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A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CANADIAN CONCRETE, VISUAL
AND SOUND POETRY 1965-1972
WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

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Nicette Jukelevics

In the early fifties an international movement emerged around a cluster of poetic concepts and methods which later came to be known as concrete poetry. In the early sixties young Canadian poets working independently, or, in Earle Birney's phrase, "on the grass roots level of creating their own tradition," merged critical and creative resources with the international movement.

Because no systematic and significant listing exists to date, I have compiled a bibliography of Canadian Concrete, and related forms of visual and sound poetry. This includes a brief section on the international movement. The Canadian section includes anthologies, periodicals, critical and theoretical articles, individual authors' publications and reviews of their work.

The Introduction, designed to give the reader general background in concrete poetry, is divided into two parts. Part One outlines the historical development of Concrete, discusses international poets central to the movement, and summarizes the basic principles of the art. Part Two discusses concrete

poetry in Canada; its relation to the international movement,
its distinctive characteristics, and its significance as an
experimental art in Canada.

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PREFACE

The urge to attack the integrity and value of experimental arts, including concrete poetry, often proves irresistible to critical reviewers. A critic writing on Eugene Wildman's Anthology of Concretism and Emmett Williams' Anthology of Concrete Poetry amused himself by talking about "would-be-poets with nothing to say", whom he caustically consoles with the notions that the twentieth century has an art form for everybody, and that "the dumb-struck poet may now make his mark as a concretist, practising a definition-defying discipline."¹ His reproduction of Aram Saroyan's poem "blød", crammed into one square inch of page betrays his confusion regarding the importance of the visual element in the original and in concrete poetry generally.

Perceptions of reality and of man's place in the universe change constantly. When ideas and perceptions change so do their modes of expression. To approach intelligently a new artistic convention one must begin by inquiring about the artist's perceptions of the world around him, his particu-

¹"Hey Doedle Doodle," Time Magazine, 12 April, 1968. The notion that concrete is a kind of poetry that anyone can write is reflected in a recent article by Marq de Villiers entitled, "You, Too, Can Become a Great Canadian Poet". See the Montreal Star Weekend Magazine, 20 October, 1973, p. 6.

lar aims in his medium of expression, and his criteria of achievement.

To begin to understand and perhaps eventually to appreciate concrete poetry, as is true of any experimental art requires that one temporarily isolate it from traditional aesthetic values and judgements, redefine poetry according to the artist's own values and basic premise, and alter one's expectations accordingly.

The function and value of genuinely experimental art is to stretch out the human mind and its capacities for communication with other minds, and to provide us with an exercise in perceptual change. The danger of a traditional attitude of skepticism lies in the probability, rather than possibility, that we will fail on first encounter with such art to distinguish a true spirit of discovery from the pretentious, the facile, and the merely fashionable.

Because concrete poetry is still scoffed at by the academic reader after at least thirty years of modern practice, and because it is scarcely understood by the minority who are willing to grant it recognition, I have included an introduction to the bibliography intended to give the reader an understanding of the general principles of that genre. I have tried, in the introduction, to outline the aims and perspectives of concrete poets central to the international movement, to consider their art, and to suggest ways in which its significance extends into the development of Canadian concrete, visual, and sound poetry.

The bibliography is by no means definitive although every effort has been made to compile as many Canadian concrete, visual, and sound poetry texts as was possible in the last two years. Although Canadian concrete poems appeared in Canadian periodicals prior to 1965, I have dated the bibliography from that year because, to the best of my knowledge it marks the year of the first concrete publications in Canada. Since compilation of this bibliography began in 1971 and inclusion much beyond that point would have required incessant revision and would have made completeness an ideal too difficult to approximate, I felt therefore that the publications of 1972 were the latest that could reasonably be included.

Because the reference material available for consultation in the libraries is almost negligible, and because many texts are published in very limited editions (usually 300-500 copies or less), my major sources of reference have been the authors themselves, editors of literary periodicals, and publishers of concrete texts.

I have personally evaluated each listing to justify its inclusion in a bibliography of Canadian concrete poetry. However, because it was not possible to verify certain items, I have also included listings which were identified as concrete by an author, an editor of a magazine, or by a

publisher.¹ The problem of including or excluding texts with respect to their contents has been a great deal more difficult, and lines of demarcation between concrete poetry and its associated forms on the one hand and poetic experimentation beyond this group, have proved impossible to draw without exceptions, qualifications, and without leaving room for argument.

Ray Kiyooka's Stoned Gloves for example combines photographic images with verse but with the exception of the title pages the words themselves are not the principle constituents of image. Lionel Kearns' By the Light of the Silvery McLune on the other hand was singled out as an influential volume by more than one of my informants, and on the basis of two clearly concrete poems in it has been judged worthy of inclusion.

In addition to listing the authors' separate publications I have also included their contributions to anthologies, to special concrete issues of Canadian magazines, and critical or theoretical articles related to their work. This, I hope will give the reader a broader perspective on the development of each author's style, expose him to a variety of experimental forms, and make him familiar with some of the reactions to and evaluations of the authors' work.

I have also included a brief bibliographical section

¹These titles are indicated by the following initials representing my source of reference; (B.B.) for Bill Bissett, (N.B.) for Nelson Ball of William Nelson Books, (bpN) for bpNichol, (D.R.) for David Robinson of Talonbooks, and (E.V.) for Edwin Varney of The Poem Company/Intermedia Press.

on the international movement to give the reader a source of reference for the historical development of the movement, and to allow him to compare the work of Canadian poets with their European counterpart.

The titles in the sections for each individual author are listed in order of publication first and in alphabetical order second. All other titles are listed in alphabetical order with the exception of the Concrete Issues which are listed in order of publication.

I wish to thank Bill Bissett for his editorial assistance in the preparation of the bibliography, for his interest in my work and for making Blewointment publications available to me; b. Nichol for his editorial assistance, for his contribution to my appreciation of concrete, and for allowing me to make use of his extensive collection of experimental poetry without which the accuracy of my listing would have suffered; and Richard Sommer whose encouragement and confidence in my work urged me to embark on a study I would not have initially attempted.

INTRODUCTION

Part One

The International Movement

Section One

The Beginnings of Concrete Poetry

The term "concrete" has been applied to a variety of experimental and innovative poetry which emerged in the 1940's and is now revolutionizing the art on a global scale. Although the international movement of concrete poetry was officially launched in 1956 as part of the National Exposition of Concrete Art in São Paulo, Brazil, the need for the concrete poem and for the new modes of communication it implied was anticipated as early as 1920 in the second De Stijl manifesto:

THE WORD IS DEAD . . .

THE WORD IS IMPOTENT

asthmatic and sentimental poetry
the "me" and "it"

which is still in common use
everywhere . . .

is influenced by an individualism fearful of space
the dregs of an exhausted era . . .

psychological analysis
and clumsy rhetoric
have KILLED THE MEANING OF THE WORD . . .

the word must be reconstructed
to follow the SOUND as well as
the IDEA
if in the old poetry
by the dominance of relative and
subjective feelings
the intrinsic meaning of the word is destroyed
we want by all possible means
syntax
prosody
typography
arithmetic
orthography
to give new meaning to the word and new force to ex-
pression

the duality between prose and poetry can no longer
be maintained.
the duality between form and content can no longer
be maintained.
Thus for the modern writer form will have a directly
spiritual meaning
it will not describe events
it will not describe at all
but ESCRIBE
it will recreate in the word the common meaning of
events
a constructive unity of form and content . . .

Leiden, Holland, April 1920.

Theo van Doesburg
Piet Mondriaan
Anthony Kok¹

Although the first concrete poems began to appear at
the end of the Second World War and were not as yet defined
by that term, the need for non-representational and purer,
more universal art forms expressed itself some twenty years
earlier not among poets, but among artists of the abstract

¹From De Stijl 1919-20, translated by Mike Weaver in
the Lugano Review, Appendix B, cited in Mary Ellen Solt, ed.,
Concrete Poetry: A World View (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana
University Press, 1970), p. 11.

art movement.¹

The first examples of concrete poetry appeared in Italy in 1943 and were, in their dedication to new space patterns, related to some of the basic principles of the Futurists. Ten years before the publication of the first manifesto for concrete poetry (by Öyvind Fahlström of Sweden) Carlo Belloli, a young Italian poet, wrote and displayed a series entitled Testi-Poemi-Murali (Wall-Text-Poems), and some war words, Parole per la Guerra. The latter were ideograms in which typography was made organic to the meaning of the poem (see fig.1). Sixteen years later when concrete poetry as an art form was fairly well established these compositions were recognized as a major contribution to the beginning of concrete.

The new experimental poetry movement began to emerge simultaneously but independently in various countries between 1950 and 1955. Although their poetry was not yet defined as "concrete", poets in Switzerland (Eugen Gomringer), Sweden (Öyvind Fahlström), Germany (the Darmstadt Circle), Austria (the Vienna Group), and Brazil (the Noigandres Group) began to make several attempts to break away from the traditional

¹The De Stijl group was instrumental in the development of the modern art movement; the complete rejection of representational reality as it appears to the five senses. See Hans L. C. Jaffé, De Stijl (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1967).

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umbria 1943

Fig. 1. Carlo Belloli, from Wall-Text Poems.

ways of writing poems.¹ By 1955 there appeared three manifestos in which the theory and practice of concrete poetry were clearly formulated.² However, the fact that the authors of the manifestos were unaware of the existence of the other concrete poets is a clear indication of the need that began to be felt by poets and artists to re-evaluate the function of poetry, to re-examine the meaning and value of words, and to develop new methods of composition.

The major figures who helped establish and formulate the basic principles of the new poetry are Eugen Gomringer, the Noigandres Group, Carlo Belloli, and Öyvind Fahlström. Because the development of concrete poetry and its various tangential forms (visual poetry, found poems, le poème mécanique, etc.) in other countries was directly or indirectly influenced by the contribution of these poets, in later years, one must turn to their initial experiments and theoretical principles to gain a better perspective on the meaning of the term "concrete" as it is applied to poetic expression.

¹The foundations of this development in new modes of poetic expression go as far back as 1897 when Stéphane Mallarmé dreamt of a book in which the disposition of the lines, the blanks on the page, everything would play a part. His "Un Coup de Dés" is the first published example of a poetry which combined the visual and auditory elements of ideograms. See the preface to "Un Coup de Dés" in Mallarmé, *Oeuvres Complètes*, H. Mondor and J. Aubry, eds., (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade: Editions Gallimard, 1965), p. 455.

²Fahlström's "Manifesto for Concrete Poetry" which appeared in 1953; the Noigandres Group's "Poesia Concreta" which appeared in 1955; and Eugen Gomringer's "From Line to Constellation" which appeared in 1954. See the manifestos in M. E. Solt, Concrete Poetry, pp. 74, 71, and 67 respectively.

Section Two

Eugen Gomringer

When Eugen Gomringer published his first "constellations" in 1953 and his first manifesto, "From Line to Constellation" a year later, he was unaware of the existence of other poets in Europe and South America who shared his dissatisfaction with the existing forms of poetry. It was as a student in Berne that he became aware of the Symbolists, particularly Mallarmé, and Arno Holz, an East Prussian poet who had attempted to find a natural rhythm divorced from traditional meters. It was Holz's particular concern with the visual arrangement of the script and the organization of sound in his poetry which most attracted Gomringer.

However, Gomringer was first introduced to concrete poetry by way of concrete art.¹ While in Berne he became familiar with a group of painters whose work was a decisive

¹Concrete art aims at harmony through geometry and construction. "The artist's authentic material is absolute, clearly defined form. His task is to treat the picture as an autonomous field from which he eliminates all disturbing elements in order to achieve a harmony which is the ultimate and self-sufficient formula of the spirit and hence a visual equivalent of the balance achieved by man in the universe." See W. Hafftman, *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, trans. R. Manheim (London: Lund Humphries, 1965), p. 343.

influence on his development of new poetic structures. These artists sought new aesthetic values. The center of attention was, at the time, on art that sought to define reality with the help of images drawn from representational forms. These artists began to formulate clearly what in the past they had only suspected, namely that abstract painting was also concerned with the creation of realities: harmonic realities existing in their own right and expressed by structures of form and colour, psychic realities expressive of man's inner world, and realities relating to the outside world reflecting modern scientific insight. As a result, the artists stressed the term "concrete" as opposed to "abstract" to define their work. Later, Gomringer adopted the term "concrete" in reference to his work because of his conscious study of the material of his poetry and its structure.

It was in 1944-45 that Gomringer met Max Bill at the Galeries des Eaux Vives in Zurich, a special gallery for concrete paintings, and in 1947 that he wrote a very favourable review for an exhibition of concrete painting in Berne. It had gradually become obvious to Gomringer by that time that an incongruity existed between his sonnets and the direct method of concrete art, which "offered a solution to unequivocal problems of line, surface, and color."¹

In 1951 Gomringer, together with Dieter Rot and Marcel

¹ M. E. Solt, p. 8.

Wyss (both graphic artists) decided to publish a magazine to be called SPIRALE. Its contents were to include poetry, the plastic arts, graphics, architecture and industrial design. Gomringer, who was made literary editor, set out to find a "suitable" form of poetry or to devise and produce one himself. Consequently, he began to explore the presentation of script on the page.

A year later, Gomringer wrote his first "constellation". "Avenidas" was a poem composed of three nouns, the conjunction "and", and the indefinite article (see fig. 2). Gomringer replaced the traditional verse form with the constellation because it is the "simplest possible kind of configuration in poetry" and in its emphasis on the concentration and simplification of language, it comes closest to communicating the essence of poetry. The constellation has for its basic unit the word. "It encloses a group of words as if it were drawing stars together to form a cluster."¹ Gomringer felt the concept of the line required unnecessary words to fill in the pattern. As Mary Ellen Solt accurately perceived it, "naming 'avenidas', 'flores', and 'mujeres' (streets, flowers, and women) they become beautiful simply because they are what they are. Comment would be superfluous and insulting."²

¹Eugen Gomringer, "From Line to Constellation," cited in M. E. Solt, p. 67.

²M. E. Solt, p. 9.

avenidas
avenidas y flores

flores
flores y mujeres

avenidas
avenidas y mujeres

avenidas y flores y mujeres y
un admirador

Fig. 2. Eugen Gomringer, "Avenidas".

In 1953 Gomringer published his first book of Constellations. The poems were the result of his explorations of the presentation of script on the page. Here, Gomringer used graphic space as an element of structure, and rather than printing the poems in the center of the page he arranged the words spatially. The simplicity, precision, and purity of these constellations are a reminder of the principles of concrete art. In fact, the constellations are related in their structure to the constructivist tradition in art. The poems result from an arrangement of materials according to a scheme or system set up by the poet which must be adhered to on its own terms. Everything in the poem "Wind" for example comes from the material (see fig. 3). The design is organic to the word as a material object, it is organic to its inherent message, and to the space it occupies which can be utilized as a semantic vehicle.

By 1954 Gomringer had radically broken away from the old way of writing poems. He was convinced that the usages of language in traditional poetry were not keeping pace with live processes of language and the increasingly rapid methods of communication. He recognized that contemporary language was moving toward "formal simplification" and abbreviated statements on all levels of communication; e.g., the headline, the advertisement, the scientific formula. Furthermore, he felt that these particular processes of language and communication contained within themselves the essential

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Fig. 3. Eugen Gomringer, "wind".

qualities of poetic statement; namely concentration and simplification.

Gomringer's constellations can be perceived visually as a whole as well as in their parts. In a sense they become aesthetic functional objects, to be both seen and used; objects containing thought, but made concrete through play-activity (*denkgegenstanddenkspiel*). Gomringer finds the element of play-activity useful to modern man, whom the poet helps through his special gift for this kind of activity.

Being an expert both in language and the rules of the game the poet invents new formulations. By its exemplary use of the rules of the game the new poem can have an effect on ordinary language.¹

Although Gomringer has created ideograms, spatial structures, and serial poems, his preference lies in the direction of the visual concrete poem constructed with word-signs. He insists on the use of language because, "even in its most primitive usage language serves a spiritual use--so long as it is a language of words."²

Gomringer's principles of concrete poetry, both theoretical and creatively manifested, have been adopted and enriched by many poets since. The ideogram, the spatial structure, the serial poem and the kinetic book are all found

¹"From Line to Constellation," cited in M. E. Solt, p. 67.

²"Concrete Poetry," cited in M. E. Solt, p. 68.

in his work. His concern with the use of elements of language, with the word as a totality, with the poem as a linguistic design and as a functional object have influenced a later generation of experimental poets. He was serious enough about his work to recognize and warn against the facetious and aesthetically meager attempts that have been made since and now pass for concrete.

Concrete poetry is perhaps the most important aspect of the poetry of our time . . . it is important that it should not become merely playful . . . In my view it is fitted to make just as momentous statements about human existence in our times and about mental attitudes, as other forms of poetry did in previous periods. It would be unfortunate if it were to become an empty entertainment for the typographer.¹

¹Form, no. 4, cited in Solt, p.10.

Section Three

The Noigandres Group

The year that Gomringer wrote his first constellation, three poets in São Paulo, Brazil were attempting to define a new formal concept. Haroldo de Campos, Augusto de Campos, and Décio Pignatari formed the Noigandres Group, a name they adopted from Ezra Pound's Cantos.¹ The group soon began to publish a magazine by the same name, and within the same year (1952) they established contact with concrete painters and sculptors in São Paulo, with musicians of the avant-garde, and began a correspondence with Pound.

The following year Augusto de Campos, inspired by Anton Weber's "Tone-Colour Melodies" and Pound's ideogrammic techniques of the Cantos, wrote a series of poems entitled "Poetamenos" (Poet-Minus). The poems, which developed as a result of research engaged in by the group in 1950, helped to

¹"In Canto XX, coming upon the word in the works of Armand Daniel, the Provencal troubadour, old Levy exclaimed: 'Noigandres, eh, noigandres/ Now what the DEFIL can that mean!' This puzzling word suited the purpose of the three Brazilian poets very well; for they were working to define a new formal concept." M. E. Solt, p. 12.

establish the new formal concept they were seeking. The poems in "Poetamenos" were intended for both the eye and the ear. The colours in the poems served as directions for reading (i.e., for male and female voices) and to designate word themes (see figs. 4 and 5).

By 1954 the Noigandres group was becoming a recognized and influential force in the cultural life of Brazil. Pignatari was lecturing at cultural congresses and the group was establishing contact with Pierre Boulez and John Cage.

In 1955 the second publication of Noigandres included the "Poetamenos" poems and the first theoretical articles of the new poetry by Augusto and Haroldo de Campos. For the first time the term "concrete" was used in one of the titles; "Poesia Concreta". These poems were presented under the same title in the Teatro de Arena of São Paulo. The "poems" were projected on a screen and read by four voices.

In that same year Pignatari visited the Hochschule für Gestaltung at Ulm where he met Gomringer. Their coincidental meeting of mutual interest marked the beginning of the international movement of concrete poetry. The following year, Pignatari and Gomringer were planning an international anthology to be entitled "Concrete Poetry". In December of 1956 the movement of concrete poetry was officially launched as part of the National Exposition of Concrete Art, at the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo.

In March of 1958, Noigandres 4 appeared with poster

poems and a synthesis of the theoretical studies and writings of the group. The "Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry" deals with the evolution of the concrete poem and with the question of form-content.

The Brazilian group of poets derived their concept of the concrete poem largely through the influence of Joyce, Pound, Cummings and Mallarmé, and from Futurism, Dada, and the montage technique of Eisenstein. From Mallarmé's "Un Coup de Dés", they derived the idea of using typographical space as an element of composition. Pound, Joyce and Cummings provided ideas for the actual method. Pound's ideograms, Joyce's word-ideograms, and organic interpretation of time and space, and Cummings' atomization of words and expressionistic emphasis on space have made significant contributions to concrete poetry in general.

The group's concept of the concrete poem initially began with awareness of graphic space as a structural agent. The poets rejected the linear concept of form and introduced the concept of "space-time structure".

The "Pilot Plan" deals with the question of form-content . . . in terms of isomorphism ("the conflict form-subject looking for identification"). The Brazilian concrete poets have been able to discern that "parallel to form-subject of isomorphism, there is a space-time isomorphism, which creates movement." The concrete poet must be consciously concerned with this level of isomorphism.

¹ Ibid., p. 13.

The poets themselves define concrete poetry as a "tension of things-words in space-time". They conceive of concrete as a dynamic structure;

a multiplicity of concomitant movements. So in music--by definition, a time art--space intervenes, . . . in visual arts--spatial by definition--time intervenes, . . . (Mondrian and his Boogie-Woogie series; Max Bill; Albers and perceptive ambivalence; concrete art in general.)

Whereas Gomringer spoke of his own concrete poems in terms of constellations, the Noigandres group defined their poetry in terms of the ideogram. The ideogram included the verbal and vocal dimension of the word as well as the visual one which Gomringer emphasized. Because the group now conceived of the word as "verbi-voco-visual" their poems could now partake of "the advantages of nonverbal communication" without sacrificing the "virtualities of the word".

The Brazilian "Pilot Plan" deals specifically with poems made from words. However, the group has occasionally composed poems without words, but nevertheless semantic in content.

In 1964 Pignatari and Luis Angelo Pinto developed a theory for a new kind of poetry to be written without words; Semiotic Poetry. They proposed a new definition of language which accepted "any set of signs and the way of relating them among themselves (syntax) and with referents (semantics) by some interpretant (pragmatics)."² More specifically their

¹"Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry," cited in M. E. Solt, p. 70.

² "Nova linguagem, nova poesia," cited in M. E. Solt, p. 15.

definition included the idioms, traffic signals, computer languages, mathematical symbols, and audio-visual languages (see fig. 6).

The poets attempted to create designs and construct languages according to each particular situation or necessity. Consequently, the poems were entirely functional and the role of the poet then became that of a language designer whose task it was to construct new sets of signs, visual and audible.

Their proposal was founded on their understanding of the function of syntax in spoken language and in traditional writing. The poets felt that any language, ample as it may be, was always limited; one could not talk about anything or establish any kind of relationship but the ones subjected to the form of language one used, and in traditional writing, syntax is the same as spoken language.

Pignatari and Pinto felt they had succeeded in creating a new syntax only to a limited extent. The fact that the new syntax confined itself to "signs issued from a spoken language, whose form is fit to a linear writing process" limited the possibilities of communication. In their semiotic poems the signs must be given a word definition before the meaning of the poem can be understood.

The basic principles which the group established as requirements for concrete poetry included the poem's ability to communicate its own structure (structure-content), and

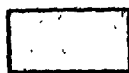
chave léxica
lexical key



pelt



a pátria é a família
(com televisão) amplificada
the country is the amplified
family (with television set)



no fim dá certo
at the end all ends well

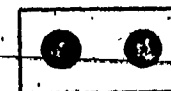
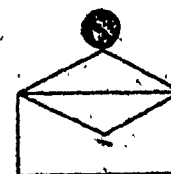


Fig. 6. Décio Pignatari, "Semiotic Poem".

the idea of the poem as an object in and by itself rather than as an interpreter of exterior objects and/or subjective feelings. The material of the concrete poem as they perceived it would include visual form, semantical charge, and sound. The poem's problem would then be one of "functions-relations" of this material. The play activity mentioned by Gomringer as an important element of the poem, is created by the resolution of the problem of "functions-relations".

Despite its international affinities, Brazilian concrete poetry displays a distinctive national characteristic. "On the whole, it is more directly concerned with sociological-political content."¹ In the poem "beba coca cola" (drink coca cola) for example, the poets make a very effective protest against the cultural and social evils of their country, and allow the reader to become aware of the nature of his world (see fig. 7).²

¹ M. E. Solt, p. 14.

² See M. E. Solt's interpretation of the poem "beba coca cola" in Concrete Poetry, p. 14.

Section Four

Öyvind Fahlström

Almost three years before the Noigandres group began to speak of their poems as "concrete" (1955) and Eugen Gomringer adopted the term for his own poetry, Öyvind Fahlström published the first manifesto of the new post-war experimental poetry. He titled it "Manifesto for Concrete Poetry". Although it was not widely circulated, nor translated into English until about 1968¹ Fahlström's statement anticipated much of the theory and practice of traditional concrete.

Like many other concrete poets, Fahlström made a distinction between his work and the prevalent official literary fashion, and although his concepts of concrete poetry are mainly derived from his painter's sense of visual-conceptual relationships, the alternatives he proposed for the new poetry are similar to those of Gomringer, the Noigandres group and other poets.

Fahlström's definition of concrete is not limited only to matters of style. Literary concretion as he perceives it is "partly a way for the reader to experience word art, primarily poetry--partly for the poet a release, a declaration of the right of all language material and working.

¹M. E. Solt, p. 29.

means."¹

Fahlström favoured concentration on language as material as a substitute for self-preoccupation, analysis, and self-expression; concentration on single letters, words, etc., so that poetry may be experienced and created on the basis of language as concrete material.

At Stegana [where a literary conference was held in 1953] . . . no one claimed freedom from preoccupation with the self in connection with the claim of interest in poetical structure.

Poetry can be not only analyzed but also created as structure. Not only as structure emphasizing the expression of idea content but also as concrete structure. . . . There is no reason why poetry couldn't be experienced and created on the basis of language as concrete material.²

In order that poetry may become an organic part of the reality we live in, Fahlström insisted that it should not depend on inspiration, and consequently divorce itself from the realm of myth, dream, and symbols; "The eternally valid word-symbols (if there are such animals) have become faded by much rubbing of the washboard."

Fahlström also proposed the abandonment of the linear concept as essential to poetry and emphasized the poet's freedom to create new syntax.

What is going to happen to the new material? It can be shaken up as you like; and after that it is always unassailable from the "concrete" point of view.

¹"Manifesto for Concrete Poetry," cited in M. E. S Solt, p. 74.

²Ibid., p. 75.

This can always be said at the beginning. But the circumstance that the new means of expression have not found their norms of value ready-made, does not prevent us from testing them, if their value is ever to be clarified.¹

Unlike other authors of concrete poetry, Fahlström placed a great emphasis on the importance of rhythm in poetry. He insisted that a new constructive principle must be found to replace the conventional uses of rhythm and meter; "When we tire of regular meter and at last tire also of rhyme," he wrote, "we must find something else that will give the poem that general effect."²

Fahlström understood that rhythm is "the most elementary, directly physically grasping means for effect; which is the joy of recognizing something known before, the importance of repeating;"³ Consequently, he provided an alternative to the traditional repetitions of motifs by suggesting that one works at filling out rhythmic words as a background for principal meanings which can be bound or unbound by the background rhythm. One could also introduce independent rhythmic phrases, metrical rhythms, rhythms of word order, rhythms of space, as well as construct a poem which demands simultaneous reading or the reading of several lines in which at least one has rhythmic words.

As well, Fahlström encouraged a new "multi-directional concept or reading which corresponded to the "free movement of sight when looking at abstract art."

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 76.

³Ibid.

Whereas Gomringer spoke of his poems as constellations and the Noigandres group referred to theirs as ideograms, Fahlström has chosen to speak of his poems as "tables". In "Bob's Fence", the motifs are constructed of serial word patterns which repeat and reverse themselves to make a statement about the fenced-in condition of modern man.

Fahlström's more individual contribution to concrete poetry theory is exemplified in his energetic and consistent search for varied possibilities of widening the logical scope of the poem. He stressed the necessity of giving form its own norms again, creating new rhythms, and formulating new syntax and new meanings to conventional words.

It is valid not only to mix the word order but to meet the necessities in terms of all the habitual mechanics of sentences or grammatical constructions and as thinking is dependent upon language, every attack aimed at valid language form will be an enrichment of the worn-out paths of thought, a link in the evolution of language-- of thinking which always occurs on the every day, literary and scientific levels.

Fahlström's ultimate definition of concrete as related to poetry is the creation of newly formed contexts yielding new material. "Squeeze the language material: that is what can be titled concrete."² For Fahlström, it is always a question of making new form of the material and not being formed by it. The significance of concrete as he sees it is clearly expressed in the following statement:

In addition the concrete working poet is, of course,

¹Ibid., p. 77.

²Ibid., p. 78.

related to formalities and language-kneaders of all time, the Greeks, Rabelais, Gertrude Stein, Schwitters, Artaud and many others. And he considers as venerated portal figures not only the Owl in Winnie the Pooh but also Carroll's Humpty Dumpty who considers every question a riddle and dictates impenetrable meanings to the words.¹

¹Ibid.

Section Five

Carlo Belloli

Carlo Belloli first explained his theoretical perspectives in his introduction to the Testi-Poemi Murali, and although neither Gomerlinger nor the Noigandres group were aware of Belloli's work, the statements he made anticipated the ideas included in later manifestos of concrete poetry. As early as 1944 Belloli foresaw that poetry was "moving towards a closer identification with the changing needs and tastes of modern culture and art." Included in his introduction to the Testi-Poemi Murali are the following statements;

to see will become more necessary than to listen.

the people of the future will not seek poetry in libraries but on the walls of their rooms, and they will find in it an integrating factor uniting them with the environment in which they work. . . .

marinetti. [Fillipe Tomaso, author of the first Futurist manifesto, 1909] has urged me to form this collection of words which are to be visualized before being read for their meaning, to be repeated intermittently for their internal content. . . .¹

In Marinetti's introduction to Belloli's book he

¹Milan: Erre, 1944, cited in M. E. Solt, p. 37-38.

praised the young poet's dedication to the development of new forms;

. . . these text-poems anticipate a language of word-signs set in the communicational network of a mathematical civilization which will be marked by restraint in the use of dialogue, gestures and feelings.¹

Within a few years Belloli's concept of the poem extended to include what he called a "poetry body". "Poetry," he wrote, "was bound to escape from the pages of a book."²

For the poetry of ideas, for symbolical, technological and other forms of poetry, we have substituted a poetry of simple words whose semantic structure is capable of integration with a corresponding semiotic structure in space: the poetry body . . .

a poetry body is an object composed of words set free not fixed in space; visual words, in that they can be read, they become qualitatively visual because of the multi-sensory feelings that they evoke. . . .³

Belloli's poetry bodies were a creative expression of his attempt to relate visual poetry in space and to integrate semantic and semiotic structures. His exhibition of 1951 included poetry bodies which consisted of words arranged within a synthetic and transparent substance. Words were inserted into cubes, spheres, polygons, etc., to form word structures in space (see fig. 8).

Belloli's continuous explorations into the relationship between visual and semantic poetry were eventually synthesized into a theory which he named "audiovisualism". The

¹Ibid., p. 38.

²from a leaflet of instructions included in *Corpi di Poesia (Poetry Bodies)*; (Rome-New York: Mediterranean Publishing Co., 1951), cited in M. E. Solt, p. 38.

³Ibid.

audiovisual poet's role as he sees it is one of a "word-builder" whose aim is to "define a language of the spirit in meta-lingual terms." For the poet the word then becomes "purely verbal material of visual conception and structure, a precise typographical arrangement deriving from selected semantic values."

Although Belloli agreed in many respects with concrete poets with respect to what constituted a concrete poem, he dissociated his work from the label "concrete" on semantic grounds. As he saw it, concrete poets tended to neglect the fact that form can become the sole content of poetic expression, and because "they sought an arithmetical solution to phonetical combinations" their poems were occasionally transformed into "mere verbal puns." Whereas concrete poetry, from his perspective, substituted "arithmetical construction of monotone keywords of illusory effect without the necessary relationship with visual typographical construction," the audiovisual system of semantic and morphological structures combined with the semiotic and typographical one.¹

Here, Belloli particularly emphasized the organic use of typography in relation to semantics. He sought more than the "expressionistic evaluation of page space" as did Mallarmé,

¹Carlo Belloli, from a statement which appeared in a volume of audiovisual texts, cited in M. E. Solt, p. 39.

and Apollinaire. "The typographical disposition of our words," he wrote, "is not determined by arbitrary decorative or graphic considerations. It is regulated by the physiognomy and meaning of words used in the development of the semantic content area."¹ (For an example of Belloli's theory see fig. 9).

In 1967, Belloli stated that while he considered work as precursive of the international concrete poetry movement, he preferred to consider himself an "audiovisual" poet to dissociate himself from graphic and phonic non-semantic work which has become associated with the term "concrete". However, his basic principles in relation to his concept of poetry make him very much a member of the international concrete movement. It is the following conclusions which tend to place him among them;

for almost twenty-five years I have sought to express myself in poetry consisting of autonomous words unrelated to ideas of philosophical, psychological, social, historical or autobiographical origin.

I do not regard poetry as a narrative or lyrical genre but as word patterns a form of verbal architecture in a space-time dialect.

¹Ibid.

²Carlo Belloli, "Visual Poetry Today," from a letter dated 1967 sent to M. E. Solt, cited in M. E. Solt, p. 41.

Section Six

Basic Principles of Concrete

Although most concrete poets adhere to the basic structural principles outlined in the second De Stijl manifesto,¹ their motives for exploring and developing new forms of poetic expressions are as diverse and distinctive as the poets themselves.

Emmet Williams' desire to use language as material, to "collage it, paint it over, throw it together at random," was not so much a protest as finding his way "to be a poet under the circumstances of [his] own place and time."²

Other poets such as Belloli, Pierre Garnier, and the Noigandres group also experimented with concrete because they felt that the existing means of linguistic communications were inadequate to express man's new awareness of himself in the age of space. They were convinced that the old grammatical-syntactical structures were inadequate to the advanced methods of thought and communication. In their view, we tend more and more to perceive abbreviated and spatially organized symbol patterns rather than read lines and lines of print. This is complemented by an increasing domination of our sen-

¹See p. 1 above.

²M. E. Solt, p. 50.

sibilities by graphics, tele-visual and cinematic images.¹

When Saroyan's perceptions of contemporary society are essentially McLuhanesque; "book, print culture," he writes, "is finished . . . because the process of moving the eyes is antique, has nothing to do with what eyes are doing now."²

Those who have experimented with concrete poetry structures have felt the need to stimulate new experiences in language in order to convey and extend the contemporary consciousness of reality and to achieve a greater flexibility of communication.

Despite the diverse attitudes toward the need for concrete, and the fact that as a genre it is by no means explicitly defined, one can safely outline its characteristic features. Basically, it is a poetry which uses language as material and which creates structures with the language material, integrating as completely as possible the image and the materials so that the pauses between the words, their sound, their texture, and their position on the page play a part in the total information that is conveyed; i.e., the visible form of concrete poetry is identical to its structure, as is the case with architecture.

Concrete poetry considers its linguistic means (its

¹See Marshall McLuhan's Understanding Media (New York: Signet Books, 1964).

²From a letter to Emmett Williams, ed., in Anthology of Concrete Poetry (New York: Something Else Press, Inc., 1967), unpagged.

sounds, syllables, words, word sequences, and the interdependence of words of all kinds) primarily as elements of a linguistic world which is independent rather than representative of objects extrinsic to language, or of a world of events. The objectivation of language is consequently conceived as an autonomous universe, i.e., words are not used primarily as carriers of meaning, but as material elements of construction in such a way that meaning and structure reciprocally express and determine each other. Max Bense defines the term in relation to the word "abstract";

. . . Everything that is abstract is based on something from which certain characteristics have been abstracted. Everything concrete, on the other hand is nothing but itself . . . All art is concrete which uses its material functionally and not symbolically. To some extent therefore concrete poetry can be considered to be material art.¹

The concrete poem is an object in and by itself; it is not an interpreter of exterior objects nor subjective feelings. If it is to be evaluated and analyzed within a theoretical framework, it must be viewed within an "objective" orientation.² It must be considered as a poem per se, as a "heterocosm, a world of its own, whose end is not to instruct, or please, but simply to exist."³ One must accept it as a self-sufficient entity and judge it solely by criteria intrinsic.

¹"Concrete Poetry," from *Konkrete Poesie International* (Stuttgart: Edition Hansjorg Mayer, 1965), cited in M. E. Solt, pp. 73-74.

²M. H. Abrams in *The Mirror and the Lamp* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), outlines four major aesthetic orientations by which a work of art can be evaluated; the mimetic, the expressive, the pragmatic, and the objective. It is to this last evaluative orientation to which I refer.

³*Ibid.*, p. 27.

sinc to its own mode of being. The concrete poem should be approached as a happening rather than a statement that can be interpreted in any way as a generalization about the human condition.

Concrete poetry tends to be objective in the sense that it is not a vehicle for moral or philosophical values, nor is it an expression of a self-searching social ego. In its content it is a reaction against sentimentality, pathos and emotionalism in traditional poetry, in its style it rejects verbosity and arbitrary non-functional verse forms.¹ The traditional structures of poetry have limited semantic value. Concrete poetry however, says formally what it means to say, and means to say what its form says. One can conceive of it as a language system or scheme that replaces linear and grammatically ordered contexts in favour of visual and surface connectives, allowing words to function aesthetically and semantically so that the meaning and structure of the poem is reciprocally determined and expressed.

Sentences are not the aim of concrete texts. What is to be created are ensembles of words which as unities represent a verbal, vocal, and visual sphere of communication. This three-dimensional language object (verbi-voco-visual) is the carrier of a specifically concrete aesthetic message.

¹William Carlos Williams objected to the metrical line because it couldn't accomodate the rhythms of the American speech idiom and it forced him to use words he didn't need just to fill in the pattern. See M. E. Solt, p. 52.

In traditional poetry emphasis is placed on rhythm and word associations. Concrete poetry concentrates more on the material from which the poem or text is made; i.e., language and words are considered in their functional elements of letters and syllables, and in their material presentation. Because it is a poetry of presentation, concrete makes use of semantic, visual and phonetic elements of language as raw material. The poet attempts to establish his linguistic material in a new relationship to space, the page for example, and/or time, abandoning the linear measure. Consequently, a visual poem can be seen as a painting, a design in words, and a sound poem can be listened to as a musical score. The concrete poem, then, communicates its arrangement, its aesthetic dimension, as well as its meaning derived from words.

Words are not the only physical material from which the concrete text is made. Some poets construct theirs from letters, or individual speech sounds. Jiri Valoch's optical poem "i" (see fig. 10) is a relevant example of a concrete poem, whose formal element is a letter of the alphabet. The poem is freed from semantics and is identical in its visual impact to an optical painting. Valoch's poem is realized as pure structure. Aesthetically it depends on the visual value of the mechanical signs used. However, the letters can be seen horizontally, diagonally, or vertically rather than in the static condition in which they are ordinarily perceived.

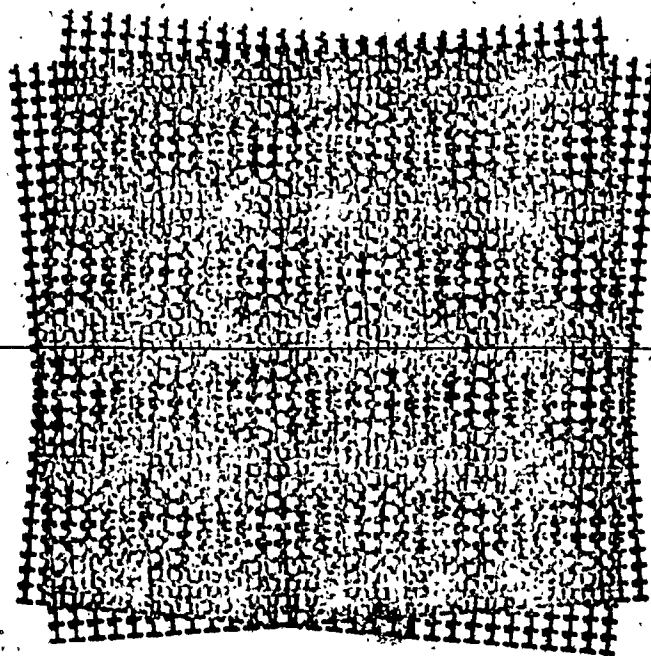


Fig. 10. Jiri Valoch, "1".

Ernst Jandl's "Schützengraben" is a pure sound poem created by the atomization of the word "schutzengraben", the German word for trench. By intensifying most of the sounds in the word he has created an impressive and dramatic poem on the reality of the horrors of war (see fig. 11).

Japan's Kitasono Katué has gone a step further in the experimental techniques of concrete and has virtually eliminated the use of the pen in the composition of his poems. He prefers to use the camera because "it can create a brilliant poem even from trifling objects." Because Katué is convinced that words are the "most uncertain signals severally devised by human beings for communication," he has created instead of the poem of words the "Plastic Poem", a photograph of a

handful of paper and scraps in which rhythm and meaning are not the essential factors. In the "Plastic Poem" the objects are a substitute for words.

The medium in which the concrete poet chooses to create his poem is also functional and organic to the message conveyed. Others beside Kitasono Katué have gone beyond pen and paper and have used materials such as metal, plastic, glass, potato sacks and cast concrete. Most concrete poems however make use of paper and ink as materials of composition, and it is particularly in these poems that typography becomes an important constructive element of the total meaning of the poem. If the poet is going to find poetry in the visual dimensions of words, he must learn to handle them typographically.

Concrete poetry is also characterized by its element of play/activity and involvement. Concrete poets reduce the subjective presence of the author and present poetic material that the reader can feel free to engage in his own way. Concrete is in McLuhan's terms a "cool" media, demanding from the reader-participator a commitment in a situation that involves all his faculties. The involvement is somewhat similar to the art and poetry of Zen. In Zen art the spectator becomes an artist because he supplies the missing relationships, he connects the intervals, or completes the Gestalt.

The reaction to the concrete poem is essentially an individual one, which will inevitably be stronger and more profound in proportion to the richness and sensitivity of the mind that perceives it.

Part Two

Concrete in Canada

Having established within a reasonable boundary the broad definition of the term "concrete" as it is applied to poetry, and having outlined the major characteristics of that genre, it remains to examine how the term is applied to experimental forms of poetry which have emerged here in Canada within the last ten years, to what extent the aims and methods of Canadian poets are similar to those of the movement which developed in Europe and Brazil, and what the significance, if any, is of Canadian experimental poetry.

In Canada the development of various experimental forms of poetry, most of which were eventually labelled "concrete", emerged also independently but concurrently in both the eastern and western parts of the country. In the early sixties certain poets began to express the need to revitalize the traditional forms of poetry which had become inadequate in expressing the realities of North American culture. The impetus to create new forms and develop new themes resulted from a similar dissatisfaction with the traditional literary standards. Each poet independently eventually began to search out the true meaning of language and to reduce it to its

essentials of sight and sound.

The initial experience of Gomringer and Pignatari was repeated in country after country, including Canada. Writers who were searching for a new means of expression, and very often arriving at forms which we would now describe as concrete poetry, would suddenly break out of their individual and national isolations . . . and discover personal and international affiliations.¹

Prior to the 1969 exhibition of concrete poetry at the University of British Columbia Fine Arts Gallery, which brought together experimental poets from all parts of Canada, bpNichol, Bill Bissett, Judy Copithorne, Stephen Scobie, and others had independently explored and arrived at concrete poetry by their own routes. Stephen Scobie came to concrete poetry in 1967 initially through an academic interest in Ian Hamilton Finlay and eventually through his meeting with Earle Birney. bpNichol's interest in concrete developed three years earlier incidentally through his efforts in translating the poems of Apollinaire. Nichol's and David Aylward's concern and experimentation with new poetic structures was well established before they became aware of the existence of concrete poets in Europe.²

In his introduction to the Index of Ganglia Press pu-

¹Stephen Scobie, from an essay sent to the author soon to be published in a forthcoming issue of Ellipse.

²It wasn't until Andy Phillips sent bpNichol copy of the London Times Literary Supplement (August 6, 1964, and September 5, 1964) from Europe that he became aware of the existing interests and experiments of concrete poets elsewhere.

blications Nichol, writing about the beginnings of concrete in Canada states, "I could go on forever giving you that sense that there were purely Canadian roots helped lead us all off in this direction."¹ It is interesting and significant to note here that Nichol stressed the "Canadian roots" for the movement; i.e., the Canadian poets, as others in various countries, felt the need for new methods of communication and developed their own experimental forms as a result of their own experience.

For poets like Bill Bissett traditional grammatical-syntactical structures had become inadequate and ego-involved poetry was dramatically incongruent with the sensibilities and interests of those living in a "global village".

the rights of spring was years
ago a field you enter why can't
poetry why does it have to be
locked in the structure of 17th c.
bourgeoisie stuffed
chair art forms.
look how far
music & painting
painting
have gone always. but
when it cums
to words they
want to control the
proof of your alleg
iance to the ruling class of
meaning.²

b. p. Nichol and David Aylward were questioning the established but arbitrary distinctions between prose and

¹ (Toronto: Gargle Press, 1972), unpaginated.

² Bill Bissett, Rush What Fukin Theory (Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972), unpaginated.

poetry, challenging literary values, and urging the need for a "language revolution".

... there are a lot of questions that people don't seem to ask. There doesn't seem to be a big audience in Canada in the sense of considering some of the basic issues raised about language; about prose and poetry. Even among writers the interest is negligible.¹

The kind of poetry which developed from this search for new possibilities of communication has explored the two essential characteristics of language; the visual and the phonic elements. Consequently, two distinct genres of poetry have emerged from the experiments of certain poets during the last ten years; visual and sound concrete and a visual poetry which has indiscriminately been labelled "concrete".

Although it is difficult to establish with any certainty the direct source of influence on the works of the experimental poets in Canada, it is clear to see that their explorations and search for the true meaning and values of language have led them to the same sources which interested and influenced the European concretists; namely, Pound, Joyce, Gertrude Stein, concrete art, Dada, and Chinese ideograms. Consequently, in a direct or indirect way the Canadian poets who have created concrete structures have adopted basic principles reflected in the work of the international poets. Perhaps the most evident is the concern with the unity of form and content. Canadian visual concrete is concerned with the presentation of script on the page, using graphic space as an element of

¹from an interview with bpNichol (Toronto), June 26, 1974. See page 132 of the Appendix below.

structure. It is also characterized by the concentration and simplification of language in the poem, the atomization of words and by abbreviated statements. Canadian concretists have created forms which function semantically, and which are organic to the poem. Consequently, they have rejected the linear concept of form and adopted what the Noigandres group called a space-time structure. The similarities between international concrete and Canadian concrete are striking in the work of bpNichol, Steve Mc Caffery, and Judy Copithorne.

bpNichol's interest in experimental poetry forms emerged gradually as a natural development from his fascination with the concealed messages within language, the pictographs and the literal dimension at many levels of speech. In his poem "Akhnaton's Dream", Nichol presents two messages simultaneously through the use of small letters and capitals. His attraction to Chinese literature, and particularly the poems of Su Ton P'o, resulted in his attempting to evoke the power of the thing named in his poems through the visual placement of the words. Certain poems in Still Water, the original title of which was the Chinese Poems, are a good example of his efforts to incorporate the concept of the ideogram in his work (see fig. 12). Parallel to working out these concepts, Nichol had been drawing comic strips and working with ideas of syntax and narrative. It had occurred to him then, that the individual frames tend to function as paragraphs, with a linear narrative proceeding from frame to frame. As

star

star

star

moon

you & me

the sea

Fig. 12. bpNichol. : from Still Water.

well as drawing the comic strips he was doing a series of poem-drawings. In a series of allegories he compressed stories of one image in which there was no narrative succession of frame, and indeed no frame, only the cluster of images. By substituting a grouping of images for the traditional linear concept in the narrative, Nichol was "freed out".

To his comic strip drawings, Nichol added single letters floating in the sky or simply standing in the middle of the landscape. Since frames had shown him that he could replace things with the names of things and still retain the power, he realized that he could simply include the single letters in his poems. In his visual poetry Nichol has gradually moved from the "Classical" concrete style found in Still Water and Journeying and the Returns towards a more graphic style using the "frame" of comic books and concentrating more on individual letters than on words.

Judy Copithorne and Steve Mc Caffery have also been concerned with the visual dimensions of language, and perhaps with the exception of Nichol, David Aylward, and Earle Birney they come closer to the European tradition in concrete than any other experimental poets in Canada. In both Copithorne's and Mc Caffery's work the visual element of language is of particular significance. Their poems are appreciated for their aesthetic qualities even prior to reading them. Judy Copithorne's poem-drawings are like calligrams. Her concentration on fine details in her work and her organic use of

script and design is a result of her interest in the etchings of Blake and particularly in Persian miniatures. Both these sources of inspiration are visible in her poem-drawings (see fig. 13). Mc Caffery has been described by John Robert Colombo as the Canadian poet whose work comes "closest to pure typography and visual art than to poetry proper." He has combined his interest in ideograms and his concern for an aesthetic and semantic typography to produce visual poems in the Chinese tradition; i.e., poems which are hung on a wall (see fig. 14).

There is a visual poetry, which Mc Caffery has named "Canadada", which shares certain characteristics with concrete but cannot be accurately labelled "concrete" although the term has been applied by poets themselves to their own work. This visual poetry shares the following structural principles with concrete. Both can be conceived as a language system or scheme that replaces linear and grammatically ordered contexts in favour of visual and surface connectives. Both reflect a concern for the objectivity of the poem and share an interest in simplifying and concentrating language. Both make use of language as material and both emphasize the value of exploration and involvement in the process of experiencing the poem. The essential difference, as I see it, is in the fact that although visual poetry may use typography as an element of structure, and although it may replace linear forms with word patterns, the typography and/or structure of the visual poem is not necessarily functional; i.e., form and



Fig. 13. Judy Copithorne, untitled.

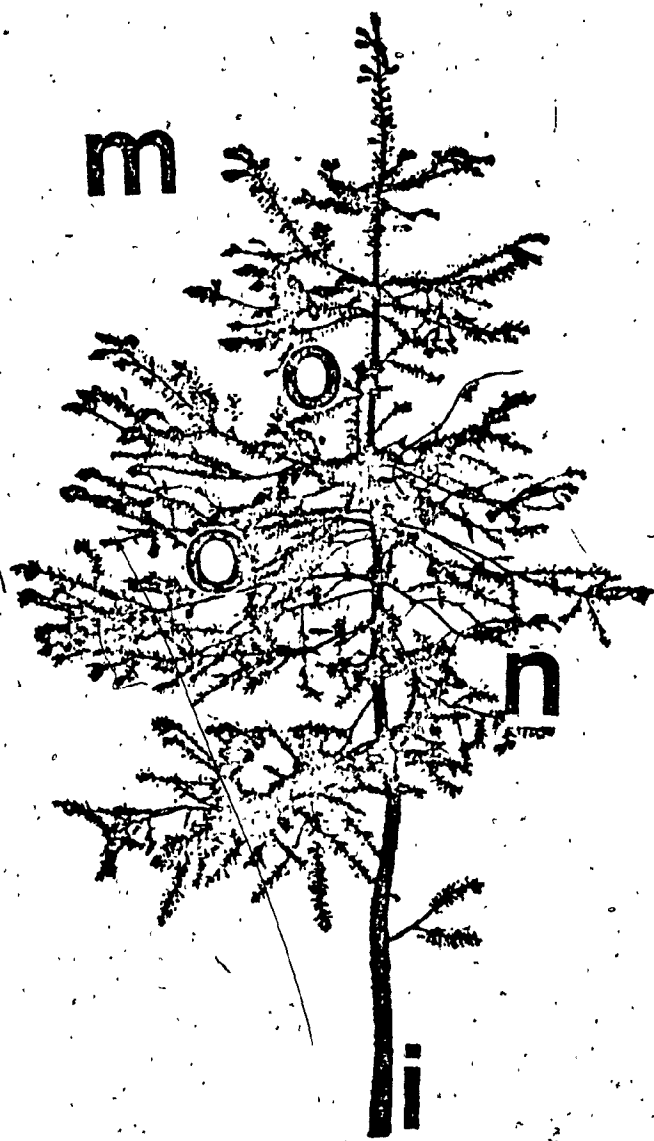


Fig. 14. Steve Mc Caffery, untitled.

content are not a constructive unity of the poem, and the form of the poem does not necessarily have a semantic function.

David Uu has pointed out that the difference between Canadian visual poetry and European concrete does not lie in the aim of the Canadian poets, but in their approach;

On the whole most Canadian poets in this field work on a completely intuitive level where chance is the major technique and disorder common, obviously not what Albers or concrete artists have in mind. The reason for this approach is that Canadian "concretists" are rooted in Dada, the antithesis of Bauhaus, and are not in fact Concrete Poets--but to use the term coined by Toronto poet Stephen Mc Caffery "Canadadaists".

.....

Where Bauhaus/Concrete is one extreme (intellectual/constructive), Canadada is the other (physical/destructive).¹

Hart Broudy's When I Was Young One Summer is an example of a visual poem or "picturepome" which uses language as material but in which the visual form does not have a semantic value. Although the letters in the poem are not used as carriers of meaning, but as material elements of construction and although Broudy himself used the term "concrete" to describe his text, the term can only be accurately applied to the extent that letters in the poem do not function symbolically (see fig. 15).

Bill Bissett who has been credited by many Canadian experimental poets as a pioneer in concrete in this country

¹"Beyond Concrete Poetry," B. C. Monthly 1:3 (December 1972): 94.

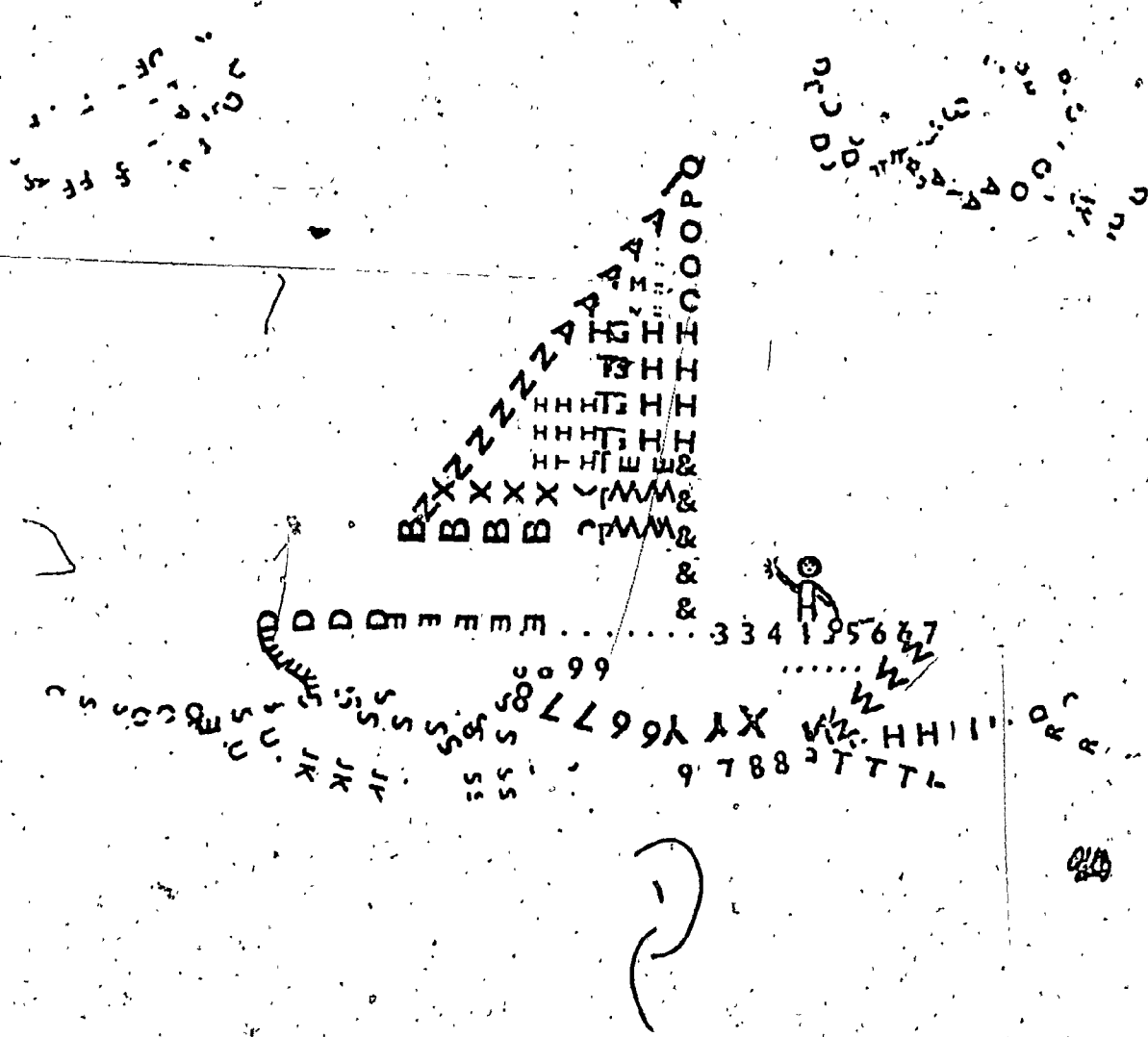


Fig. 15. Hart Broudy, from When I Was Young One Summer.

has produced largely visual and sound poems. His work can best be described by Dom Sylvester Houédard's description, "borderblur"; "that poetry which arises from the interface, from the point between things, the point in which poetry and painting and prose are all coming together."¹

Bissett moves freely between painting, collage, graphics, typographical drawings, visual concrete poetry, "straight" poetry in which the line division on the page is often determined more for visual form than for rhythmical notation, . . .²

He is the one poet, perhaps more than any other in Canada, whose work and style reflect an inspiration derived from the Dadaists. He is a devout supporter of the Dadaist attitude that "in this club every man is president and every man can have his say in artistic matters."³ Bissett's work has evaded the critic's categorisations and challenged elitist views on poetry and on art in general. He has urged writers to "free the language" from "purposive aristotul catogorees", to explore language "byond sentenses byond grammar byond left to right reading."

so you dont need th sentence
 yu dont need correct spelling
 yu dont need correct grammar
 yu dont need th margin
 yu dont need regulation use of capital nd lowr case
 yu dont need sense or skill⁴

¹ bpNichol. from a transcription of an interview with Nichol, see p.130 of the Appendix.

² Stephen Scobie, from an essay sent to the author soon to be published in a forthcoming issue of Ellipse.

³ "Fragment from a Dadaist 'Manifesto'," cited in Hans Richter, ed., Dada 1916-1966 (Munchen: the Goethe Institute, 1969), p. 34.

⁴ Bill Bissett, Rush, unpagged.

The Dadaist influence on Bill Bissett's and other Canadian poets' work is perhaps more recognizable in the tremendous energy that has been spent to restore poetry to its aural tradition. The need to get down to the "warmed roots of poetry, sound and rhythm and pulse", as expressed by Steve Mc Caffery can be traced back to the efforts of Hugo Ball and Kurt Schwitters to "renounce a language devastated and ravaged by journalism" and to preserve for poetry "its most sanctified domain". Today, the Canadian poets are striving to restore to language its rhythmic element long dormant and ignored by poetry, perhaps ever since the advent of print. The result of their efforts has been the development of a sound poetry composed to be performed, chanted, or sung.

The Four Horsemen (bpNichol, Steve Mc Caffery, Paul Dutton, and Rafael Barreto-Rivera) work as a performing and compositional unit and make use of all the possible resources of the sound poem; chants, contrapuntal reading, abstract sound, and occasionally musical instruments. In a program note for a reading of the group, Steve Mc Caffery made this statement;

In liberating sound we are discovering these basic forces [rhythm, sound, pulse] for ourselves in organic expressionistic performance, the repetition of sound only seems to establish an external object of mesmerism for in reality it liberates the elemental regions and most primitive impulses of the human self.¹

Nichol referred to sound poetry as "completely reaction-

¹from a copy seen by the author in the private collection of bpNichol.

ary" rather than evolutionary because it is essentially a return to basic principles, and in its direct sensory involvement and direct emotional confrontation its impact is greater than indirect communication to and through the intellect. Sound poetry, although it cannot be reproduced on the page, and should not according to Mc Caffery be recorded or taped, is a very important aspect of concrete poetry in Canada. In its emphasis on the respect for its immediacy and on the unique value of the human voice, sound poetry is a challenge in the face of highly technological culture.

Canadian concrete does not have a unifying formal characteristic, but it does have a creative ethic from which new forms of expression have evolved in the last ten years. In a sense, the term "concrete" as it has been used in reference to Canadian experimental poetry seems to have provided a context for a wide variety of experimental probes into language. At the root of this movement, as dispersed as it may be, is a belief in the need to venture into new territories, to examine the meanings and nature of language, to redefine worn out symbols and words. In a way it is a protest against mass culture and authority, in others it is using and bending technological media to artistic purposes.

It is difficult to make any comprehensive statement about the nature and function of Canadian experimental poetry particularly because no one as yet has made any definite conclusions about the subject. However, John Robert Colombo has

put forward certain hypotheses that are relevant and useful to those who want to understand some of the concepts behind this genre. In his editorial comment in New Direction in Canadian Poetry he outlines these three features;

Art is an attitude to life, not merely an object or a process, so man can experience an aesthetic response when he encounters a cloud or a skyscraper, a weed or a garbage can. . . . Trees, machines, poems . . . all these pack a poetic punch if we allow them to. The new art forms try to "turn us on" to these possibilities of poetic pleasures.

Art is concerned with perception for it helps us to see. . . . It does this by animating everything in the universe and showing us that all things are potentially alive, and that the categories we use to understand the world are projections of our own wills and imaginations and are not inherent in the natural world. . . .

The new art often looks haphazard and unplanned and uncraftsmanly, and sometimes it is. It capitalizes on the tenderness of simplicity and naivety, and often makes its effects because of "happy accidents", things that happen "accidentally on purpose," as the phrase goes. They are scaffolding meant to be torn down when the building--your own response to the poem--has gone up. In Marshall McLuhan's arresting word, modern art is a "probe," an exploratory vehicle that will take us into new macrocosmic and microcosmic worlds in order to understand our own world better. The new art asks questions but it doesn't supply any answers.¹

"These assumptions" he writes, "are basic to the concrete poetry in this book." Beyond these general attitudes one can add that the experimental poets in Canada share with Hans Arp an attitude which he expressed nearly thirty years ago; "reason uproots man and causes him to lead a tragic existence." By demanding a reassessment of literary and aesthetic values,

¹(Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Ltd., 1971), pp. 31-32.

by challenging the existing uses of language and creating new methods of communication which demand from the reader an active participation in the process of experiencing the poem, and by questioning the value of structures and methods which have ceased to be functional, these poets have paved the way for a more natural and elemental art.

By advocating the objectivity of the poem they have attempted to save man from the folly of vanity and by no longer making man the measure of all things they have identified him with nature.

Concrete poetry is a young movement in Canada, and despite the fact that it has received more recognition internationally than in this country, it is as valuable as any experimental art which contributes to our understanding of the world around us. Its significance is best emphasized by the words of Richard Kostelanetz;

Given the influx into art of new ideas and new compositional materials, given a contemporary historical predicament rapidly distinguishing itself from those of the far- and near-past, given the widespread aesthetic cross fertilization that the tradition of the new produces, one must say that no artist today or tomorrow will be considered significant unless his work is either an expansion of formal range, an original re-ordering of materials within the spectrum of possibility, or a new perception of the changing aesthetic and/or human situation of our time.¹

"The New American Arts," in The Young American Writers, edited by Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Funk and Wagnells, 1967), p. 239.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CANADIAN CONCRETE,

VISUAL, AND SOUND POETRY

1965-1972

THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

ANTHOLOGIES

Bann, Stephen, ed. CONCRETE POETRY: AN INTERNATIONAL AN-
THOLOGY. London Magazine Edition, 1967.

Bory, J. F., ed. ONCE AGAIN. New York: New Directions, 1971.

Bowles, J., and Russell, T., eds. THIS BOOK IS A MOVIE: AN
EXHIBITION OF LANGUAGE ART AND VISUAL POETRY. New
York: Delta, 1971.

"An exhibition of the ways some people are using
language-words as a visual structural element in
the making of art and poetry." The book includes a
potpourri of the most recent experiments being done
with language; poems, word-paintings, collages, pho-
tography, and graphic designs.

Kostelanetz, Richard, ed. BREAKTHROUGH FICTIONEERS. Millers-
ton: Something Else Press, 1973.

Solt, M. E., ed. CONCRETE POETRY: A WORLD VIEW. Blooming-
ton, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970.

The most comprehensive anthology and survey of
the international movement of concrete to date.
Includes a world look at concrete, its historical
development, manifestos, notes on the authors, a
bibliography, and a reading of each poem in English
and Spanish. Its only reproach is its section on
Canadian concrete which reads, in its entirety, "Cana-
da's leading poet is B. P. Nichol, one of the editors
of GRONK. From his text we learn that 'love' is
also a beautiful word to look at."

Wildman, Eugene, ed. ANTHOLOGY OF CONCRETISM. Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1971.

Includes examples of international concrete and an afterword on the meaning of the term "concrete" as it is applied to poetry.¹

Williams, Emmett, ed. ANTHOLOGY OF CONCRETE POETRY. New York: Something Else Press, Inc., 1967.

The Forward outlines the definition of the term "concrete" as the return to the poem as picture, picture writing, and the universality of its roots. Includes notes on the authors and a short biography of each.

¹The Anthology of Concretism was originally an issue of the Chicago Review (Vol. 19, no. 4).

ARTICLES

Belloli, Carl. AUDIOVISUAL POETRY: NOTES FOR AN AESTHETIC OF AUDIOVISUALISM. A brochure published by the Avant Guard Poetry Group in Basle, 1959.

Chandler, J. N. "Incoherent Thoughts on Concrete Poetry." 11., Arts Canada, August 1969, pp. 11-13.

Eoynag, Eugene. "Concrete Poetry and the Concretism of Chinese." Alphabet 18-19, June 1971, pp. 3-9.

Layer, Harold, A. "Space Language." Media and Methods, January 1972, pp. 34-36.

An interesting article on three-dimensional concrete poetry written to be viewed through a stereoscope.

LONDON TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT, August 6, 1964; September 3, 1964.

Two special issues on audio-visual and concrete poetry. Includes reviews, critical articles, manifestos, and poems.

O'Leary, Marië France. "Poesie Ouverte? Art Nouveau? Rencontre avec Henri Chopin." 11. Vie des Arts 53 (Winter 1969) : 55-57.

Tait, Robert. "The Concreteness of a Wild Hawthorne." Extra Verse 15 (Spring 1965) : 1-13.

A special essay on Ian Hamilton Finlay and concrete poetry.

STATEMENTS AND NOTES ON/OR RELATED TO CONCRETE

Bory, J. F., ed. ONCE AGAIN. New York: New Directions, 1968.
See notes on pp. 3-11.

Bowler, Berjouhi. THE WORLD AS IMAGE. London: Vista Ltd.,
1970.

An important study on the iconic quality and
concreteness of picture language and design.

Fenollosa, Ernest. THE CHINESE WRITTEN CHARACTER AS A MEDIUM
FOR POETRY. Edited by Ezra Pound. San Fransiseo: City
Light Books, 1969.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

CONCRETE POETRY. A catalogue for an exhibition originating at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and travelling through Europe in 1971.

Contains theoretical articles by Paul de Vree, Reinhard Dohl, and Bob Cobbing. (M.E.S.)

Mayer, Hansjorg. TYPOEMS. Stuttgart; Studiengalerie, Studium-Generales, 1965. (M.E.S.)

Reichardt, Jasia, ed. BETWEEN POETRY AND PAINTING. Presented in London, England, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts from October 22 to November 27, 1965.

THE ARTS IN FUSION. An International Exhibition presented at the Tyler School of Art of Temple University, Philadelphia from January 23 to February 17, 1966. (M.E.S.)

CONCRETE IN CANADA

ANTHOLOGIES

Brown, J., and Phillips, D., eds. WEST COAST SEEN. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1969.

Formerly published as WEST COAST '68. Contains a brief introduction on attitudes and ideas about West Coast poetry. " . . . there is no school of poetry only pomes. what is believed as dogma limits but it is in the tissues of language that literature, . . . the literate response lives."

Colombo, J. R., ed. NEW DIRECTION IN CANADIAN POETRY. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Ltd., 1971.

One of the best texts available on avant-garde poetry in Canada. Intended for students of literature, the book includes a collage of ideas and theories by artists and poets whose work has been the major influential factor in the development of visual and concrete poetry in Europe and Canada. Colombo has included a section in the anthology "to suggest to the reader that there is a method in the madness of much contemporary art." The anthology includes samples from some of the best poets in this field; Bill Bissett, b. p. Nichol, Andrew Suknaski, Steve Mc Caffery, Judy Copithorne, and David Uu.

Fetherling, Doug, ed. THUMBPRINTS. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1969. (B.B.)

Nichol, bp, ed. . THE COSMIC CHEF: AN EVENING OF CONCRETE. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1970.

The first Canadian anthology of concrete. The text is a small cardboard box which contains poems, each on a separate sheet, left for the reader to arrange and read as he pleases. " . . . everything

here comes from the point where language &/or the image blur together into the inbetween & become concrete objects to be understood as such." The anthology includes typepoems, kinetic, visual, and sound poetry.

SEA GULL. Published as Elfin Plot, issue 2.

"A three copy book bound in the ancient way of book binding in China . . . includes poetry by Nichol, Scobie, and Suknaski." (N.B.)

ARTICLES

De Villiers, Marq. "You Too, Can Become a Great Canadian Poet." The Montreal Star Weekend Magazine, 20 October 1973, pp. 6-10.

A contemptuous and poorly written article on the sound poetry presentations of the Four Horsemen and on concrete in Canada. The interest in the article lies only in its being a good example of critics who are too ready to condemn a new form of art they know almost nothing about.

Doyle, Mike. "Notes on Concrete Poetry." Canadian Literature 46 (Autumn 1970): 91-95.

A review of Nichol's The Cosmic Chef, Bissett's S Th Story I Too, Ken West's Wire, and Hertrand Lachance's Eyes Open. Doyle finds the above texts experimental and evocative, but not good examples of concrete.

Mc Caffery, Steven. "For a Poetry of Blood." Stereo Headphones (London, England) no. 4.

Mc Caffery's manifesto on sound poetry. "Sound is the extension of human biology into a context of challenge, breath is the purest sound, sound is awareness that direct sensory involvement/impact is a greater thing than indirect communication to and through the intellect."

Mortimer, Hilda. "West Coast Poets." The Montreal Star, Entertainment Section, 24 January 1970, p. 3.

An article on the poetry of Bissett, Jim Brown, Maxine Gadd, Gordon Fidler, and the beginnings of Intermedia Press.

Richmond, John. "Two Interviews." The Montreal Star, Entertainment Section, 24 January 1970, p. 5.

An interview with Frank Davey and George Bowering, mostly about the West Coast poets; Newlove, Bissett, Gadd, and Kearns.

Uu, David. "Beyond Concrete Poetry." B. C. Monthly 1:3 (December 1972): 94-95.

STATEMENTS AND NOTES ON/OR RELATED TO CONCRETE

Bissett, Bill. WORDS IN THE FIRE. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Published as part of ICE BAG. The text includes theoretical notes on concrete, language structures, the need for new forms of expression, and the need to revive the vocal tradition of poetry.

McCarthy, Cavan, ed. Tlalloc 10.

A special Canadian issue which includes Lionel Kearns, Gerry Gilbert, bpNichol, and Bill Bissett. (bpN)

Nichol, bp, ed. . BIG JULY GRONK MAILOUT. Published as newsnotes from GrOnk issues.

Includes letters by Bill Bissett and Stephen Scobie on concrete.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

CONCRETE POETRY: AN EXHIBITION IN FOUR PARTS. New York: Wittenborn Art Books, 1969.

Presented by the Fine Arts Gallery at the University of British Columbia, March 28 to April 19, 1969. Includes poetry by Canadian authors, an essay on Ian Hamilton Finlay by Stephen Scobie, and an essay by Edwin Varney.

CONCRETE ISSUES PUBLISHED BY

BLEWOINTMENT PRESS,

VANCOUVER

1963

Blewointment, Vol. 1, no. 1.¹

Includes poetry by Bill Bissett, Martina Clinton, Judy Copithorne, and Lance Farrell.

Blewointment, Vol. 1, no. 2.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Clinton, Copithorne, and Farrell.

1964

Blewointment, Vol. 2, no. 2.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Clinton, Copithorne, Farrell, and Gerry Gilbert.

Blewointment, Vol. 2, no. 3.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Clinton, and bpNichol.

Blewointment, Vol. 2, no. 4.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Clinton, and Copithorne.

1965

Blewointment, Vol. 3, no. 1.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Clinton, Copithorne, Farrell, and Nichol.

1966

Blewointment, Vol. 4, no. 1.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Clinton, Farrell, and Nichol.

1967

Blewointment, Vol. 5, no. 1.

Includes poetry by David Aylward, Earl Birney, Clinton, Copithorne, Pierre Coupey, Gilbert, and David Uu.

Blewointment, Vol. 9, no. 1.

Includes poetry by Bissett, Farrell, Lionel Kearns, and Nichol.

¹ All issues listed here are edited by Bill Bissett.

1970

FASCIST COURT.
An anthology.

OCCUPATION ISSUE.
An anthology.

1971

OIL SLICK SPESHUL.
An anthology.

1972

POVERTY ISSUE.
An anthology.

TH BLEWOINTMENT OPN PICTURE BOOK COMBIND WITH TH
NEWS.

Includes poem-drawings by Judy Copithorne, montages by Bill Bissett, and photopoems by David Uu.

CONCRETE ISSUES PUBLISHED BY

FLEYE PRESS,

TORONTO

Luv, no. 1.¹

An anthology issue. (bpN)

Luv, no. 2. WHERE IS MISS FLORENCE RIDDLE? Text by Bill Bissett. (bpN)

Luv, no. 3.

An anthology issue. (bpN)

Luv, no. 4. (bpN)

Luv, no. 5. RUTH. Text by bpNichol. (bpN)

Spanish Fleye, no. 1.

"A Special Cunnilingus/Tamarack Review Issue." (bpN)

¹All issues listed are edited by David (Harris) Uu.

CONCRETE ISSUES PUBLISHED BY

GANGLIA PRESS,

TORONTO

The following are listed in order of publication from 1967 to 1972.

GrOnk 1, no. 1.¹
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 1, no. 2. SCRAPTURES: 9th SEQUENCE. Text by bpNichol.

GrOnk 1, no. 3.
An anthology issue.
Includes an article by bpNichol on D. A. Levy.

GrOnk 1, no. 6/7.
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 1, no. 8. SCRAPTURES: 11th SEQUENCE. Text by bpNichol.

GrOnk 2, no. 1. KON 66/67. Text by bpNichol.

GrOnk 2, no. 2.
A "flagwavingallnationalistic" issue.

GrOnk 2, no. 5. CAPTAIN POETRY POEMS. Text by bpNichol.
Published in association with Blewointment in Vancouver.

¹The GrOnk issues listed are part of the first series consisting of sixty-four issues now out of print. GrOnk's Intermedia series is now being mailed sporadically to those interested in the "language revolution". Chief editor of GrOnk is bpNichol.

GrOnk 2, no. 7/8. COMIC WORLD. Text by bpNichol.

GrOnk 3, no. 3. PHONEBOOK. Text by Gerry Gilbert.
Published in association with Weed Flower Press, Toronto.

GrOnk 3, no. 4. FORCE MOVEMENTS. Text by Nelson Ball.

GrOnk 3, no. 5. CAPTAIN GEORGE'S COMIC WORLD.

GrOnk 3, no. 6. NIGHTS ON PROSE MOUNTAIN. Text by bpNichol.

GrOnk 3, no. 8. UNTITLED. Text by John Riddell.

GrOnk 4, no. 2. C POEMS FOR CORINNE. Text by Hart Broudy.

GrOnk 4, no. 3. PNOMES JUKOLLAGES & OTHER STUNZAS. Text by
Earle Birney.

GrOnk 4, no. 4. THE WAR AGAINST THE ASPS. Text by David Aylward.

GrOnk 4, no. 5. RAIN. Text by Judy Copithorne.

GrOnk 4, no. 6. READINGANDWRITING SERIES. Text by Joseph
Di Donato.

GrOnk 4, no. 7. ROSE WAY IN THE EAST. Text by Andrew Suknaski.
Includes notes by Suknaski on his interest in Chinese
picture writing and its influence on his poetry.

GrOnk 4, no. 8. ONE WORD POEMS. Text by Stephen Scobie.
Published in association with Lighthouse Press, Vancouver:

GrOnk 5, no. 1. SYNOPSIS 2.
A special number published in association with Runcible Spoon, California.

GrOnk 5, no. 2. A SECTION FROM CARNIVAL. Text by Steve Mc Caffery.

GrOnk 5, no. 3. WOURNEYS. Text by David Aylward.

GrOnk 5, no. 4. SOMETHING IN. Text by Martina Clinton.

GrOnk 5, no. 5.
A special issue devoted to newsnotes.

GrOnk 5, no. 6. CAT. Text by Barry Mc Kinnon.

GrOnk 6, no. 1. UNTITLED. Text by Steve Mc Caffery.

GrOnk 6, no. 2/3. TRANSITIONS TO THE BEAST. Text by Steve Mc Caffery.

GrOnk 6, no. 4. UNTITLED. Text by Steve Mc Caffery.

GrOnk 6, no. 5. COLIBRATIONS. Text by bpNichol and Steve Mc Caffery.
Originally published by Anon Beyond Press, Toronto.

GrOnk 6, no. 6/7.
An anthology issue.

77

GrOnk 6, no. 8. MAPS: A DIFFERENT LANDSCAPE. Text by Steve
Mc Caffery.

GrOnk 7, no. 1.
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 7, no. 2.
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 7, no. 3.
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 7, no. 4. TOUCH. Text by David Uu.

GrOnk, 7, no. 5. WHEN I WAS YOUNG ONE SUMMER. Text by Hart
Broudy.

GrOnk 7, no. 6.
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 7, no. 7.
An anthology issue.

GrOnk 8, no. 5.
A special Tlalloc issue. Includes poems reprinted from
various issues of Tlalloc.

GrOnk 8, no. 7. A GANGLIA PRESS INDEX. Compiled by bpNichol.

Synopsis 1.

Includes poetry by Bill Bissett, bpNichol, Gerry Gilbert, and David Mc Fadden.

Synopsis 2.

An anthology issue.

Synopsis 3.

An anthology issue.

Ganglia 1, no. 1.

An anthology issue.

Ganglia 1, no. 3.

An anthology issue.

Ganglia 1, no. 4. WE SLEEP INSIDE EACH OTHER ALL. Text by Bill Bissett.

Includes an introduction by Sam Perry and an afterword by bpNichol.

Ganglia 1, no. 5.

An anthology issue.

Ganglia 1, no. 6.

Includes all sixty-four issues of GrOnk.

5/ MINI MIMEO SERIES

Leaflets and pamphlets all published between 1968 and 1970.

no. 5. THE COMPLETE WORKS. Text by bpNichol.

no. 10. BISSETT/67. Text by Bill Bissett.

no. 11. A NEW CALENDAR. Text by bpNichol.

no. 15. ELECTRIC PUSSYFOOT. Text by David Uu. (N.B.)

no. 18. THIRD FRAGMENT FROM A POEM CONTINUALLY BEING WRITTEN.
Text by bpNichol.

no. 25. ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS: JULY 1969. Text by bp
Nichol. (N.B.)

no. 35. FINAL CONCRETE TESTAMENT. Text by bpNichol.

no. 39. A CONDENSED HISTORY OF NOTHING. Text by bpNichol.

• TONTO OR SERIES

Pamphlets and leaflets by bpNichol published in 1966.

no. 1. FODDER FOLDER. (N.B.)

no. 2. PORTRAIT OF DAVID.

no. 3. A VISION IN THE U OF T STACKS.

no. 4. A LITTLE POEM FOR YUR FINGERTIPS. (N.B.)

no. 5. THE LANGWEDGE.

no. 7. ALAPHBIT.

no. 8. STAN'S IKON.

no. 9. THE BIRTH OF O.

INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS

AYLWARD, David

Separate Publications

1967

TYPESCAPES. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

"One of the classic concrete works in Canadian literary history."

1968

THE WAR AGAINST THE ASPS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

Undated Publications

WOURNEYS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

Collaborations

1966

with bpNichol. STRANGE GREY TOWN. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN).

Contributions to Anthologies

Colombo, J. R., ed. NEW DIRECTION IN CANADIAN POETRY. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Ltd., 1971

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Ganglia 1, no. 1.

Ganglia 1, no. 3.

Ganglia 1, no. 5.

GrOnk 1, no. 4.

GrOnk 1, no. 6/7.

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

Synopsis 3.

BARRETO-RIVERA, Rafael

Collaborations

1972

with the Four Horsemen. Canada. A 12" 33 1/3 rpm
issued by Griffin House, Toronto. (For additional
information see section on recordings under
listings for bpNichol.

BASMAJIAN, Shant

Undated Publications

ON MY FACE. Toronto, n.p. (bpN)

SPARE CHANGE. Toronto, n.p. (bpN)

BIRNEY, Earle

Separate Publications

1969

PNOMES, JUKOLLAGES AND OTHER STUNZAS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

A collection of card poems, pamphlets, and visual poetry. Package design by bpNichol.

1971

RAG AND BONE SHOP. Toronto, McClelland and Stewart.

Experiments with typography. Some visual and sound concrete. Includes a note by the author; "to bpNichol and his generation for turning me on."

Collaborations

1972

With Bill Bissett, Judy Copithorne, and Andrew Suknaski. FOUR PART SAND. Ottawa, Oberon Press.

Contributions to Concrete Issues.

Blewointment 5, no. 1.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

Poverty Issue. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

Reviews of Earle Birney's Work

RAG AND BONE SHOP

Ballstadt, Carl. Canadian Forum 51 (July/August) pp. 36-37.

BISSETT, Bill

Separate Publications

1966

WE SLEEP INSIDE EACH OTHER ALL. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

Prose Drawings. Includes an introduction by Sam Perry and notes on the typography of Bill Bissett and his visual approach to language by bpNichol.

1967

FIRES IN THE TEMPLE OR TH JINX SHIP ND OTHER TRIPS. Vancouver, Very Stone House.

(TH) GOSSAMER BED PAN. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Typepoems, collages, some lettrist poems,
350 copies issued.

WHAT POETIKS? Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

"Being a coloring book treatise on Poeticks (what is poetry?) . . . devoted to what has cum to be called is now CONCRETE POETRY." Limited edition of 200 copies.

WHERE IS MISS FLORENCE RIDDLE. Toronto, Fleye Press.
Second edition published by Blewointment Press in 1973. (B.B.)

1968

AWAKE IN THE RED DESERT. Vancouver, Talonbooks and See/Hear Productions.

A recorded book including a 12" 33 1/3 rpm phenodisc.

OF THE (SIC) LAND DIVINE SERVICE. Toronto, Weed Flower Press. (B.B.)

1969

LIBERATING SKIES. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Type poems. 500 copies issued.

LOST ANGEL MINING CO. Edited by Freda Nobbs. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Type poems, prose, and drawings. Limited edition of 500 copies.

SUNDAY WORK? Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Collages, type poems, prose, sketches.
Introduction by Al Purdy. "A benefit collection written mostly just before and after a 2 week stay (stand still) at Oakalla Prison Farm."

1970

S THE STORY I TO. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Type poems, drawings, prose.

TUFF SHIT: LOVE POEMS. Windsor, Ontario, Black Moss.

1971

BLEW TREWS. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Optical poems, visual poems. Limited edition of 300 copies.

DRIFITING INTO WAR. Vancouver, Talonbooks. (B.B.)

NOBODY OWNS THE EARTH. Toronto, House of Anansi Press.
Some concrete. Type poems, sound poems.

1972

I.B.M. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
"Saga uv th release uv human spirit from computerr funkshuns." Poem drawings, visual and phonetic language compositions. Limited edition of 300 copies.

1972

RUSH WHAT FUKIN THEORY. Toronto, Ganglia Press: Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

Bissett's own theory on poetics, the role of the poet in contemporary society, and the need for the liberation of language.

THE ICE BAG. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

Contains the following texts; POLAR BEAR HUNT, WORDS IN THE FIRE, TH HIGH GREEN HILL, and ten mini-poster-poems, all included in a poly-ethelene ice bag.

Collaborations

1972

with Earle Birney, Judy Copithorne, and Andrew Suknaski. FOUR PART SAND. Ottawa, Oberon Press.

Editor

Bill Bissett has edited all of the Blewointment publications.

Films

1964

Foret, Leonard, Director. "In Search of Innocence." Produced by the National Film Board, Quebec Division. A film on Bill Bissett.

Television Broadcasts

1967

with bpNichol. "Poets of the Sixties." A CBC television network production. A film on Bill Bissett and bpNichol.

Radio Broadcasts

1972

"Anthology." A CBC radio production on the poetry of Bill Bissett.

Contributions to Anthologies

Bory, J. F., ed. ONCE AGAIN. New York: New Directions, 1968.

Brown, Jim and Phillips, David, eds. WEST COAST SEEN. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1969.

Colombo, J. R., ed. NEW DIRECTION. IN CANADIAN POETRY. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Ltd., 1971.

CONCRETE POETRY: AN EXHIBITION IN FOUR PARTS. New York: Wittenborn Art Books, 1969.

Kostelanetz, R., ed. BREAKTHROUGH FICTIONEERS. New York: Something Else Press, 1972.

_____. IN YOUTH. New York: Ballantine Books, 1972.

Mandel, Eli, ed. MID-CENTURY CANADIAN POETS, '60-'70. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971 (1972?).

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1970.

Ondaatje, M., ed. THE BROKEN ARK. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1971.

Purdy, Al, ed. STORM WARNING. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

BLEWOINTMENT.

Bill Bissett has contributed to and edited every Blewointment publication.

Ganglia 1, no. 1.

Ganglia 1, no. 5.

GrOnk 1, no. 1.

GrOnk 1, no. 3.

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

Lodgistiks 1. Editor, David Uu.

Tuatara. Editor, Mike Doyle.

Vigilante. Editor, P. Piffen.

Articles and Reviews by Bill Bissett

"Collected Poems." Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

"On Gertrude Stein." GrOnk 1, no. 4.

"Two Novels." Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Reviews of Bissett's Publications

AWAKE IN THE RED DESERT

Fetherling, Doug. Canadian Forum 48
(January 1969) : 230-231.

FIRES IN THE TEMPLE

Livesay, Dorothy. The Biddlehead 70-73
(Spring 1967) : 64-65.

Mac Callum, Hugh. University of Toronto Quaterly 37
(July 1967) : 365.

Nichol, bp. : Quarry 16 (Summer 1967) : 43-46.

Purdy, Al. Canadian Literature 35
(Winter 1968) : 83-85.

LOST ANGEL MINING CO.

Mc Kay, Don. Alphabet 18-19 (June 1971) : 50-51.

NOBODY OWNS THE EARTH

Nichol, bp. : Books in Canada Vol. 1, no. 4;
(November 1971) : 6.

OF THE (SIC) LAND DIVINE SERVICE

Barbour, Douglas. Dalhousie Review 50
(Spring 1970) : 116.

Fetherling, Doug. Canadian Forum 48
(January 1969) : 230-31.

SUNDAY WORK?

Gervais, C. H. Quarry 19 (Summer 1970) : 58-59.

BROUDY, Hart

Separate Publications

C POEMS FOR CORINNE. Toronto: Garglia Press, n.d.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG ONE SUMMER. Toronto: Garglia Press, n.d.

A concrete picture-poem published as
GrOnk 7, no. 5.

Contributions to Anthologies

Colombo, J. R., ed. NEW DIRECTION. IN CANADIAN
POETRY. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston,
Ltd., 1971.

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon
Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Synopsis 2.

CARTER, Jim

Separate Publications

1972

READING. Vancouver, Intermedia Press. (E.V.)

CLINTON, Martina

Separate Publications

1971

YONDER GLOW. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Includes only two concrete poems. Limited
edition of 300 copies.

Undated Publications

SOMETHING IN. Toronto, Ganglia Press.
Published as GrOnk 5, no. 4.

Contributions to Anthologies

Brown, Jim and Phillips, David, eds. WEST COAST
SEEN. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1969.

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon
Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Blewointment 5, no. 1.

Fascist Court. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Ganglia 3.

Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

Poverty Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

COPITHORNE, Judy

Separate Publications

1965

RETURNING. North Vancouver, Returning Press.

1967

MEANDERING. North Vancouver, Returning Press.
Poem drawings. Envelope containing 5 sheets.

1969

RAIN. Toronto, Garglia Press.
Published as GrOnk 4, no. 5. Holographs
and script drawings.

RELEASE. Vancouver, Bau-X1 Gallery.
Poem drawings. Limited edition of 200 copies.

1970

RUNES. Toronto, Coach House Press; Vancouver, Inter-
media Press.

1971

MISS TREE'S PILLOW BOX. North Vancouver, Returning
Press.
Poem drawings.

Collaborations

1972

with Bill Bissett, Earle Birney, and Andrew Suknaski.
FOUR PART SAND. Ottawa, Oberon Press.

Contributions to Anthologies

Brown, Jim and Phillips, David, eds. WEST COAST SEEN.
Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1969.

Colombo, J. R., ed. NEW DIRECTION IN CANADIAN POETRY.
Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Ltd., 1971.

Goldberg, Gerry and Wright, George, eds. I AM A
SENSATION. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon
Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Alphabet 18-19, (June 1971) : 30-38.

Ganglia 1, no. 1.

Ganglia 1, no. 3.

Ganglia 1, no. 5.

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

Poverty Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

COUPEY, Pierre

Separate Publications

1967

CIRCLE WITHOUT CENTER. Vancouver, Talonbooks.

Contributions to Poetry Magazines

Delta 24 (December 1964), "The Alphabet of Blood."
Visual concrete.¹

¹ Although this text was published one year prior to the limits set in the bibliography, I have included this item because of its influence on other Canadian experimental poets.

DUGUAY, Raoul

Separate Publications

1966

RUTS. Montréal, Editions Estérel. (bpN).

1967

OR LE CYCLE DU SANG DURE DONC. Montreal, Editions Estérel.

1970

MANIFESTE DE L'INFONIE. Montreal, Editions du Jour.
A manifesto on visual and sound poetry.
L'infonie is the name of a group who has, like the Four Horsemen, given performances of sound poetry.

1971

L'APOKALIPSO. Montreal, Editions du Jour.
Includes poems, manifestos, stereo poems, visual poems, and articles.

MUSIQUE DU KEBG. Montreal, Editions du Jour. (bpN)

Recordings

"Poemes et chants de la résistance 2." (bpN)

DUTTON, Paul

Collaborations

1972

with the Four Horsemen. Canadada. Toronto, Griffin House.

A 33 1/3 rpm phonodisc, sound concrete. For additional information see the listing for Canadada in the section on bpNichol.

Editor

Ganglia, series 2.

PARRELL, Lance

Separate Publications

1967

INSIDE LOVES OUT. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

1971

TEN POMES. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Concrete? Cover collage by Christos Dikeakos.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Blewointment 5, no. 1.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

GILBERT, Gerry

Separate Publications

1964

WHITE LUNCH. Vancouver, The Periwinkle Press.
Some concrete.

1967

THE MIDK. Vancouver, Intermedia Press.
Drawings by Elizabeth Coleman. A collection
of "skoobs", poem-objects, cut ups, mini books,
and broadsheets in a polyethelene bag.

1969

PHONEBOOK. Toronto, Ganglia/Weed Flower Press.

1971

AND. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
A collage of found prose. Limited edition
of 500 copies.

BABY LAND BLUES. Toronto, Coach House Press.

MONEY. Vancouver, New Star Books.

1972

LEASE. Toronto, Coach House Press.

Contributions to Anthologies

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon
Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Lodgistiks 1. Editor, David Uu.

Synapsis 1.

Th Blewointment opn picture book combined with the news.
Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

KEARNS, Lionel

Separate Publications

1969

BY THE LIGHT OF THE SILVERY MC LUNE. Vancouver, Day-light Press, distributed by Talonbooks,

"Media parables, poems signs, gestures, and other assaults on the interface." Includes "The Birth of God" and "The Woman Who".

¹"The Birth of God" was published separately by Trigram Press, London.

LACHANCE, Bertrand

Separate Publications

1970

EYES OPEN. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Contains some concrete prose and poetry.
Cover photos and drawings by Bill Bissett.

1971

TES RIVIERES T'ATTENDENT. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.

Editor

Air, nine issues published between January 1971 and May 1972.

- Air 1. Text by Sid Stephen. (B.B.)
- Air 2. Text by Maxine Gadd. (B.B.)
- Air 3. Text by Colleen Thibodeau. (B.B.)
- Air 4. Text by David Uu. (B.B.)
- Air 5. Text by PX Billinsky. (B.B.)
- Air 6. Text by Bill Bissett. (B.B.)
- Air 7. Text by Robin Mathews. (B.B.)
- Air 8. Text by Greg Dexter. (B.B.)
- Air 9. Text by Sharon Stevenson. (B.B.)

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Fascist Court. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

Poverty Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Th blewointment opn picture book oombind with th news.
Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Reviews of Bertrand Lachance's Work

EYES OPEN:

Mc Kinnon, Barry. B.C. Monthly 1 (November 1972): 84.

MAYNE, Seymour

Separate Publications

1969

MUTETATIONS. Vancouver, Very Stone House.

Undated Publications

ANEWD. Vancouver, Very Stone House. (bpN)

EARSEEDEARSEEDER. Vancouver, Very Stone House. (bpN)

MANIMALS. Vancouver, Very Stone House. (bpN)

TICKLISH TICLICORICE. Vancouver, Very Stone House.
(bpN)

THE GIGOLO TEASPOON. Vancouver, Very Stone House.
(bpN)

MC CAFFERY, Steve

Separate Publications

1970

GRAND PLANS FOR A SPEAKING CITY. Toronto, Anonbeyond Press.

A special hand edition of 15 copies.

TRANSITIONS TO THE BEAST; POST SEMIOTIC POEMS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

UNTITLED. TORONTO, Ganglia Press.

1972

MAPS: A DIFFERENT LANDSCAPE. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

Undated Publications

A SECTION FROM CARNIVAL. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

A "typescract" 20 feet in length.

Collaborations

1970

with the Four Horsemen. Canada. Toronto, Griffin House.

A 33 1/3 rpm phonodisk of sound concrete.

n.d.

with bpNichol. COLLABORATIONS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

PARALLEL TEXTS: ONE. Toronto, Anonbeyond Press.

First published as GrOnk 6, no. 5.

PARALLEL TEXTS: TWO AND THREE. Toronto, Anonbeyond Press.

Articles

"For a Poetry of Blood." Stereo Headphones (England) 4.

The text of this article appeared as a program note for a reading of the Four Horsemen, presented on October 30, 1971 at the Brunton Auditorium of Mount Allison University, New Brunswick.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Poverty Issue. Vancouver, Blewointment Press, 1972.

Synopsis 3.

MC FADDEN, David

Separate Publications

1972

THE OVA YOGAS. Toronto, Weed Flower Press/Ganglia.
"Being a series of poems written in one long
strange afternoon." Published as GrOnk Intermedia
Series (IS) no. 1.

MC KINNON, Barry

Separate Publications

1970

CARBON COPIES. Wood Mountain (Saskatchewan), Deodar
Shadow Press.

STAMP COLLECTION. Vancouver, Blewointment Press. (B.B.)

Undated Publications

CAT. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

Contributions to Concrete Issues

GrOnk 6, no. 6.

Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

Synapsis 1.

Synapsis 2.

NICHOL, bp

Separate Publications

1965

CYCLES, ETC. Cleveland, Seven Flowers Press. (bpN)

SCRIPTURES: SECOND SEQUENCE. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

1966

++
ALAPHBIT. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

++
A LITTLE POEM FOR YUR FINGERTIPS. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

A PORTRAIT OF DAVID. Toronto: Ganglia Press.
Limited to 15 copies each with an original
cover drawing by David Aylward.

++
A VISION IN THE U OF T STACKS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

BP. Toronto, Coach House Press.

Designed and produced by Stan Bevington.
Photo, by Andy Phillips. A folder of concrete
objects, typescripts. Contains a note by Nichol
on poetry as a medium of communication. "How can
the poet reach out and touch you physically as
say a sculptor does by carressing you with
objects you caress? only if he drops the barriers,
if his need is to touch you physically he creates
a poem/object for you to touch and is not a
sculptor for he is still moved by the language
and sculpts with words."

JOURNEYING AND THE RETURNS.

A three-part package which includes a book of
traditional poems, a folder of concrete objects,
and Borders, a 33 1/3 rpm of sound concrete. (bpN)

CALENDAR. Woodchester, Gloucestershire, Opening Press.

CHOCOLATE POEM. Toronto, by the author.

++
Part of the TONTO OR series published by Ganglia Press.

++
FODDER FOLDER. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

++
LANGWEDGE. Toronto, Ganglia Press.
Limited edition of 20 copies.

★
SCRAPTURES: FOURTH SEQUENCE. Niagara Falls, New York; Today Press.

++
STAN'S IKON. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

++
THE BIRTH OF O. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

1967

DADA LAMA. Leeds, England; Tlaloc Books. (bpN)

KONFESSIONS OF AN ELIZABETHAN FAN DANCER. London: Writers Forum.
Second edition, 1969. Third edition published by Weed Flower Press.

LAST POEM WITH YOU IN MIND. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

RUTH. Toronto, Fleye Press.
Published as an issue of Luv.

SCRAPTURES: TENTH SEQUENCE. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

SCRAPTURES: ELEVENTH SEQUENCE. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

THE YEAR OF THE FROG. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

1968

BALLADS OF THE RESTLESS ARE. Sacramento, California; Run-
cible Spoon.

1969

A NEW CALENDAR. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

LAMENT. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)
Second edition by Writer's Forum, England, 1969.

NIGHTS ON PROSE MOUNTAIN. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

THIRD FRAGMENT FROM A POEM CONTINUALLY IN THE PROCESS
OF BEING WRITTEN. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

1970

STILL WATER. Vancouver, Talonbooks.

A collection of concrete poems each on an individual card and enclosed in a small card box. The original title of this work was THE CHINESE POEMS. This is Nichol's attempt to evoke the power of the thing named through the visual placement of words.

1971

A.B.C. THE ALEPH BETH BOOK. Ottawa, Oberon Press.

MONOTONES. Vancouver, Talonbooks.

THE CAPTAIN POETRY POEMS. Vancouver, Blewointment Press. (bpN)

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM. Toronto, Weed Flower Press.

1972

A GANGLIA PRESS INDEX. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

An invaluable listing for those interested in keeping track of concrete publications.

THE MARTYROLOGY I and II. Toronto, Coach House Press. Designed and illustrated by Jerry Ofo.

Includes a forward by David St. Alwart (Aylward). "To the poet every word in the language is a saint who continually intervenes between him and the world of sense, making it senseless with their hallowed p's and whining q's, their doting i's and literary t's." This is Nichol's attempt to free himself from the shackles of language and words.

1973

THE ADVENTURES OF MILT THE MORPH IN COLOUR. Toronto, Weed Flower Press.

A portfolio. Illustrations by Barbara Caruso.

Editor

1965-72

bp Nichol is chief editor of Ganglia publications which include Ganglia, GrOnk, and Synapsis. Ganglia IS (Inter-media Series) is the only publication currently in print.

1967

A CONCRETE MISCELLANY. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

with David Aylward. SYNAPSIS: A PRELUDE. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

1970

THE COSMIC CHEF: AN EVENING OF CONCRETE. Ottawa, Qberon Press.

The first Canadian anthology of concrete poetry. Includes type-poems, picture-poems, visual concrete. "The language revolution is happening all around you! LIBERATE A POEM TODAY THROW IT OUT."

1972

Open Letter. Contributing editor.

Collaborations

1966

with David Aylward. STRANGE GREY TOWN. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

1970

with the Four Horsemen. Canada. Toronto, Griffin House. A 33 1/3 rpm phonodisk of sound concrete.

A review of Canada appeared in Excalibur (York University Weekly), 5 October 1972, p. 12.

n.d.

with Steve Mc Caffery. COLLABORATIONS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

PARALLEL TEXTS: ONE. Toronto, Anonbeyond Press.

Published as GrOnk 6, no. 5.

PARALLEL TEXTS: TWO AND THREE. Toronto, Anonbeyond Press.

Theoretical and Critical Articles

"From Sound to Sense." Stereo Headphones 4 (England), (Spring 1971).

A letter from bpNichol to Frank Davey on concrete poetry. Open Letter 4, no. 1.

"Some Beginning Writings on Gertrude Stein's Theory of Personality." Open Letter 2 (Summer 1972). (bpN)

"The Death of Concrete." Stereo Headphones (England) 2/3.

"Zounds! The Sounds of Bill Bissett." Quarry 16 (Summer 1967) : 43-46.

Recordings

1967

Borders. Toronto, Coach House Press.

A 33 1/3 rpm phondisk issued as part of BP. (bpN)

1968

Motherlove. Toronto, Allied Record.

A 33 1/3 rpm phonodisk. Sound concrete. (bpN)

1970

Canada.

See listings under collaborations.

Films

1970

Sons of Captain Poetry. Directed by Michael Ondaatje. London, Canada.

A half-hour documentary which blends Nichol's family world with the images and characters in his poetry. The film is available through Canadian Film Makers and distributed in Toronto.

Television Broadcasts

1967

with Bill Bissett. "Poets of the Sixties."

A CBC television network production featuring Bill Bissett and bpNichol.

Radio Broadcasts

"Little Boy Lost Meets Mother Tongue."

A CBC radio production broadcasted in six episodes over a six week period. Part of the "Ideas" series on language.

Contributions to Anthologies

Colombo, J. H., ed. NEW DIRECTION IN CANADIAN POETRY. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Ltd., 1971.

CONCRETE POETRY: BRITAIN, CANADA, UNITED STATES. Stuttgart: Hansjorg Mayer, 1966.

GORDON WATKINS TO YOU. Toronto: New Press, 1970. (bpN)

HOW DO I LOVE THEE. Edmonton, M. C. Hurtig. (bpN)

SOLO FLIGHT. Vancouver: Resources Publications, 1970. (bpN)

Solt, M. E., ed. CONCRETE POETRY: A WORLD VIEW. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970.

THE ENCHANTED LAND. Toronto: W. J. Gage, Ltd., 1967. (bpN)

TWENTIETH CENTURY POETRY AND POETICS. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Blewointment, Vol. 4, no. 1.

Blewointment, Vol. 5, no. 1.

Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

GrOnk 1, no. 1.

GrOnk 1, no. 3.

GrOnk 1, no. 6/7.

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

GrOnk 4, no. 3.

GrOnk 8, no. 5.

Synapsis 1.

Synapsis 2.

Ganglia 1, no. 1.

Ganglia 1, no. 3.

Ganglia 1, no. 4.

Ganglia 1, no. 5.

Reviews of bpNichol's work

A CONCRETE MISCELLANY

Gasparini, Len. Untitled Article. Canadian Forum 49
(April 1969) : 20-21.

BP.

Colombo, J. R. "New Wave Nichol." Tamarak Review 44
(Summer 1967) : 100-104.

JOURNEYING AND THE RETURNS

Kearns, Lionel. Untitled Article. Canadian Literature 36 (Spring 1968) : 67.

Mac Callum, Hugh. Untitled Article. University of Toronto Quaterly 37 (July 1968) : 376-77.

Mc Kay, D. Untitled Article. Alphabet no. 14.
(December 1967) : 82-83.

Reany, J. Untitled Article. Quarry 16
(Summer 1967) : 46-47.

Warsle, L. Untitled Article. Poetry: Chicago Monthly (July 1968) : 276.

MONOTONES

Bowering, George. Untitled Article. Open Letter 2,
no. 2. (1972).

STILL WATER

Barbour, Douglas. Untitled Article. Quarry 2
(year end 1971) : 61-62.

THE COSMIC CHEF

Barbour, Douglas. Untitled Article. Quarry 2
(year end 1971) : 62-63.

Chambers, D. D. C. Untitled Article. Canadian
Forum 51 (November 1971) : 53.

Magazine Interviews with bpNichol

Bowering, George. "Cutting Them All Up." Alphabet
no. 18/19 (June 1971) : 18-21

RAPPAPORT, Henry

Separate Publications

1971

ARE WORDS THINGS? 2nd ed. Vancouver, Pacific Trans-
Power Publications.

RIDDELL, John

Separate Publications

1969

POPE LEO, EL ELOPE: A TRAGEDY IN FOUR LETTERS.
Toronto, Gangle Press. Drawings by bpNichol.

1970

UNTITLED. Toronto, Gangle Press.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

Gangle 1, no. 5.

Gangle 2, no. 1. (bpN)

Gangle 2, no. 2. (bpN)

SCOBIE, Stephen.

Separate Publications

1973

STONE POEMS. Vancouver, Talonbooks.

Undated Publications

ONE WORD POEMS. Vancouver/Toronto, Lighthouse Press/Ganglia Press.

Contributions to Anthologies

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1970.

SUKNASKI, Andrew

Separate Publications

1970

CIRCLES. Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan; Deodar Shadow Press.

ROSE WAY IN THE EAST. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

An envelope containing poem-drawings and notes by Suknaski on his interest in Chinese ideograms and their influence on his work.

"ROSE WAY IN THE EAST grows out of my first attempt to see things historically and mythically in an attempt to bridge Western hangups . . . and Eastern Ways."

THE SHADOW OF EDEN. Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan; Deodar Shadow Press. (bpN)

1971

IN MIND OV XROSSROADS OV MYTHOLOGIES. Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan; Deodar Shadow Press.

1972

THE ZEN PILGRIMAGE. Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan; Elfin Plot.. (bpN)

Y TH REVOLUTION INTO RUENZ. Wood Mountain, Saskatchewan; Elfin Plot.

Collaborations

1972

with Earle Birney, Bill Bissett, and Judy Copithorne.
FOUR PART SAND. Ottawa; Oberon Press.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

GrOnk 4, no. 3.

Synopsis 2.

THIBODEAU, Colleen

Separate Publications

1965

LOZENGES. London, Ontario; Alphabet Press.
"Poems in the shapes of things."

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Occupation Issew. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Poverty Issew. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Th blewointment opn picture book combind with the news.
Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

UU (HARRIS), David

Separate Publications

1967

GIDEON MUSIC. Vancouver, Blewointment Press.
Type poems. Includes "Verklarte Nacht"
(after Shoenberg a poem on joycean style with
cageah overtones).

JUNE POEM. Toronto, Fleye Press. (bpN)

TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS. Toronto, Fleye Press. (bpN)

TOUCH. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

1969

DOG RAPE. Toronto, Fleye Press.

ELECTRIC PUSSYFOOT. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (N.B.)

MOTION/PICTURES. Toronto, Ganglia Press. (bpN)

1971

AIR 4. Vancouver, Air Press.

BEFORE THE GOLDEN DAWN. Toronto, Weed Flower Press.

1972

AURORA HYPERBOREALIS. Toronto, Ganglia Press.

CHEOPTICS. Vancouver, Talonbooks.

Critical Articles

"Beyond Concrete Poetry." B. C. Monthly 1
(December 1972) : 94-95.

"Magic and the Goddess." Georgia Straight Art Supple-
ment (Vancouver), 3 June, 1970.

Contributions to Anthologies

Brown, Jim and Phillips, David, eds. WEST COAST SEEN.
Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1969.

Colombo, J. R., ed. NEW DIRECTION IN CANADIAN POETRY.
Toronto: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Ltd., 1971.

Kostelanetz, R., ed. BREAKTHROUGH FICTIONEERS. Miller
ton: Something Else Press, 1973.

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon
Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Blewointment 5, no. 1.

Fascist Court. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

GrOnk 1, no. 1.

GrOnk 1, no. 3.

GrOnk 1, no. 6/7.

GrOnk 2, no. 2.

GrOnk 7, no. 1.

GrOnk 7, no. 2.

GrOnk 7, no. 3.

GrOnk 7, no. 6.

Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

Oil Slick Speshul, Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Th blewointment opn picture book combind with the news.
Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Editor

Lodgistiks. 1 issue, still extant.

Luv. 7 issues.

Spanish Fleye. 1 issue.

VARNEY, Edwin

Separate Publications

1969

OPENINGS. Vancouver, Intermedia Press. (E.V.)

1970

SUMMER SONGS. Vancouver, Midnight Press. (E.V.)

Editor

The Poem Company. Vancouver, Intermedia Press.

Contributions to Anthologies

Nichol, bp, ed. THE COSMIC CHEF. Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1970.

Contributions to Concrete Issues

GrOnk 7, no. 2.

WEST, Ken

Separate Publications

1970

WIRE. Vancouver, Blewointment Press. (D.R.)

Contributions to Concrete Issues

Fascist Court. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Occupation Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

Oil Slick Speshul. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1971.

Poverty Issue. Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Th blewointment opn, picture book combined with the news.
Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1972.

Review of Ken West's Work

WIRE

Nichol, bp. Untitled Article. Occupation Issue.
Vancouver: Blewointment Press, 1970.

APPENDIX

Interview with bpNichol

Toronto June 26, 1974

Q: How and when did you become interested in concrete poetry?

A: Actually, I began to get into concrete through Apollinaire and the Dadaists, and subsequent to that, through the publications of Blewpointment which Bissett put out in Vancouver. I just began by exploring the visual aspects of poetry. The specific occasion was about 1964 when I really got into the serious thing. That was mostly because I was really bored with what I was doing with using the same forms, trying to write convincing lyrics. It didn't satisfy me. It occurred to me that I was being arrogant; that I was sitting down and making occasion to write, trying to dominate the act of writing the language I was using as opposed to simply letting myself learn from it. I thought I wasn't giving the language a chance to teach me anything. I was assuming knowledge that I didn't really have, so I just sat down and began to play with words, and to see what I would come up with.

Q: Did any concrete poet have any direct or indirect influence on your work at that time?

A: Well, I wasn't really aware of that stuff till about I guess the middle of 1964 when Andy Phillips went to Europe and sent me a couple of issues of the London Times Literary Supplement. It was at that point, but prior to that, literally I was only familiar with Apollinaire and the Dadaists, and I began to take my own approach to it, to use my imagination. And when George Bowering first published an issue of Imago he asked me to contribute some poems. I did, but he didn't think they were concrete at all. Anyway he did send me Cavan Mc Carthy's address and I wrote to Cavan, and he sent tons of addresses of poets in Europe and other parts of the world. And that was my access.

Q: Initially then, you began to get into concrete on your own, and later you became aware of others who were doing the same thing?

A: Yes, initially I started to do it by myself, and mostly it was Bissett, his influence too. Just seeing him busting out, and I said to myself I can bust out too. And Michael Mc Clure, his work opened up new possibilities for me. So there were influences, but I did not set out to copy someone else's poems.

Q: What aspect of Apollinaire's work and the Dadaists' influenced you the most?

A: I remember what impressed me most at the time was Kurt Schwitters' "W" poem. He had simply taken the letter "W" and made a poem from it. The poem was the letter "w", and that blew my head really. It was a minimal statement. You don't get much more minimal. And when I thought about it, I realized that there was tremendous power in that simple letter, and that was very exciting. So that sort of opened up the idea. At that time I couldn't think further than the excitement of that poem. So when I think of the Dadaists I think about Schwitters, and specifically about the sound poems of Hugo Ball, and about the typography that some of the Russians were exploring. At that time I called it all Dadaism, so that's why I still refer to it as Dadaism.

And with Apollinaire, it was two things. I did some translations of his poems, there was the experience of the translation itself, and in the process of translating his poems I discovered his Calligrams, his visual use of the page, which led me to Mallarmé and what Mallarmé was doing. At that time I was in Vancouver and sitting in on a bunch of workshops that some people from Tish were conducting, heavy discussions about the relationship of form and content. At that time this was very new to me, I used to sit there and shudder at the implications of what was discussed. Anyway, this opened up another dimension for me. And when Bissett once again came out with the Blewointment issues, I got a sense of inspiration, the kind of inspiration that comes from a person that is also interested in the same thing, the inspiration of somebody communicating exactly what you are interested in and are doing.

Q: Are you saying then that concrete in Canada started on the West Coast?

A: In a way it started with Earle Birney. Earle Birney was interested in specific notations, that is to say the rise and fall of the line on the page which approximates the human voice, or which approximates the action of something falling. It's simple in a sense. That did not particularly influence me because I wanted something different, but it was there as

an idea. Other than that, it began with Bissett and Lance Farrell. I was out there doing those things, but I didn't know anyone doing the same thing at the time. I didn't know Bissett at all at the time.

Q: Were you responsible for bringing concrete to the East then?

A: Yes, I guess so. I don't really know in '64-'65. What happened was David Aylward and I started Ganglia about this time. And my specific thinking was to get some of the West Coast people like Bissett and others in the Eastern scene. The first issues of Ganglia were not pure concrete, as I later began to understand the term.

Q: Which brings me to the question of how do you define the term?

A: Well, it's really a tough thing to answer. It would be simpler to say that I define it in Dom Silvester Houédard's term, "borderblur". That poetry which arises from the interface, from the point between things, the point in which poetry and painting and prose are all coming together. That's what is referred to as "borderblur".

The term concrete, see, if you get into Gomringer's very pure sense of the poem which he calls "constellations", he has very specific definitions of what the concrete poem should be. So in a sense I can't really call all I produce concrete, at least not in the terms that the guys who started the movement call it. That's why in a way, other than using the term humourously, as I did in the title of An Evening of Concrete [The Cosmic Chef], the Oberon Cement Works, and all that thing, I never thought about my poetry as concrete. I thought about it using the fact that the page is a visual field to do visual things.

Q: Would you consider your visual poetry, poetry?

A: Well, yes, I would, in a way. Some of it I would and some of it I wouldn't. Steve Mc Caffery and I did an essay as part of the TRG [Toronto Research Group] thing, on why you would call concrete poetry, poetry, and why it is a valid term. It's because the left hand and right hand terminal points, like in poetry, the left hand margin and the right hand margin have a function based either on the breath prosody or metrical prosody or whatever, but it has a function. It is important where the poem breaks off and where it picks up again. It's very important in poetry. It's not in prose. In prose it's simply because you can't have a book that runs out. In prose, the line is a horizon upon which words stick out.

In concrete or visual poetry, in the constellations or whatever, the left hand and right hand terminal points

once again are functional. They are there for a reason therefore, I call it poetry. As you know, one of the hoariest questions has always been the difference between poetry and prose.

Q: Would you say then that the basic difference between poetry and prose is the function of the terminal points?

A: Yes, the essential difference. Then there are things like rhythm, intensity of image and so on, And then you get into the long poem. Now the long poem is very close to prose and very close to story. One tends to think of poetry as imagistic and prose as story, but I think those terms are arbitrary.

Q: How would you define the term "concrete"?

A: The same way, the importance of the left and right hand margins, the terminal points. From the sound point of view you see, then that goes into what my values are in writing. My values in writing tend to be governed by sound and the music I hear in the spoken word. In the Martyrology for example, the page becomes a printed score, and the right and left hand margins as it were are important as notations for breath pauses for emphasis, and so on, and so on. So yes, I would still think of sound poetry as poetry.

Q: Is there a particular national characteristic that is typical of what is being produced in Canadian concrete?

A: Well, I used to think there was. I don't know if I still do. But, the most underlying basis of most Canadian concrete seems to be sound. There is of course the visual and rhythmic kind of poetry too, but Canadian stuff tends to be, I think, it was Steven Scobie who used the term, "dirty-clean". The visual stuff I mean, say in relation to Mayer's work which is super clean. Whereas if you take somebody like Bissett, or someone like D. A. Levy who use the mimeo look, this is what Scobie was referring to as the "dirty-clean" look in Canadian concrete. He called me "clean-dirty-super clean". But that's the underlying characteristic of visual concrete here.

Q: In one of your GrOnk mailout sheets you wrote that it functioned as a "free information service to get stuff into print from the language revolution in this country back into the general stream." What did you mean by the "language revolution"?

A: Well, I simply meant to provide as many entrances and exits as possible, to alter consciousness. To reconsider the value of words, to reconsider the language, the value of translation, a total reconsideration of the language.

Q: In the same mailout sheet you also mentioned that you were planning to give away Canadian publications by David Uu, John Riddell and others to people outside of North America because they simply had not sold here despite appearances on various book racks. How do you account for the lack of interest in this kind of medium in Canada?

A: I really don't know what it is. I haven't reached any conclusions yet. All it seems to me is that there are a lot of questions that people don't seem to ask. There doesn't seem to be a big audience in Canada in the sense of considering some of the basic issues that are being raised about language, about prose and poetry. Even among writers the interest seems to be negligible.

I know that when Steve and I worked on the TRG, we sat down to try and tackle the issue of what is narrative? It's a term for which there is no useful working definition. It's a vague term which gets used and used, it's confused with the idea of plot. It's not plot, but people just don't seem to be interested in asking themselves these questions. I think it's because once you start to ask yourself these questions, you have to ask yourself why you write?

There is also a kind of freak element in some of the things that Bissett or I do. I remember when I first began to do sound poetry, I did it because I had something to say. But, I remember the first time people were shocked. It was total shock. The audience was not prepared for someone to forsake the traditional role of the poet-reader. Someone who stands and reads or does monologues. They were not prepared for that. Now that attitude is changed. Now for instance, people are not as shocked. They are more open to that kind of experience.

Q: To those who are not familiar with its basic principles, concrete is somewhat enigmatic. Are you at all interested in making your poetry more intelligible to your audience?

A: Well, sometimes it's just a result of a bad piece of writing on my part. I think it's a kind of thing which raises questions by its nature. I think sometimes that's part of the problem. In a way, what I am into is research. I know that, I am into research writing. I am not, say, in the Martyrology, this is a completed piece. Actually, everything that I publish I see as complete, but it's research. Whereas in the Martyrology, for example, I have taken everything that I've learned, I've incorporated it and now it's coming out. So there is an element of research in most of what I do. So in a way I have no anticipation of what an audience reaction would be.

Q: Are you interested in making your audience understand what it is you are trying to do, or does it not matter to you that much?

A: Well, I would be a liar if I said that I was not interested in communicating with my audience, that I didn't have the desire to please. But, if I was mainly interested in pleasing and making a name for myself as a popular author, I certainly chose the wrong kind of work to get into. On the other hand, I have had two feelings. One is I always like to be two jumps ahead of what I write, so that by the time I publish it it is a phase that is behind me. And I think if you are growing as a writer you are always ahead of the last piece of work that you did. There is an element of wanting to please, but in the end you can't let it govern your life.

Q: There is very little theoretical or critical work being written on concrete in Canada, and for someone who is interested in knowing more about it, there is little material available.

A: That's why Steve and I are into the TRG. See, I don't think there is anything to explain, because there is a way in which visual and sound poetry is completely reactionary. There is a way in which it is not evolutionary, and that is, it is a return to such basic principles that people often are looking for things that are not there.

I have done some theoretical writing in which I outlined what I understood to be basic principles behind visual and sound poetry, but there is a point at which the thing itself says it better than any explanation ever could. I think it just makes people more secure, in a way; not that it makes them understand it better. Where I thought I had something of general value to say I tried to say it. I don't believe in theory for its own sake.

In the work that Steve and I are doing, we are doing research. We are researching writing, trying to get at the basic understanding of some of the labels. In fact there is so much weird categorization that most people are confused about the different kinds of writing anyway. I guess at the back of the question you are asking if I am interested in communicating. The answer is yes. It's a question which I've often heard before. But the whole thing is that people come to concrete with so many expectations. In a way, what I am saying is, look, abandon those expectations, play a while, and see what emerges from that. Basically it's a game which you have to play. You can't read down line by line and come to a satisfying conclusion.

Q: If what you are saying is, this kind of poetry is a game, how do you feel about those who insist on the seriousness of poetry?

A: Many people don't realize that play is serious. It's a serious thing. It's enjoyable and it's a serious thing. If you watch children play, they are very serious, it's their work. Games demand work and involvement.

Q: How much of an influence was Gertrude Stein on your work?

A: Well, as you can see here, my shelves are filled with her books. Her theory, her writings, her involvement with language. Yes, she has been a tremendous influence in many ways.

Q: Do you see any similarities between visual poetry and Chinese ideograms or other kinds of picture writing?

A: Oh, yes. There are many similarities. When I started writing I was very attracted to Kenneth Patchen. There was Kenneth Patchen and there was Chinese poetry. I was really excited by the haiku and the Chinese characters. They opened up another dimension for me. I like the purity and tight quality of the use of words, their relation to the real world was fantastic.

Q: What is the significance of concrete or visual poetry as you see it?

A: By getting into the visual or concrete poem you are forced to play with it. To discover new meanings for words, to re-evaluate the use of language in general. The only way to get into it is to play, to examine the structure, to evolve new meanings and new relationships. When you are writing ideational poetry, the emphasis is on thoughts and symbols not on language. For me the importance of sound poetry is that it takes poetry back as a spoken art, as it was meant to be. It brings poetry back to its aural tradition. In visual poetry, it is more or less an assertion of different values which say that since the advantage is not of reading but of print, the whole iconicity of language comes out, the meditational aspect. I can take this page, I can meditate on it, it's not a quick thing, it's not an instant high. It's value lies basically in exploration.

Q: Are you not in fact advocating values contrary to those promoted by our pre-fab, buy-now-pay-later culture?

A: Yes, in fact that's what I meant by the term "reactionary". But then, this is happening in a lot of the arts today. You encounter pure colour, pure shape, pure event. It's a return to the old values in art.

Q: Do you foresee a major change in this direction as far as visual poetry is concerned?

A: I don't think so. But I think that the work that some of us are doing will certainly change or alter some of the writing that is coming out in Canada. There is a lot of exciting things happening in poetry here. There are people like Phyllis Webb, Frank Davey. This is a very exciting time to be writing in Canada. I don't think there will be a big wave of concrete in the future, but I think that we will certainly help to alter a few perceptual systems.

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