
thought

probably can't be distinguished.

The *res poetica* takes the place of intention.

10.

Poetry has its own particular modes of reception,

rather than a fixed and identifiable set formal characteristics.

Reception, as defined by Auerbach, is a “subjectivistic-perspectivalistic procedure,” one that, under certain conditions, “creat[es] a foreground and a background, resulting in the present lying open to the depths of the past.”

Despite the yucky metaphor, the procedure Auerbach describes takes place within the *res poetica*.

Maharashtra was created in 1956,

four years after Nissim Ezekiel’s first book, *A Time to Change*, was published, in English, the language in which it was written.

Ezekiel returned during this period from England to Bombay, where worked in close touch with other writers.

Arun Kolatkar, 8 years younger than Ezekiel, published more than 15 books in Marathi.

He published *Jejuri*, his first book written in English, in 1976.

The book is a serial panorama of a sacred Hindu site in Maharashtra, incorporating numerous ironies that play the site’s actual physical state off its accepted spiritual significance.

Kolatkar’s second book written in English, titled *Kala Ghoda Poems*, (after a district in Bombay now as gentrified as the West Village or *le Marais*), was published in 2004, a year after his death.

His third, *Sarpa Satra*, a retelling

of a tiny piece of the *Mahabharata*, was published that same year.

Kolatkar’s writing in English was an open secret

whose nature is only beginning to become clear

in the lights of linguistic politics, Hindu and Maharashtrian nationalisms, and various cosmopolitanisms.

Kolatkar’s Bombay is a city of refuge whose forms of solidarity are now beginning to be realized within the *res poetica*.

Kolatkar’s poem “Pi-dog,” from *Kala Ghoda Poems*,

set in the Kala Ghoda section of Mumbai,

ends when day breaks, and, as in many cities in India,

the dogs, who have ruled small sections of the night roads,

“surrender the city

to its so-called masters.”

IO.

Anne Boyer’s daughter recently said that the choices are between shut-in or revolutionary.

The air has run out of the piety market.

The staging of voice can be a revelatory

model, opiate, refuge, by-product, or iteration, for what it is worth.

“Metaphysical blippety-blips while sucking candor lozenge?”

— “The Cosmopolitans”

Sianne Ngai and Brian Kim Stefans

'my'
Materialism

↓
the Soul Aristotle

Don't hate
goat's milk

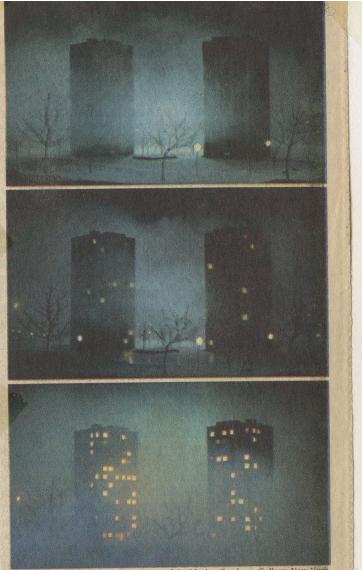
Gentry as
'isomath'
in Coriolanus

Cirling railroad yard of
~~male parent~~
milk
milk
muck
Dogenback



"we created a monster out of Le Corbusier's utopia," Mr. Huyghe says. "When people first arrived in these buildings, there was a very strong positive expectation, but the density was too powerful, and they became more and more violent."

The energy generated in the dialogue between the two towers, and its final dissipation, is both a historical narrative and a collective memory — the sum of a thousand small glances on a single event. The result is neither fiction nor history but a kind of hyperreality. "It's about a symphony; not one voice but a number of points of view on an particular event," Mr. Huyghe says. "It is through the montage, the way we combine and relate them, that we can create a representation of the event that is more precise than the event itself."



Courtesy of the artist and the Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Pierre Huyghe

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Avenue and 89th Street.
Jan. 24 through May 4.

"Les Grands Ensembles," created in 2001 for the French pavilion of the Venice Biennale, is one such film. In it, two towers are shrouded in a shifting fog. First one, then several lights flicker on and off in the windows. The towers communicate in digital Morse code at an increasingly frenetic pace, resembling a first-generation super computer. The sound is a cross between what you might hear in a techno club and in the sewer just underneath, a pulse, a boom, a blackout.

Though void of any realistic sense of time and place, the film addresses a specific, if inglorious, slice of

postwar French History. Les Grands Ensembles is the euphemistic name given to the large housing projects that in France, as in the United States, attempted to realize a modernist ideal of efficiency and ended up as icons of desolation and decay.



Camping

What have I been doing? I can't call it camping.

Value

The relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume.

Whistle-blower

~~It was~~ The Chinese often put lead in the glaze of the coffee mugs they produce. We have pulverized several, and tests confirm the presence of lead.

Transparency

Society exists and progresses only if the messages circulating within it are ~~information-rich~~ rich in information and easy to decode.

The world's energy problems

Doubt on the part of Scientists

produces narrative distortions,
~~or noise~~, a factor of opacity
or "noise."

Agonistes

Every utterance should be thought of as a move in a game where the great adversary is our moves that compose the social board.

Position Emission Tomography —

The difference between
what Marx called
'private' and 'personal'
property —

is it possible to maintain the latter
and not the former without
contradiction? — ?

The brain's evolution
operating
a body
in space —

Tentative yes — the kind of cathexis
with 'personal' property —
sweaters, stuffed animals, cups,
pots and pans, a chair —
is of a scale that is
materially universalizable —
six billion cups
six billion cooking pots —
completely imaginable

Fractals
Factorial,
line
Parents walking
to the library
hand to wrist behind
in late May,
inferior
occipital
and
Parietal
areas —

You arched
your neck
and
or calcified — what about six billion acres?

Mapping
lower
glabellae
epiphysis —

Vary affective energy
for disambiguation
does not discount [what is the agrarian
acreage needed to
sustain a person
in a partic.
climate?] —

How many windows do I have to have open in order to make any
Passing

Marxist, *si marxisme* = ..., *alors je ne suis pas un.*
Marr, David. Eeyen.

Aritcles;
Poem Begnning 'The' as pinned wriggle;

rickles stickles rictus wrinkled scrunch of 'the'
white medullafoldiana

which ric tickles you?
who tickles you? ric?

M is in Oman—[M's update about Omanian Indian food] –
having flown into Dubai—[M's pic of airport]

[Lunch at Saravana Bhavan before he leaving
no, at the place that's now Tamil Nadu Bhavan alveolar "Tdahmil",

reverse-engineering the braised cabbage with mustard seed,
and some Hasids came in, since it's dairy.]

Mildred's people and how dark they were Gwenne says and all die Mandelaugen and how
the Russian Jews were raped by Tartars and Mongols and Bashkirs

23 and me
unfulfilled catedy midwestern step-great-grandmother.

Published, like finch down, en deux, meaning that both will, toward death, be forever
linked,

Like the horrid backing vocals on the fourth track of *Ys*, sounds like she replied
"suck my dick on a cherry stone," as if they're facing each other naked on a cherry stone

do you masturbate to vinyl exclusively, produce your own record cleaner, having drawn,
from the coal-burner, white drips that fall back and settle inside a clean behind.

Steve gives a cat toy to my heart.
Terence Stamp Terence Mallick, Terence nihil human alienum est.

Or Kazars disproven are 'we' Kazars, and who Tankoos, Graecius,
the pure sun who throws off, throws the giraffe in the liffey, protesting his innocence

And George Steiner talking about who, about the poems that might now, may now, might
now,
might now not, may not now, now have,

Here's the humidifier,
itch on the supple skin of the hips,

Third wheel, fifth column,

bicycle, car, two triangles

carmel, caramel, camel, pack,
oaxaca, nulle part, bulle ogier

Most of B incommunicable and Deiharryydre
gives me the enzyme

)
relationships
of
genre to
political
horizon
in

The moment in La Chinoise,
shot, I guess before
the Six Day War, where
Godard destroys some
sensitivity for
jewish ~~sensitivity~~
stranger

That film as a whole
predates his involvement
with the real it
a little

But more significantly than
the form the
toward growth
experience

He is the Anna o
the Jura that
falls against
its movement
morality.

The moment in La Chinoise,
shot, I guess before
the Six Day War, where
Godard destroys some
tenderness for the
Jewish side of
stranger

That film as a whole
predates his involvement
with the real it
a little

But more significant than
the form is the
toward growth
experience.

He is the Anna of
the JVA that
falls against
its movement
morality.

He is the ^{Ann's} ^{driv}
The Jew that ~~hated~~ the left
falls against Israel because of
its movement from oppressed
minority to ~~oppressor~~
~~class~~ ~~class~~-oppressor —

One is always harshest with
one's own (Hitlers) —

Thus one's ^{driv} of the hatred, ^{is driv}
which does draw on latent ^{latent} at having
anti-semitism — ~~showing~~ ^{involving} ~~from h~~ ^a possible

He is the ^{antis} ^{driv}
The Jew that all of the left
hates against Israel because of
its movement from oppressed
minority to ~~oppressor~~
~~class~~ class-oppressor —

One is always harshest with
one's own (Hitlers) —

thus the intolerance of the hatred,
which does draw on latent ^{of just}
anti-semitism — along with a major ^{at having}
~~major~~ ^{in mind} ~~major~~ ^{or}
~~major~~ ^{possible}

What Did They Use to Cut Paper in Ancient Rome?

A caesars

which really troubles

Alfred,
Lord

Tenny Pump
unquantifiably

to which to wit,

'razors'

'barrels'

'contortions' -

confounding liquids
and nasals.

Ok,

Heaviest one-syllable word
in English?

Strengths.

Heaviest rock in English canon?

Badger.

Nocturnal threshing

My hands enter the water and sort of separate
the wheat, gold and granular in the water.
It does not get cold enough anymore
to freeze the leaves. The pane shakes.
Nay saying bedside warm click of the lamp,
the yellowed shade, or melted yellow plastic top,
lets hair down to the mats on the floor. Climactic
sets of images to be read off as circled, spoked,
tuned, forced. The teeth of each
winding gear gapped, spaced unevenly, w/o
two quarters to rub together in i/o
folderol twiggy, jerry, quoit,
let it down
("let down
uneas
ily")
Several inhaler, Creation of evidence
spring injector, by stranded
false leads. sample.
Cloudy water
in the same beaten
pans. Red rice
floating
husks. Cast
alloy.

Second Schädel

The land's a pocket mirror; you like to hold it down
and catch flashes of yourself.
It's teeming. Greenpoint burns off its relations.

It's a rimless procession: the sun, unbound but forced to sphere,
tentacles marble, an absorptive French blue, with particles
rising and falling in tandems, lolling in arcs.

Walking past the plant on Meserole, foot
blanket tangles and lips come down, calcium white.
Steam comes out the windows. It smells of perc.

Neo-Malthus

The neo-Malthusian, generally alarmist story about human eco-destruction, of which neither economic optimists nor distributionists (meaning those who would like to see the square footage spread out rather than reconcentrated) have folded into recent findings about thresholds, interdependence and interactivity, can't account for the disruption of ingenuity in environments of scarcity. The violence of the appropriation of science is counterbalanced by a need to get the word out, the reflexive digression a needed point of rest. Similarly, the production of perverts like Balthus an economic effect, one that has shifted as the bourgeoisie elevates directly to gentry, already in motion before, as evidenced by the spectacle of Lizzie's purge, staged by agents told by Massoud to stay home from Conscience Point that night. Explain that. Easy. Contextual pressure nudges toward the quick hits: homemade rockets, hilltop bionics, and superraytheonics.

Zero Point

Leading edge charged to millions of volts,
trailing edge charged to millions of volts—

Spectacle of youth-driven memory
remains acquisitive during development,

adding and storing complex
behaviors and symbol sets destined for—

planned obscenity material—arrival.

Witnesses distracted as much as possible as
predecessors obliterated,

capacities for bio-powered beat-based behaviors
form the basis of distant
mutations,
fatal adaptation
to Fordism.

Coats are not exchanged for coats

and your exigency cannot confront me directly
smashing skulls on the ice repeatedly
to facilitate carbon dating of a single example,
relentlessly cited.

Five people not destroyed by their jobs;
five animals destroyed.

*

Brains wired for incredible violence
produced directly, cut, packaged,
shared and exported,
or hidden and
lied about, whatever.

Each ‘culture’ its own dissimulation or virtual machine
from extrémiste littérateur to practiced flak
to family adviser
it really works
just putting it out there

Parallel states
planes above
casting uniform
thus difficult-to-detect shadows
over and rays onto

the depleted skein
never actually deployed:
structures of representation
rule of law
terms of citizenship

intercourse between planes constant,
sexless, and violent

vacuum between planes
under development

and though the lower
be degraded to countervailing
construct or 'pressure valve',
enough energy
at points of contact
to boil the oceans six thousand times.

Just as a twist of the knob from 60,000 feet
rearranges the village or Syrian contact among princes
and operatives,
scaled-down attacks allow discourse
to prepare the ground
where poetry can still operate
make form like choice.

For Douglas Rothschild
For Nick Cook

A month of Sundays

Sunday

All de Chirico. Limp glove. Moist. Kalt. Vaca. Late de Chirico. Still. Stay in your plaça.
Hanging. Four boys huddled under a scaffold. High. Exit ramps like ram's horns. Stay real.
Contribute carbon. Card. Slot. Hot. Bot. Cot. Cod. Tot. Todt. Toll. Tam. Tap. Toe. Poll.
Poe. Pee. Pop. Pin. Clouds like needles. Clouds like explosions. Like expositions. Like roses.
Like containers. Like pilots.

Sunday

I had tris in my pajamas.

Sunday

You can't say pilots anymore.
But notice

how you can say roses.

Malbecfast of Champions

Punto Pays 2005.
In a big country, dreams.

Koop!

Er, flown the? Nay,
it's what they say
on the train to Oostende
to collect the fare.

Er hat,
said the German
in the next compartment
after I reached for my wallet
and touched her hair.
Hazel.

(ii) Full derivation with an opaque vowel representation are all

free. The specification [low +back] is shorthand notation which allows these two features to associate identically, sharing association lines. The [-round] specification is specific to the suffix. After regular association, the C-elements associate to eligible anchors, bracket erasure takes place, as no distinct underlying repres.

made by Mid Vowel is shared between stem and suffix (see section 2).

The rule of [+ATR] insertion finds only one eligible target, the unrounded height [[kh ð p a m] i l e] spreads via rule, with the grounded condition ATR/LO relaxed.

As for the derivation in [+low], underlying low link representation includes two prelinked F-elements those shown above the anchor tier, the P-elements being (theoretically) free. Right-to-left Lowlink then applies on the F-elements first so that the [+high]

[+low] [+high] regular assoc. (a)

association. [[kh ð p a m] i l e] on the stem associates via regular association, as does the [+] which is itself checked via overgeneralising by [+round] [-back] regular assoc. (b)

[+ATR] insertion find two targets, both on the former suffix. Although ATR/LO is relaxed, bracket erasure

condition on the [kh ð p a m i l e] /a/ is satisfied (being rounded) after the application of Lowlink rules.

The opacity of /a/ is lost under Clements' [+ATR] insertion he structure preservation effect, which is taken to mean that no feature any vowels not present underlyingly from spreading. If true, or if open

in Clements' acc [kh ð p a m i l e] may be added with height 1

[+ATR] [+ATR] spread
n/a

¹⁸ An alternative to proposing prelinking here is to assume a penetrative rule for i-round; spread in this case. Under A is P (1992), this would seem the representationally simpler choice, though the hypothesis would have to be verified under khòpamile, 'became crooked'.

Bouleversement

A golf club
shoved
upside down
down the length
of the esophagus ---
club head just showing
thought the teeth

Apartment-dwellers
in contractor's bags
piled at curb for 12:30am
pickup

Other bags, filled just with blood,
opaque,
bulging, misshapen on the pavement,
drained for sodium
and pumped into
the streetlights

All the city's dogs
electrocuted and left stiff,
piled.

Elevators run on long cords
in whatever direction they are needed.

The Prince

The prince of
the primitive
society touches
his cousin,
the princess,
with impunity.

A functioning Presbyterie
heightens its
men's cries.

Everyone is
getting touched
in Mysore.

I make films
in which I fuck
Indian
girls.

A Footpath

A footpath in Mawkynew. A brighter brown than Roland Garros.
We are all of the view that the area is too congested, and as soon
as we can find a larger space to meet, we will move the group.

Junction

Power comes into the box
from the street. On into the building
from the street, then is split.
Boxed unexposed.

The wires underground spray sparks
within capped frays and insulation
thicker than thumbs.

Redistribution

You understand the reeducation committee;
you can understand me.
The level, and then the appeal
to equitable terms.

The white sauce thickened
by corn starch, the reduction
thickened by corn
starch, the reduction
of the stock.

Tracing out
the argument
as a contribution.

John Jay

Schools should teach procedurality &
paramilitary procedure, and science
should be based on health-care
chemistry and human cell functionality.

Whimsical Packet

Medical element, preserved
tentacles,
strung walls, busted
umbrellas, rice,
lobster claws
strained violin tops,
scrolls, shower
stars, lone peach with
blossom, S.A.
eggplant colored bath
sticky star, hanging
ice-cube like, isolated
flecks, evidence of scrapes,
more fruits and bursts
faded and distressed.

Movement

Instead of trying to undo
while 'growth' mimics
population,
You must have self-confidence
or you will make other people
feel stupid
for investing in you

Why It Seems Strange to You

Songs arrive at the moment
of emotional impasse, when canned dialogue
can't sustain the emotions (thus, the plot),
when the characters 'realize' they
are in the thrall of bad terms

Cerberus

When death was a master and not a miasma, not a failure
of health care, the graveyard sat within the town, city, square block.
When, sickened, you turned your eyes up...
Fuck the ward and its beeps
night as it creeps

Circumspection

Circumspection
pushes outward
to assimilate

Fatted,
and then pushed
into higher state
hood
hoos
hodding handling

Es gibt
Il faut
To a fault
he crept

taken token
too closely
wrapped

in 3

I, 2

The Personalist School

Frank O'Hara's "Personism: A Manifesto" (1959) can be read as a parody of a construct called Personalism.

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.

By the time Allport's 1954 book *The Nature of Prejudice* was released, psychology and psychoanalysis were being used to explain a range of phenomena. The book describes "prejudice" in terms of "In-Groups," "Out-Groups," "ego defenses" and "rejection."

Its peculiar euphemisms proved very useful. The book 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" (the container for personality) 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."

In *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951) by Carl Rogers (1902-1987), 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,” marshals resources that require “a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes” to add up to the “freedom to be.”

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

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).

Other readings of Personism [look past parody](#) (and also note its engagement with Surrealist manifesto).

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 invoked 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.

Robert 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.

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 relations (Maya, the Matrix, the 10,000 things) by which the poet is sustained.

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

Jack Spicer's "practice of outside" projects competing false sets of relations from multiple eras to block poetry's collapse into personalism.

The desire to reject obligation or entailment of any kind, poetic or otherwise, drives some poetry.

Poetry that attempts to replace entailment with individualized transcendence is the personalist school.

The poem that best stages the impossibility of personalist poetry is Jorie Graham's "Colonialism." It is its era's answer poem to *Life Studies*.

Ashbery's non-staging of certain kinds of positions, as a refusal of obligation, simultaneously refuses individualized transcendence as a final or outcome state.

"Perhaps I don't like the word 'useful'" Stevens once wrote.

Forms of appropriation have recently replaced direct attempts at individualized transcendence.

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 1) art-based model-state dramatizing, and 2) conventional socialist reformism.

The conclusion that the film seems to reach is that "this situation must change," that the opposition is false, or falsely constructed given current conditions.

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

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

Dispossession in Patna looks different from that in Passy or Paoli.

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 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.

Cat Washington

The light is pink through the backs of trees
can be pines or larches or pears

kinship terms more familiar than names can be
distancing diminutivizing affirming no longer unfamiliar

power cut no inverter
use the gas make tea

a smell dettol stronger than dettol antiseptic toxic
polished granite compound brown

beyond the trees hills disappear into houses
concrete lain over rebar hand-torqued into concavity

forms a solid gray unbeveled arch from hilltop to roofline
ostensibly maybe probably to keep errant exposed flanks of illegally-mined sand at bay

because beyond the trees within city limits resources are extracted
thin though thin through competition thin like *chats Shillongais*

thin through taking thin through selling thin through use thin alkaline
From our royal blue Maruti 800 we marvel ('I've never seen anything like this')

Belt that looks like it's in inches
measuring the land they wanted to measure right up to the drain

he demanded they measure four feet from the drain and they wouldn't
they measured two feet from the drain

multiply 1300 per sq foot by 150 by something and it
comes to seven crore and something

are you accusing me of making a mistake he said
it's eight

The light is still morning light
thin but full and not paining bright

Cat *Kyntiak*, later disappeared, leaving
jean thread hangings tangling attachment

missing swipes the vox-hollow bereft
Cat *Kyntiak* motionless intent springs forward

curls into grass shadowed by reeds
shaded by the backs of trees

Like citrus vapor the light emulsifies
micronic droplet flammande

Kyntiak intensifies
muscles tighten dainty

to articulate tip
She begins to open and close

her jaws
rapidly in a clatter

like toy teeth and hers are needles
on a wound spring

and she in a trance flashing the teeth the jaws
opening and closing very rapidly

from the throat an involuntary chatter an eck eck eck
frightening until a short echo sounds

She's imitating a small black bird also in the grass nearly perfectly as a kind of lure
staring intent involuntary

Let out in the afternoon moon
hens

sawdust sticking to their heels
forking

but ignored draw lines in the wet grass pushing up
pyrjong mosquitos

Intimate gossamers but gossamers
require cosseting to be expected to survive

Close the windows it's after 5 it's already two hours
that the mosquitoes left the shallows for the shadows

train the tongue to treat *b* as consonant clustering aspirationally
Tb as in *thy*

voiced and voiceless two character plosive
not melded

but single-wound copper core
damp down mutton bone *thlone*

Cat as cowboy
astride

the white chickens
Tb as in *thy*

thick
compound I

we freely
take

Too hot to paint corrugated tin
last month

Too wet now in back to whitewash
or paint the doors

Entire green islands fleck off into black catchment
Sintex yellow print

tin roof in the rain
too wet to paint

Nature where encroachments and distortions are everywhere
Nuclear minority Romulus and Remus same she produces wastes

Romanized orthography botches epenthetic
lot extension

pesticidal garden pathology
of another plot

down the garden path
switching on the pump

Starting construction the field next door accommodates
another giant concrete abode

outdoor tube-lights
fail to explode

Giant golflink Lodge can't get a liquor license
given the objections of the Garo church down the lane

so the Cherokee room, at Rs. 10,000 per night,
remains empty

And the house itself a dacha though in the city
limits the city Salzburg *sma ksem*

Mozart there Julie Andrews
fashioned love out of drapes

what is it Salzburg ringed by mountains like a berserk
Maypole sticking up through the abode of the clouds

while down the hill toward the tastefully situated private psychiatric hospital
the rural health mission strops youth in clime

The red light atop the black plastic speakers' subwoofer beats
in waltz time

jaggery candy striper wound round spindle leading down to three men
in basement rooms the *khrum* for clandestine Buds

I think in America you don't see very many ladies in saris
there is no more native dress anywhere I think only India is beautiful

Morse bill of lading
Ezekiel trading

The light is fading
The bed is mading

The heart is beating
bp-bp bp-BP!

Chattering teeth
like polished teak

repeating
reap

like a
computer, not also the fact
that, not also the fact
going anywhere until they
really, planned, and
without a ~~not~~ mark will be