Lawns of America
and Other Poems

&

On my Mind: The Shared Vision of Collaboration
in absentia

(A Practice-based PhD)

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I hereby declare that all of the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Jocelyn Page, September 2015.

Acknowledgements (PhD)

Abstract

The study of *collaboration* promotes discussion on issues of authorial identity and individual agency that contribute to new understandings of classification and methodology in poetic practice. Applying the theories of the function of the author written by Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault onto the collaborative process, we can test our own notions of the effects and importance of the author's initial decisions and purposes on a text, the reader's subsequent agency within the process, and, by extension, the idea that collaboration can occur outside the reciprocal arena, or, *in absentia.* With this theory established, we can start to consider the possibility that *absentia* can apply not only to the author *but also his text*, not simply a product-oriented intertextuality, but rather a process between the translator and the person translated as it is documented and appropriated within the site of the text. Employing Walter Benjamin's principles on translation and the nature of language, and examining this writer's own creative work and practice, we will see how authors can collaborate with a shared vision, retaining individual ownership, while also affecting some degree of change or reconsideration to both the more recent and the resurrected text.

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Lawns of America
and Other Poems

Acknowledgements (Poetry)

Lawns of America
i.m. Wayne L. Page

The grass is giving off that green again,
the one that got you all
defending the rain.

Can it be right that it's the light leaving
each blade and not the color
of grass itself?

Here, I think of all the lawns of America,
and though I try not to,
I think of you.

One

Ice Cream

That Saturday morning you drove straight past your office to the strip mall
       so I could buy my first-ever 45.
I sat a good stretch away down the Buick's sofa seat, my legs shot all twiggy
       out of short-shorts, sticking to searing vinyl.

I added up my allowance and tooth fairy money all summer until I had enough
       to hear Ringo Starr sing to me in my bedroom.
You steered us home with one hand squeezing the wheel, the other curled round
       a soft-serve, flat-bottomed cone.

Head tilted left then right, tongue lapping to stop the fresh-white drips before
       they reached your fingertips.
Lowering the needle, a deafening scratch and then I was all ribbons and curls
       and beautiful and all his.

*

At the airport your smile powered the arrival doors open and you dropped bags
       and hugged me extra hard.
Your mother and I we love you no matter what. I watched your lips press together,
       a flat line.

A strange welcome to a continent you barely remembered from thirty years before.
       It was a day of not saying, like the day after a funeral,
just moving on. I'd planned on the quirk of black pudding and fried bread.
       I'd counted on the warm magic of a cup of tea.

But you'd spotted the terminal's Baskin Robbins with thirty-one flavors
       from home sweet home
and the girl was already reaching in, scooping snaky ribbons which curled
       into a hollow ball.

*

By the time I'd got to you, your wavy hair had turned to soft-spiky dandelion seed
       which shocked with electricity
whenever they moved you under the sheets. You survived each day on nothing
       but plastic-cup tap water and touch.

Your window-side hand playful, groping for someone to clutch. That last afternoon
       during a glaring spell in the courtyard sun
you asked for your mother and brothers. And you asked, with a voice like paper,
       for an ice cream.

Your fingers made bunny ears, a sign for two scoops. I fed you as fast as I could,
       your eyes fluttering closed
in that bright June day while your tongue probed the warm air, worm-blind,
       feeling for the wooden spoon.

Genetics

The girl enters the living room and spreads her hands in front of the fire.
Her father says *Aren't your fingers long? Where'd you get those?*

From their bed her mother shouts *She can't have long fingers, Wayne, look at ours.*
He studies his own splayed hand on his knee.

The girl waits for a verdict, shoves her hands into her pockets. *But she does, Margie.
Come here and look. She really does.*

Now That's What Family Is For

Now I tell you what my mother told me as we sat down to supper, she said: *Jocelyn,*
(and then she pushed a nest of noodles into her mouth)
I wish I lived in a caravan and I could stand in the middle of that caravan and reach out
my arms and touch everything I own, like the hands of a clock touch all of its numbers.
And I said, *well, Mom why don't you do that then?*
I turned my plate so the pork chop was at the bottom, under my chest, and I began to cut.
And she said, *well do you know what, I just might do that, I just might, if I had a little bit*
of money, and her fork speared those peas every last one till only the tips of the tines
showed silver above those tiny green globes stacked 1,2,3,4, like an abacus.

Test

I've got these half dozen eggs and the use-by date was yesterday.
No, wait,
        the day before yesterday.

And they're on the counter, not the fridge, very European. I like
that that bugs
        my mother.

So I'm standing next to these eggs, and not much else to make
for dinner,
        and he's out, again.

I try to remember what Grama taught me about a pot of water,
a test,
        and how to tell a bad egg.

I lower them in with a silver spoon, then watch them float
to the top,
        all six,

speckles and stamps, wet, magnified, still far from a meal, staring
at what could be
        success.

Order Form

We are asked if there are any places on the photo
that we want touched up - please circle

all that apply: cheek, chin, forehead, lip.
In the blank we list the cowlick (now that we think of it),

the scratch along his jaw line, the one-sided
dimple, freckle on the tip of his nose.

We notice for the first time his overbite,
big ears, his dark, downy sideburns.

We think of Grama's mantle, and on it,
the dust that rests like a perfect, cold, cold snow.

Graves Avenue
i.m.

The light and the dark of it,
                              that house.
We'd enter through the buttery-bright kitchen
where first thing, Dad would lift the dome
to check for chocolate cake.
                              The voodoo doll
hung on a nail across from the cookie jar,
its little brown body wound in threads
of yellow and red.
                              The warm maple
of the family table where we'd sit
in the company of chickadees and robins,
beefy as quarterbacks and, feathery tailed
acrobats, those *damn* squirrels.
                              Tapped on the shoulder
by the tapered arc of a spider plant.
                    Then the armchair where you
and your cousins would tuck up
your legs and lean in toward her
at her end of the sofa,
                    the one cushion worn to a shine.
Crochet needles joined in tablets
          of little sweater fronts and backs.
Watched from the mantle above by creamy faced
          dolls and teapots.
                    And down the hall, a gallery
of high school photos, still lives of teens, decades
of hair-do fashion.
          Things came from cold closets, too:
postcards, the Ouija board for contacting
the dead,   (I confess
          now I would guide one eye open)
          loose ends of
stories of Indian blood
trailing through our veins
                    and fortune tellers,
                    Ferris wheels.

She liked my story of a palm reader
who told me what I already knew:
you have a large family, I can see here, like a net
or a spider web,
          some little lines broken.

What I think of spider webs today
is simple: how dainty,
          how strong.

The Wake

Uncle Woody's looking for a saltshaker to do a magic trick;
cousins are into the silver chest fogging up Grama's blackened spoons,
then dangling them off their anatomy -
                                    noses, bent elbows, naked toes.

All this in the kitchen's sickly light tonight.

Meanwhile, the black and white of our parents' parents' century
is nowhere to be found, having bolted for the screen door
to the fresh air of the porch, to trade one crazy for another -

                                    this family, for the tar-black back lawn.

I Find Traces of You, Still

Your waxy lip print
below the rim of the flute, somehow, after
so many washes,
all this time.

I hold
the stem
just so,
to the light,
then
lower it
until your kiss
presses
my forehead.

I hold you
responsible
for
everything.

The Winter of Virga

It rained, but the ground stayed dry.
Snow fell, with no accumulation.

The Cheerios jar, empty by night,
was full again by breakfast. We cut

our minute steaks in silence, elbows
off the table, while overhead, words

bunted, ricocheted and parsed apart
on tiny kitchen tiles till adjectives,

nouns were left huddled in corners.
One April day I saw the word *love*

crawl the wall, jump out the transom
and fling itself into an unwritten sky.

Agenda

It's nearly dark and the dishes are drying in the rack.
We sit with a bottle of Cantanac, my mother and I,

and instead of all the things I imagine I should say,
matters I often think of at my desk at home in London,

we talk of the U.S., and all the dams we've ever seen.
Mission, Blue Hollow, Deadwood, Hells Canyon.

And there are lines to be drawn on the trips that we made,
together, apart, when he was there, after he died, but no.

We're not tempted to guide like that and I don't feel
the need to boss things around. We simply let things flow

as they please, agreeing that we've been around.
Barron River, Greyson Lake, Swift River, St. Cloud.

It's well past midnight and into tomorrow when we finish
and climb the stairs, empty for having covered so much.

Heap

She went to the cold rooms of the house
still named for children long since gone
and there were fabrics in their closets
with smells trapped within their weaves.
She piled high these clothes, forced
the heap flush to the wall so nothing fell
and admired the poses surrounding her:
the single frayed knee of a denim leg
a silk blouse arm helpless yet free
a winter glove hailing skyward
poised to ask one last quick question.

For Sale

We've stapled signs on oak trees around town.
Strangers will turn into our u-shaped driveway,
park their cars on the lawn's edge and witness
all that we've given up on: the bread machine,
yoga mat, curling iron.
                              Late last night
we had second thoughts about the dumbbells
as we stuck prices on the rest: twenty-five cents
for the lava lamp, a dollar for the encyclopedia,
a dime an album. Well into the morning hours,
on our third bottle of wine, we are blunted
and proud of the very little we are asking
as we roam the night attic to look for more.

A History of Makeup

She fingers the tube of *Pink and Proper* at the bottom of her purse,
  heavy between clouds of used tissues,
   then makes herself up in the rear-view mirror of their Chrysler,
    parked between church and library.
          Color first, then definition.

The organ's opening trill sends a strike like a defibrillator to her heart
  as she sits alone in the back pew,
   singing out of sync, mousy-mouthed, lost in the crash of chords,
    while her lips bleed out in rays
          toward nose and chin.

Back home, before entering the house, warm with the smell of roast beef
  and indoor pine, she draws black smiles
   along the rims of her eyes by the light of the garage's naked bulb,
    its filament a blinding tangle
          that imprints with a blink.

Heart Sounds

Best of all I liked the doctor who called it a gallop.
I could picture that colt cantering along the fence
of my ribs. She must have known I would come to her,
rub the blaze on her nose and tell her everything was fine
before I unhooked the gate and let her out to run

Hotter Than Hades

She takes a Popsicle from the man's hand that reaches out the truck window,
pinches the stick-end under the waxy wrapper, *Good Humor, Good Humor, Good*
stamped in cherry red. She pays, drags away, slow in the heat, even hotter
than yesterday. She waits till she passes the hydrant to tear it open, knowing
that the paper will cling to one side, leaving a beauty like a January window.
She thinks how, by the time she's home the whole will start to soften intact,
then ooze a single, darker strand and around its tiny orbit will cling a thin cloud
like she's seen envelop Mom as she sits, Indian-style, at the open freezer door,
eyes closed, smiling in both pleasure and pain, her forehead numb on building frost.

Happy Trails, for Karen upon leaving London

Where I come from we ride west with a drive like cowboys or Kerouacs
to fortunate skies and spur-spark thrills, to nights propped awake with starlight
and a horizon like homecoming arms, just out of reach, always a day away.

Or, like hungry prospectors following the maps of those blind-excited before us,
we search for a glint in the valley's scree and river-bed rock, pan in hand,
braced for the lean and trawl, shaking like a croupier for a lucky-break nugget.

And now you and your little cowboys head toward the sunsets of Wiltshire
to a breadth of treasure and color that our city holds only in short supply.

And at the risk of carrying these metaphors too far and tarnishing this occasion,
we turn toward tonight's ruddy clouds, give your ponies a tender smack on the hind,

remind you to check for letters at each trading post, to strum happy tunes for us

around each campfire, and to recall, every time you see the clear country moon,

waxing or waning, that we're here, only a journey away, wishing, just like you.

Two:

You've Got to Wait Till the Man You Trust Says *Go*

Headed Toward Montana

I ride from the Mexican border cloaked in silence, thinking mostly of you, Caroline.
And I'm far in front of these strangers herding a thousand beeves cross-country
$$\text{to slaughter}$$

when a curtain of rain ahead blurs any thought of the river bluffs and Padre Island,
one sure fording point, beyond. The drops they fall plumb to the ground and ricochet

off stubborn earth part-way back up toward the lowering sky. And the storm, its flash
and rumble, its border of wet and dry, hauls us north, and west. I think of Jim Flood's
$$\text{words,}$$

The secret to driving cattle is to never let them know they're under restraint.
I shove my hat down tight to my head and give the sign, charging into the weather

like there's no tomorrow. And as sure as I'm my father's son, I know that this mile of
trailing steer follows, faithful and dumb.
$$\text{And so we race forward, well off the planned path.}$$

Fifth Night, Abilene

I wake to a midnight quiet, the wink of moon sizing up our camp tonight.
And the stars in the sky are like tacks in a map, saving the places we'll lay down

along the way. From the other side of the dying fire pit, over coals that have long lost
their throb and spell, come the ordinary sighs of Jim and Eddie, their faces replaced

by the creased crowns of Stetsons. While by the trees, a hoof insists on earth crust,
a horse's nostril stutters wet, with force, like a trombonist clearing spit from his horn.

I lie still as timber among these men who will become brothers of the trail. I hold my
                                                         breath
to listen to theirs - some shallow, flirting in dreams, some well below sleep's horizon,
                                                   with big ins, little outs.

I Couldn't Take the Moon Out of This Story if I Tried

It was the kind of night you get at the low point of winter, a night that comes on
just after midday and makes you doubt the existence of all sorts of things.

Caroline was nursing the baby by the cradle and I was wandering the cabin,
needing something to do, something to take my mind off my debts,

when I passed by the window, and the moon caught me in her gaze, burning golden bright
as any sun I'd ever seen. And I swear, if it weren't for the stars in that sky,

I'd have been fooled into thinking it was day all over again. And it was like that
the moon held me prisoner for a spell, hypnotized me like a gypsy teller,

made me think of things I didn't want to. It was there the moon played a trick on me,
travelled that distance of a night sky in a blink. It slid across the window

then dipped behind the distant line of ponderosas over by Lake Pontchartrain
and was gone, like a coin slipped into a pocket. It was then I heard his mean old voice

like he was standing close beside me. He said *Son, you're wasting your time.*
Can't you see how fast it goes? Do you see how fast?

From the bed Caroline stirred while the first sun hit the icy birch branches.
I thought again of what I owed certain men and how I'd spend my life repaying.

Every So Often, a Letter

He skims the opening about the weather, Pa's back, the freemartin born in May,
and slows at first mention of Joy – her first steps chasing a pair of Monarchs

across the reservoir's bad-luck meadow, her habit of waking in the night,
scared to pieces of the moon's sometimes blink, sometimes unstoppable eye.

No mention of Caroline herself: no heart, no arms or lips, only a glimpse
of her fingers busy sewing quilts, stewing tomatoes, making dandelion tiaras

to balance on Joy's curls as she totters and trips through fields. He leans
against the general store's doorframe in that one long strip of a town

and searches the road from where he came, to where he's going, and then
for someone to pick on, or pity, for any old symbol or sign.

Joy

He knew now that her one-syllable name wasn't right. They'd made a mistake
they couldn't take back.

He couldn't keep her in his head as long as he wanted when her name was finished in one
tiny breath,

over before it'd begun, when her name was a word that belonged to any Tom, Dick or
Harry sung in church,

at Christmas and good news. A feeling he himself was trying awfully hard to forget.

One Night, Drunk in the Fire's Glow

                                            cowboy goes into himself, bores
a hole and curls up, still talking, to himself, but out loud, monotone

and low, about the dogs, *the dogs*, he's got tenderness in his voice,
a cloud over his eye:

                    Hazel and Ivy, I loved 'em like daughters,
 pretty as portraits, kept me warm at night, heh heh.
                             And the men,

lost in flame and flicker, divide: John and James decide he's crazed,
they'll trust him no longer. Sam and Omar love him more,

understand him in a new way, feel permission to ride their horses
a little closer, to speak to him at the waterhole,
                             to settle in, to smile.

Feejee Mermaid

I'd never been one for the circus with its dust and exaggeration,
but something about Miss Feejee on a poster way back in San Antone,

curls merging into sea spray, fingertips resting on bare breast,
the puff of her belly pressed against rock laced with lichen …

It made me want to sign up, made me willing to search
for a way to choose like a mermaid between land and waves,

between breathing the air and diving under, reappearing too far away
to remember myself, to be recognized, too far away to really care.

English was No Good, and Spanish Started Out Promising

but ended up with a shuffle
                 from the chief to a couple of young bucks.

When their guttural was too much,
                 we looked about ready to fail

until the mounted chief came forward again,
                 molted his blanket

and stepped off his horse in a way that we all knew meant a threat
                 and also a plea.

He wanted beeves for the slaughter of his buffalo, for keeping the peace, for passage,
                 no hassle.

Lace

He can't talk to the men about it.　　How it smells like morning soap to him.
How its holes remind him of sunshine, indoors. How he doesn't understand it
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　and doesn't want to.

How it yellows and hardens going stale and stained like his Grandma's teeth.
　　　　　　　　　　　　　How it won't take the table's
edge very well anymore.
　　　　　　　He dreams his country's flag in lace, stiff in the wind.

When he returns he'll help Caroline more. He'll take that lace tablecloth, shake off
its crumbs and dust. He'll polish spoons, cups, his revolver. And his fingers
　　　　　　will show pink through its bursting patterns.

He Gathered Things from the Black Hills' Trail

Things he could imagine back at the house, on the kitchen table, the windowsill: a scarlet tanager's feather, the wilted trumpet of a mimbre blossom, a beavertail cactus paddle,

separated,
                    flowerless and bristled, limp yet heavy, oozing where it had broken from the plant. Like this, on a steep descent in Wyoming, he chose presents for her second
                                                            birthday.

A Flood of Thoughts Approaching Ogallala

One day among so many filled with toil and exhaustion, a day that finished
all generous, Pa asked me and Billy to come to the yard by the porch,

said he'd teach us a game his Daddy taught him long ago. If we'd turn around
and face the barn, then fall back with locked knees, he'd catch us just before

the ground. Now this game was called *Trust* and unless you had it you'd hit
the earth hard and flat-backed. Pa never played a thing with us before,

so we smiled to show we were pleased and I stood looking away ready to go first
for being oldest and I fell thinking of the heifers behind the red door,

cud sliding sideways, calves sucking teats. Billy told me later how Pa bit
an unlit cigarette real tender, teeth showing, one hand in his pocket,

the other, palm out to stop the game. He forgot to say the only rule,
that you've got to wait till the man you trust says *go*.

(On the Back of her Letter)

Because the pay is good
What do I have to lose? (I know what you'll say)
~~Because I'm good at it~~
Because I'm no farmer
Because a man gets tired of all planning and no doing
~~And I'm not done living yet~~
Because when I was a boy I used to look at the sun going down and wonder how
       some folk could still be in the light when we were almost in the dark
~~God doesn't care about men like me~~
Because I need something bigger than me
Because I know I can make you proud
~~Every time we talk about your father,~~
Because there's something to find out here
~~You'll see~~

It Was the Sort of Thing Pa Would Delight In

Thirty men, a day's toil building a bridge across a sixty-foot stream.
Twenty-by-ten feet of dragged cottonwood brush for a foundation.

Fourteen-foot logs shimmied up to the water by tarpaulin and gunny sack.
Sod and dirt broken by hatchets, carried spade by spade to the finish.

Then two yoke of oxen driven across and back for a test, and it stands.

I see nothing in my head but his smile when the cattle plumb refuse to cross.

I calm the men around me, *Don't crowd 'em, give 'em the time they need.*
To my father, I bluster, *Go to hell now, will you?*

Shadows Point East

By the time we get to camp and finish our unpacking, line-setting
horse-staking, fast-eating, bottle-passing, click-clacking, I feel

their departure, fear they're gone for good. But I settle myself out of sight,
out of firelight, to try to find the words again, the ones that appeared

in the brilliance of the noon-day sun, stamped like wintery shadows
on the backs of closed eyes. But nothing, not even a hint or a teasing opposite

comes to me in the quiet. And I lie here, defeated, knowing nothing
I write tonight, Caroline, will come anywhere near the thoughts

that I wanted to turn around and shout to you, loud enough for you to hear
from our front lawn, this afternoon. This is me, out stalking the west.

Wishing I had Better News Today, Dear Caroline

Last night I danced with a freckle-faced girl in Ogallala.
Today, we sent beeves across the Forty Island Ford

only to sink in quicksand. Six mules pulled one steer,
but the river had him, kept his leg from the knee down.

One bull, so enraged, charged men and slashed wagons.
The only thing that weakened him was Floyd McCann

dashing a handful of flour in his eyes. Near dusk, later,
we saw antelope as tall as giraffe. Ash Borrowstone

said that next time he'll be the Indian, let the other guy
drive the cattle to him. Word of a squaw winter

up ahead, and this southern mare will find it hard.
Tomorrow I leave my horse and these useless stories

near Two Medicine Creek where I'll hop the Utah Rail
home to you, my dear.
                          P.S. After the dance, I took my place
on the night guard till dawn with you by my side, I swear.

To the Finest Horse That Ever Walked the Western Trail

Helps to know I'm not alone in my regret, to leave a creature
so faithful and willing after three thousand miles under saddle.

And yes, there's a wide affection in this *remuda* for the horses
that suffer the dry drive, stampedes by night, swelled rivers by day.

I've seen boys unable to hide their grief when the need of bread
compelled the sale to a passing drover. Now, a mile from the tracks,

in the best of spirits over the end of the haul, with thoughts of drink
under my belt, a rim-fire cigar in my mouth, money in my pocket,

the smell of Caroline's hair, I know enough to ignore the tears
I see in men's eyes shed for these horses with ladies' names.

Silver Bow

Men stood facing the railway tracks
giving the early-day sun the once-over.

Each one nestled into a lust
for departure, a buried frenzy

to escape someone or something,
to sprint right back into the arms of the past.

I felt an already iron-hot sand
through the tired soles of my boots

and listened to the whistled chorus
of our approaching steam train

late by several minutes, calling –
three long blows, one short.

Three

Laundry

Before you load the clothing,
whether you feel you should or not,
you've got to check pockets, small
and large, for things that could hurt
the machine. You've got to shove
your hand deep to the seams to find
what they've collected that day.
                         No surprise
that in the process little bits of this
and that will jam hard and dark
beneath your fingernails.

We Straddle West	**East on the Prime Meridian**
with one foot in the sandbox	the other itching to get to the finish
a line drawn for the future	where all the winners go
we are half black stallion	jousting knight on its back
a lance aimed to unhorse	soon snapping to timber
half clatter of grey bones	diced up on the stony shoreline
in the company of glass	smoothed to a comfort
we practice at a kind of love	play-fighting with after-school boys
wielding twigs in city meadows	shadows kicked beneath our feet
and we learn about ourselves	through glassed-in displays
how the mighty heart pulses on	and how the voice is a muscle
meant to sing in every direction	sometimes more holler laugh prayer
sometimes in time with strangers	a baton held dead-still in mid-air

Buying Into Dusk

Mittened and gloved, our symmetrical little family

climbs the root-buckled hill to the looming,

lit observatory, where pipistrelle swoon

against the day's final light. We turn at the snap

of a twig to see a fallow buck shivering at the knees

in a nearby enclosure. A stop at the top to huff

and our eyes buy into dusk. Ring-necked parakeet

cross the sky above us like meteorites. A gruff

Tannoy-voice warns that in five, all gates will be locked.

We bolt toward the exit where a single golden

street lamp fizzles and blinks. A lone guard

steps from the shadows and motions without a word,

with the glide of her palm, out toward the boulevard.

Anniversary Poem

The old woman confessing: He that I loved the
Best, to him I was worst.
                              WH Auden

So today, the start of our thirteenth year as husband and wife,
I give to you a thing that all of our money can't buy:
                                        a promise,
a licking to time's shift and shock. I hand you what makes red
red, instead of russet or rose;
                                  what softens the glands
releasing tears, salty and sweet, where none normally brim.
I share with you what catches my eye, drawn in cloud
        against an effortless sky.

I present to you this old woman with her worn-down dazzle,
her rusty can of a heart that once raced at the capital D
                                          of your name,
and ask you to stop and consider what the sun can do with its sizzle:
how lips can chap in heat,
                                how driftwood leaches
its earth-color and pales with the wash of the sea, sheds all edge
and bark-snag and all that made it true and alive
        to rediscover itself playful and hollow.

The downward gaze of the day, the nothing night,
                                a new ok
to replace the instinctive climb toward light.

The Wind that Catches Open Doors

It's an optimistic wind that keeps me occupied today,
whisks my bangs to distract me, cross-eyed, from your note.

It curls paper corners to cover your line endings, leaving me
hoping for best case scenarios where I know there aren't.

But this wind only poses as my friend and conspires with you,
carries traces of our Autumn affair: moss, scalp, book-spine.

It rattles our rotten windows, bangs our broken shed door,
reminds me of all the things around here
                              that you've promised to do.

Monday, After the Time Change

                                               from Summer to Fall,
and we're fazed again this year, a lot like last. On Sunday,
we don't care that everything is slightly off: clock faces lie
and our stomachs are confused, so we graze all day. But now,
at this sunny park bench, I scan the landscape for light versus
dark, weighing up the state of things, clawing at October's close,
plotting indoor pursuits, piss-poor substitutes, through Easter.
The optimistic gold of the fallen sycamore leaves, scattered
in single stars, butters me with promise, knowing that any wind
or scuffle of feet will alter this, too, leaving only a reminder
of the leaf itself.

Owen, Nearly 9

The last of the wet winter days stretch a spell longer now,
tight-lipped at either end with a belly dance in the middle.

We'd firmly settled into winter roles, acceptable under the cloak
of afternoon drapes, dragged across windows to stop the draft.

And every year our bodies remember these changes, eventually,
but you, this year, you're as feisty as a badger, fighting us all off.

You exasperate me with your demands, complaints, your insomnia,
your dawn gaze, those thin white cables trailing out your ears.

Must I always be the opossum, carrying your winter weight?
I'll go on longer than I should, through Spring into Summer.

I embarrass myself with what I'll do for you, but I write this today,
March fifteenth, so we both know what I won't do is play dead.

Only When I Lift Off the Face of This Earth

can I feel gravity's effect on me.
As we bank right and Canary Wharf fills the window,
I lean left.

Path

When goose bumps swarm your bare skin,
you step over the crack in the park path
to stake your claim of the June day's sun.

Noon's warmth soothes you from within,
bakes you from above, rises off soft tarmac
drifting up your skirt to winter skin.

How long can you hold out in this oven
of dragged-down thoughts when your slack
summer breasts slide and drip, the sun

teases beads like Braille to your brow, stuns
behind the eyes, slashes sweat down your back?
You hold out a bit longer, to tan your skin.

Remember when this was what you called fun,
lying in blind worship on a back-lawn mat?
How the question of love was found in the sun?

Now you wander back to shade; guilty, done.
You find the factor fifty, methodically slather
it on. Damp clothes chill where they touch skin,
you hug yourself, turn your back on the sun.

Ordinary Love

This is not your ordinary love poem.
Like winter is no ordinary season
round here with its bright
but skeptical sky, marginal temps
and wait-and-see precipitation;
as the Atlantic between us was no
barrier, drenched with love, brazen
beneath the airplane window;
as orange is no joke of a color,
all zest, ember and deep harvest;
as bread, yielding middle
or hard end, is no shameful supper,
eaten together or by your lonesome.
An unapologetic definition of *good*
that I can see now is somehow tastier
than great, or even extraordinary;
certainly more than we ever asked for.

Little House

If you can't block out the sound
of the shouting, you might as well
catch every word of the argument.
The top stair is mainly where it's at.

And in between the accusations
and the alibis, work your voodoo.
Close your eyes and change things;
not just another leaf falling. Call in

a plague of Rocky Mountain locusts,
like the one that made Pa hold Laura
extra tight. Or make somebody blind,
like Mary after scarlet fever. Or maybe

conjure him up a cold one like the ad
with hairy hands round frosty mugs
telling us that if we've got the time,
they've got the beer. *Miller Beer.*

Filibuster

These are the conditions in which baby brothers and sisters are strategically conceived.
A sloppy-wet November morning, plastic wrap on the scaffolding outside our window
flapping in shreds like a tired sail at sea,

and the news that Republicans in the House and Senate have gained seats.
Obama's getting chummy with Wall Street, Sarah Palin's aiming for the White House,
the Tea Party has nothing to do with representation or tea.

What we need is an end to this filibuster, a cloture, a good referee.
Let's build an extension, join a time-share or get a dog like everybody else in town.
Better yet, let's hit the road with our perfectly portable family.

Where the Alde Threads Into the North Sea

I'm met with the dusky purples
and the rubbed-worn gold
                        of the ocean's skin.

The toadstool sky
is a lazy projectionist and the sea's sails
are like little bed-sheets, hundreds of corners
lifting, bellies up in a dull shine,
                                and I wonder:

what of the Swan into the Indian?
What does that conjure up for you?
Does it speak of today
and today only,
        in licks of red
                    and stutters of grassy green?

Let's talk about everything this time,
starting with all the waters we've ever seen.

Looking Out This Window in Hoboken, New Jersey

We're the lucky ones
with our view of Manhattan

   wide as a second-grade smile in a class photo

a mouth mingling worn baby teeth
goofy-huge grown up fronts

In Case of Fire

Back burn.
This will stop the real flames
from gaining on you.
Choose the river
as your firebreak.
Bulldoze a clearing
to be safe.
Set ablaze
everything
in its path
that could feed it.

Then rest
in the knowledge
that someplace
in all that heat
natural and instigated
somewhere in the smoke
between winning and losing
there is a sequoia cone waiting
to crack and germinate in ash.

Poem

We who can afford the appliances
      complain of their hum.
We who have babies
      are angry at our mothers
      for not telling the truth.
We who travel the world
      groan about the jetlag
      and the bad translations,
      roaming charges.

And you, the man with the sunniest
      of dispositions
accuse me, these days,
      of using our lives
      more and more
to stir things up for the worst:
      to prove a point,
      expose us all,
      to write a poem.

On My Mind:
The Shared Vision of Collaboration *in absentia*

To my collaborators whether their work appears in these pages or not.

I.A. Richards

Introduction

Connaissez-vous, au monde littéraire, une question plus controversée que celle de la collaboration, de sa nécessité, de ses avantages et de ses inconvénients?

Charles Séchan

Interpretations and Inroads

Collaborative verse comprises poetry composed jointly, by two or more explicitly named writers, producing a single poem or group of poems presented as a cohesive, collectively attributed unit, a shared product; or so this candidate's earliest research indicated. As the most prominent representative of anthologized collaborative verse in English, *Saints of Hysteria: A Half-century of Collaborative American Poetry* (2007) supports this myopic scope, this homogenized criterion. And yet, my own creative practice bears out a different reality regarding working with others; a more flexible interpretation that includes others as either obvious or *implied* collaborators; those who share in process and/or conception, contributing to the overarching project in various, often subtle, involuntary ways without garnering credit or claiming ownership for each individual product resulting from the joint endeavor. This discord, the incompatibility between chosen samples from the canon and my own collaborative output shaped the necessity that founded this PhD. If that which is anthologized is patently and categorically claimed as *collaboration*, then should my own shared practice not go by another name? By extension, should one intuit a value judgment inherent in the classification or is collaboration of shared product simply too nebulous, too challenging to document and attribute? What follows is an exploration of these practical distinctions: their complexities, cited by Séchan as '*avantages*' and '*inconvénients*', unraveling the *'question plus controversée'*, the associated contextual theory and the nature of contemporary collaboration. It is hoped that this unique combination of critical work, as outlined above, paired with a collection of original poetry, will represent a type of enquiry into joint work and modern authorship that might contribute to new methodologies and knowledge, expanding the ideology of the author and the fields of practice-based and Creative Writing studies.

The Creative Journey: Boundaries and Suspicions

The critical exploration has been led by my creative work, 'Lawns of America and Other Poems', an unpublished collection comprising fifty poems, approximately half of which were born of collaborative relationships. The poems deal largely with issues of communication, family and transatlantic displacement, while the overarching topic of inquiry in the exegetical phase is the process of writing with others, firstly examining notions of collaboration as a type of conversation; expanding the discursive aspect of group writing to coterie and occasional poetry; finally, elasticating, testing the boundaries or conceivable limitations of the collaborative event, extending the concept of joint work to encompass the act of translation. The creative and exegetical parallels are broad, yet synergetic. In deciding how to build on the existing framework of critical research in the field of collaboration, and associative theoretical arenas, my own creative practice, then, has been crucially influential. In fact, this submission is testimony to the possibility of an organic fusion and a constructive tension between the dual elements of a practice-based PhD. In the beginning years of this degree, the collection came to include many poems resulting from group writing projects, although these are only signposted as such when they inform this submission's exegetical thesis. As a practicing poet, I was drawn to working with others and I involved myself in three major collaborative relationships, all established through existing friendships with other artists and writers, and all reliant upon some degree of technological communication: a long-distance exchange with a painter friend, Sharon Willson-Immadin, via e-mail and Skype; a Facebook-hosted group writing event called 30/30, named for the number of days in the month of April, National Poetry Month in the United States; and one project containing an interrogative collaborative element with a poet friend, Australian Cath Drake, via text. At this same time, many of my own poems that did not spring from obvious collaborative projects with others developed an implied collaborative quality to them; relationships of process seemingly

more complex than influence, poetic products different to the textual systems evident in intertextuality. It was at this time that I developed a *suspicion* that collaboration could operate in different dimensions, could transcend the boundaries of reciprocity. One of my central projects, for example, a developing sequence of cowboy poems, seemed more than merely influenced by Andy Adams's fictionalized *The Log of a Cowboy*, written in 1903; it approached the level of a response, a seemingly intertextual relationship hinting toward *interaction,* an activity of reawakening or remaking within the genre of Western literature. I felt a connection to Adams's own process, a shared journey of imagining, internalizing the vernacular and atmosphere of the genre. This said, it should be noted that throughout the joint projects stated above, both explicit and implied, I wrote in my own individual voice. While some convergent themes were explored through imitation and reflection, shared prompts and post-game analysis, I wrote *my own* poems, mostly followed my own interests and, importantly, addressed the 'you' I felt inclined to address. In this sense, the collaborative process was largely generative, with shared thinking and vision, but no real aim toward future group publication; a more exploratory endeavor, more individually proprietary in nature and, consequently, devoid of any anxiety of compromise or bargaining. It also, however, lacked the benefits, the surprise and unexpected value that can come from negotiation.

Thrive and Thwart: The Journey from the Creative to the Critical

Reading a range of poetry collections born of group projects emphasized more expansive ideas on collaborative configuration, heightening my awareness of alternative methodology and creating precedence for collaborative endeavors of many shapes and descriptions. Many writers trade in models of collaboration other than those showcased in *Saints of Hysteria,* and the following supplied inspirational examples which I read with

great interest: poet-artist collaborations such as Alice Oswald and Jessica Greenbaum's *Weeds and Wildflowers*; Ted Hughes and Leonard Baskin's *Cave Birds: An Alchemical Cave Drama;* Norman Ackroyd and Douglas Dunn's *A Line in the Water;* and Paul Muldoon and Norman McBeath's *Plan B* all provided ideas on structure, process and presentation in line with my own nascent collaborative relationships. Although only basic information regarding their process is offered in their collections, one can clearly see evidence of shared process, distinct products, and credited appropriation. Philip Gross's many collaborative projects, some which will be explored in these pages, aided this researcher, especially *The Abstract Garden,* with artist Peter Reddick, which Gross later described as a 'benchmark' in terms of the response 'not only to each other's *products* but to each other's *process*'.[1] (original emphasis) This collection provided the first clues toward what could be seen as a pattern, a recurrent meta-aspect, a manifesto-style tone and address that many poems in collaborative publications possess. Further research into collaborative methodology was prompted by Gross's 2009 essay 'Through the Eye of the Pinhole' in *Writing in Education*, effectively launching the theoretical portion of this PhD. The joint writing of the Renga poets; the wacky projects of the Oulipo participants and the ease and candor of the New York School of poets, as evidenced in 'Locus Solus', edited by John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Harry Matthews and James Schuyler, and Mark Ford's *The New York Poets: An Anthology,* also influenced this submission, both creatively and critically. Richard Hugo's *The Triggering Town* also supported the idea of multiple-agent production using prompts and constraint, which impacted my own work. Collaborative literary journeys such as W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice's *Letters from Iceland* (1937) and Simon Armitage and Glyn Maxwell's *Moon Country* (1996) provided both physical and metaphorical destinations, horizons, for which to aim. Another, Nancy Gaffield's *Tokkaido Road,* was a contender for a third-chapter analysis due to its westward journey, but also its collaborative relationship with the *ukiyo-e* woodblock

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[1] Philip Gross, email to the author 28 September 2013.

prints of artist Utagawa Hiroshige, going beyond ekphrasis, exhibiting similarities to my

own work and its relationship to Adams's *Log of a Cowboy*. Michael Ondaatje's 1970

The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and Edward Dorn's 1968 *Gunslinger* supplied

contextual inspiration and productive ideas on voice and gender, as well as provocative

fodder for ideas on collaboration with genre. Finally, Tracy K. Smith's *Life on Mars*

recommended additional structure for my creative sequences and the collection's sections

toward the finalization of this submission.

　　　While my own collaborative projects were not initially strategically embarked

upon in order to enrich the exegetical research, it became clear, after several months, that

collaboration, in its many forms, was an emerging element of my practical work and

could be a substantive exegetical topic. As a way of documenting the journey, it should

be noted that in 2010, the early sketch of this thesis proposed an enquiry into the topic of

inspiration, motivated by my own fascination with poetic process, seeking answers for

how and why we write poetry. Using an in-depth review of Donald Hall's chapter on

'Vatic Voice' in his 2003 *Breakfast Served Any Time All Day* as a starting point, I soon

found literature concerning *inspiration* to be vast, unwieldy and largely difficult to

substantiate in any scholarly sense. While the associated topic of the *sublime* is clearly

well-researched in terms of the literary canon, with scholars such as David Herd, in his

2007 *Enthusiast!*, and Timothy Clark in the 1997 *The Theory of Inspiration,* providing

broad views on the phenomenon in English language literature, I found that attempting an

overview as it applies to poetic practice was untenably immense, unproductively

unmanageable. Although my critical research proved thwarted by limitlessness

throughout these early days of research, my own practice contrastingly thrived in terms of

creative output. Diary entries from these nascent months of the PhD evidence dozens of

first-draft poems submitted to my creative supervisor each month, many born of

collaboration. In attempting to analyze the intersection and the fundamental tensions

between these topics, *inspiration* and *collaboration*, the symbiotic nature of the PhD

became apparent: the creative work inspired me to pursue the critical theme of

collaboration and, in time, the stagnation of the initial critical project on inspiration

encouraged me to reexamine and mine my creative work for another, more promising

area of enquiry. As much of my most prolific work was a result of working together with

others, it was natural that this process of collaborative practice be examined for its

inspirational effect. Before long, the associated question presented itself: how does

inspiration work within collaboration? The question, as an undercurrent, has informed

this study.

Exegetical Field Survey

This exegesis surveys a range of literature on the topic of *collaboration*, much of it

focused on fiction and drama, with a fair amount of emphasis placed on the history and

legal aspects of authorship. The field of research within literature, in fact, has proven lean

compared to that of the sciences, education and business. That said, since commencing

this PhD, this practitioner has found that studies, both theoretical and practice-based,

querying the methodology and effects of collaboration within the arts, including Creative

Writing, have multiplied, with entire conferences, selected details of which are presented

later, devoted to the connected topics of *collaboration* and *poetry*. This thesis selects

research most relevant to my own practice-based project and this has largely indicated a

decided movement within literature that goes beyond the need to debunk the myth of

solitary genius and toward a united call for more a nuanced definition of current

complexities within the field. My intention is to place myself within this domain, keeping

the topic of *inspiration* in mind, attempting to sift through these complexities in order to

better understand issues of collaboration as they inform poetic practice. Linda Karell's

claim in *Writing Together/ Writing Apart: Collaboration in Western American Literature*

(2002) that collaboration isn't simply 'the creation of a text by two or more individuals working together'[2] but that 'all literary writing is inevitably collaborative'[3] supported this researcher's presuppositions and helped to launch this critical journey. After the false start with the far-reaching topic of inspiration, it also reaffirmed the need to establish the parameters of my own collaborative projects in an effort to provide some measurable value with which I could evaluate Karell's statement: in other words, I saw this as a challenge to fill Karell's vast statement with particulars from my own experience. For example, if all literary creation is collaborative, how can we begin to study literature in a meaningful way? This exegesis will maintain that Karrell's findings seem to imply more about process than product. Karell's background in Western American women's literature lends the study a particular accentuation on the mythology of the Western 'lone individual'[4] and the challenge that collaboration affords male authority. Further reading into the history and paradigms of collaboration explains the late eighteenth-century biographical approach to the study of English literature, as cogently presented in Jack Stillinger's 1991 *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius,* in which the author concerns his research with the fundamental complexity of authorship, incorporating a major review of unacknowledged collaborative works in modern history. This re-evaluation of past works seems to imply an inherent necessity for expansion and repositioning, with recognition of the complications involved with the act. Rather than suggesting an all-inclusive definition of collaboration, this indicates support for the identification of new classification to apply to past works as a test, to be then expanded to literature on a whole. Although Benjamin Mako Hill's 2003 'Literary Collaboration and Control: A Socio-historic, Technological and Legal Analysis' focuses chiefly on issues of copyright, it also provides a comprehensive overview of the history of authorship, from

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[2] Linda K. Karell, *Writing Together/ Writing Apart: Collaboration in Western American Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 2.
[3] Ibid., xx.
[4] Ibid., xxviii.

the earliest forms of storytelling to present day, pausing on the Statute of Anne of 1710 in

order to clarify its importance to changes in authorial control, paving the way toward

Romantic ideals of originality and subsequent challenges to creativity. Editors Martha

Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, in their 1994 *The Construction of Authorship: Textual*

Appropriation in Law and Literature, a compilation of essays regarding appropriation,

accountability and consensus, also focus their beam on law, but include an important

discussion of technology's role in collective writing. Heather Hirschfeld's contribution to

this thesis is largely directional, suggesting moderation and restraint in the parameters of

study in her 2001 'Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship'. Primarily

concerned with the conditions of authorship in drama and performance, Hirschfeld

recognizes the inherent 'cooperative endeavor behind a literary performance',[5] yet also

intuits the hazards of such a broad definition, lacking constructive boundaries. This, too,

exemplifies the need for a new taxonomy, a set of examples for instructional

classification. Although Hirschfeld avoids steering the reader toward a *superior* way, her

study recommends constraint for optimal philological understanding. *Author-ity and*

Textuality: Current Views of Collaborative Writing (1994) provides some of the best,

well-supported arguments for the inclusiveness of collaboration, citing the narrow

definition of the act as the motivating force behind the myth of solitary genius that has

prevailed for centuries. Further validating this thesis's *reason d'etre,* James S. Leonard

claims, in the book's introduction, that the 'reluctance to recognize the legitimacy and

workability of collaborative writing' is 'itself becoming a topic of some interest'.[6] M.

Thomas Inge's essay, 'The Art of Collaboration', within this publication, opens the

debate of the role of intertextuality, including reference to Herman Melville's

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[5] Heather Hirschfeld, 'Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship',
PMLA, 116 (2001), pp. 609 – 622 (p. 614).
[6] *Author-ity and Textuality: Current Views of Collaborative Writing,* ed. by James S.
Leonard, Christine E. Wharton , Robert Murray Davis and others (West Cornwall, CT:
Locust Hill Press, 1994), p. xiv.

collaboration 'with his cultural and economic world'[7] while Jewel Spears Brooker's

chapter on T.S. Eliot asserts that '[a]t the center of Eliot's theory of art is the view that the

greatest art can only be achieved through collaboration, and that the greatest artists are

not necessarily the most brilliant or energetic, but the most willing and most able to

collaborate'.[8] These ideas provide a provocative counterpoint to traditional notions of

individual genius at the same time they stimulate elasticated ideas of what constitutes

collaboration. They also reveal an underlying enthusiasm for the seeming limitlessness of

meaningful interaction that might be studied under the term *collaboration* in the future.

Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede, in *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on*

Collaborative Writing (1990) support additional exploration in the field by quoting their

research colleague Nancy Allen who states that 'very little detail is known about

collaborative writing processes in general … there is a need for in-depth study of the

features of collaborative writing [defined as] a situation in which decisions are made by

consensus'.[9] Pausing to contemplate how 'collaborative writing challenges traditional

power relationships',[10] Ede and Lunsford direct their reader's attention to a reexamination

of the status of the author, particularly in relation to the public and personal aspects of

collaboration. Vera John-Steiner's 2000 *Creative Collaboration* stresses the benefits of

communal approaches when confronting the challenges of work and studies, presenting a

range of partnership models in an effort to identify 'the dynamics of collaboration'.

Emphasizing the distinction between 'cooperating teams' and 'thought communities', the

latter which best approximates the types of collaborative relationships that this exegesis

discusses, John-Steiner presents four patterns of collaboration that delineate the

complexities of those who work together: 'shared vision': 'distributed', 'complimentary',

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[7] M. Thomas Inge, 'The Art of Collaboration', in *Author-ity and Textuality: Current Views of Collaborative Writing,* pp. 3 – 15 (p. 4).

[8] Jewel Spears Brooker, 'Common Ground and Collaboration in T.S. Eliot' in *Author-ity and Textuality: Current Views of Collaborative Writing,* p. 67.

[9] Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford, *Singular Texts/ Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), p.119.

[10] Ibid., p. 120.

'family' and 'integrative'.[11] This thesis adopts the researcher's concept of 'shared vision',

in particular, rather than the publication's wholesale methodology, yet the overarching

paradigm and the complexity it represents are welcome as they encourage a shift in focus

from collaborative product to process. Seth Whidden's 2009 *Models of Collaboration in*

Nineteenth-Century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen supplies this thesis with

additional terminology with which to determine different types of collaborative process,

within my own practice and in the greater canon. Whidden's introduction presents not

only an exemplary overview of the history of collaboration, but signifies the important

'authorial or collaborative other',[12] a major component of this research. Whidden's

differentiation between *collaboration*, a reference to creative process, and *intertextuality*,

one of systems and results, is important to this submission's development. The

comparison of these terms usefully accentuates the key parameters of this thesis's chief

argument, that of process versus product. Discussion of intertextuality as a misdiagnosed

association of collaboration is included in this submission's chapter on translation.

Finally, Whidden's classification of collaboration *in absentia* versus *in praesentia,*

together with a description of shared vision are pivotal and essential ideas in support of

the theories herein, especially in regard to theories of translation as an act of collaboration

as presented in the final chapter of this exegesis.

Several works have been peripherally valuable to this study, including Jeffrey

Masten's 1997 *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship and Sexualities in*

Renaissance Drama in which we see the language as fundamentally collaborative.

Morag Styles's 1989 *Collaboration and Writing* reminds us of the largely positive, less-

controversial outcomes of collaboration within other fields such as the sciences and

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[11] Vera John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 196-197.
[12] Seth Whidden, ed., *Models of Collaboration in Nineteenth-century French Literature: Several Authors, One Pen* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), p. 9.

education and the long-accepted status of the collaborative within the visual arts. Holly A.

Laird's *Women Coauthors* (2000) is sympathetic to the authorial authentication a reader

desires in order to validate a literary work, yet maintains focus on the 'partial

collaborations, in which full mutually acknowledged coauthorship does not occur'.[13]

Bette London, in *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships (*1999), also concerns

her research with the female author, both with uncredited 'acts of assistance and

inspiration; acts of mentoring or mutual influence; acts of revision or editorial input',[14]

but also the largely communal collaborative relationships, often 'grounded in affectional,

often familial, relationships between women'.[15] Silvia Bigliazzi and Sharon Wood, in

editing their 2006 *Collaboration in the Arts from the Middle Ages to the Present,*

investigate the purposes of collaboration, acknowledging an alternative, political strand of

the definition of the verb *collaborate*, exploring the possibility that those who write

together do so to place themselves outside tradition by deviating from a normative notion

or text, placing the reader in a paranoid position by being outnumbered by writers.

Methodology: Roads Taken

In this introduction, I will outline how this exegesis represents the work of a candidate

acting as practitioner, reader, and researcher, while also striving to be a 'useful critic', as

described by literary theorist George Steiner: 'The useful critic does two things. First, he

makes the tenor of his arbitrariness transparent. The angle of his ordering vision is clearly

manifest.' Steiner explains how a scholar 'can be - more often than not, he is - eclectic

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[13] Holly Laird, *Women Coauthors* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 2.
[14] Bette London, *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999), p. 19.
[15] Ibid., p. 1.

and variable in his adjustments of focus and aperture' and his work can represent 'a different stylization of the critical exercise, a different "choreography" and, therefore, distancing between points.' Steiner recommends that 'whatever his stance of intentionality, the useful critic offers this stance for identification'.[16] Whereas with the critic 'there is no fusion between perceiver and perceived', [17] 'the reader's engagement with the text is not "objectifying"'; instead, '[t]he reader opens himself up to the anonymous being of the text'.[18] I hereby offer my 'choreography' and 'stance' as 'eclectic' in an effort to identify and gesture toward the generative and the 'useful'. In chapter three I intend to map my path within critical and creative spaces, from these related perspectives of practitioner and reader.

Accordingly, it is proposed that this exegesis acts as a critical Venn diagram, supporting contact between theoretical models and their relationship to the creative projects within. We will see later how various generative tensions inform this project, but for now we will further employ the concepts of Jonathan Culler, literary deconstructionist, a researcher who often explores and chronicles the intersections between literature and cultural studies in tertiary education. While acknowledging the New Critical impact on literary theory, Culler proposes replacing 'theory' with 'method', or, 'work that succeeds in challenging and reorienting thinking in fields other than those in which it originates'.[19] He maintains that '[w]riting about literature is not a science or even a discipline but a changing collection of diverse projects',[20] regarding theory as

> inescapably interdisciplinary: works of philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, political or social theory, history, psychoanalysis, gender studies, film theory, and so on are taken up by people in literary and cultural studies because their accounts

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[16] George Steiner, '"Critic"/"Reader"', *New Literary History*, 10: 3 (1979), pp. 423 – 452 (pp. 427-428).
[17] '"Critic"/"Reader"', p. 432.
[18] '"Critic"/"Reader"', p. 441.
[19] Jonathan Culler, *The Literary in Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 3.
[20] Jonathan Culler, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 4.

of matters relevant to the functioning of texts have made strange the familiar and enabled people to conceive the matters with which they are dealing in new ways.[21]

It is with the spirit of Steiner and Culler that this study embraces the 'interdisciplinary', approaching textual creation 'in new ways'. As such, the chapters that follow represent an investigation into the nature of collaboration as informed and inspired by my own creative practice. In that sense, they operate as a meditation on my own practice-based journey toward understanding collaboration. Close readings of three poems arising from collaborative projects illustrate the complexity involved in collaborative practice; associated examples of my work, which reflect these intricacies both in terms of communicative process and product, are included. The chosen verse ultimately gestures toward an investigation of the possibility that *influence* and *shared vision collaboration* can be more than simply a passive or unconscious relationship, rather, a positive element in the pedagogy of the study of Creative Writing.

I.A. Richards, a foundational theorist in modern literary criticism and author of the seminal 1924 *Principles of Literary Criticism,* gives birth to the idea of close reading as a means of examining poetry. Eschewing aesthetical approaches, Richards advocates the appreciation of the communicative aspects of a poem over its beauty; he merits the technical, special features of an object, together with a statement of the 'value of the experience'[22] in order to critically explore poetry. It is with this basic tenet in mind that this exegesis ultimately selects representative verse from which to explore the nature of collaboration. This is not to suggest that these poems are sole samples of their kind, nor that they perfectly replicate the same types of processes or products exhibited in my own work. However, the examination of contemporary ideas on collaboration, studied from within, using examples from collaborative projects, has necessarily brought out aspects of

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[21] *The Literary in Theory*, p. 4.
[22] I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2001), p. 18.

verse that are frequently found in collaboration: meta-aspects of writing and group

writing come to the fore; the manifesto nature of opening/closing poems of a

collaborative collection; the 'you' as the intimate, known reader, the collaborator, as a

common factor in many joint writing pieces. The poems, products of collaborative events,

give us our best glimpse of the joint-writing process, guiding the theoretical discussion

with relevant support from various sources best suited to practical analysis. They are

selected for close reading, in part, to encourage the reader to scrutinize his own practice

in preparation for and act of communicating with others: for collaborating.

Bearing in mind the 'useful' and generative, the thinking and writing of two

literary critical theorists, in particular, thread through as evaluative filters for my own

assumptions and hypotheses: the work of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault regarding

the status of the author remains crucial to the underpinnings of this exegesis. Their

theories on authorial positioning provide a fascinating lens through which to view

collaboration, the process, as well as its subsequent products. Through consideration of

the relationship of the author with his or her own work we can test our own notions of the

importance and effects of the author's initial decisions and purposes on a text, the

reader's subsequent agency within the process, and, by extension, the idea that

collaboration can occur outside the reciprocal arena, or, *in absentia.* The multi-authored

text, in other words, affords the opportunity to explore these important ideas on individual

agency and the authorial identity vis-à-vis the phenomenon of joint writing.

The theories of Russian scholar, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Bulgarian-French theorist,

Julia Kristeva, suggest themselves, as undercurrents, in these pages. Bakhtin, in his *The*

Dialogic Imagination, comprising essays initially penned in the mid-1930s to early

1940s, and first published as a whole in 1975, gives us the term *heteroglossia*, a method

of examining speech and authorial intent in the novel. In his essay, he theorizes that

> [t]he living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical
> moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against
> thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness

around the given object of an utterance, it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.

Bakhtin's ideas that 'every word is directed toward an *answer* and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates'[23] participate in the larger investigation proposed herein, although they are not fully explored. Bakhtin's theories are later channeled by Kristeva in her 1980 *Desire in Language* in which she writes that 'any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorbtion and transformation of another',[24] describing her early concept of *intertextuality*, a theory considered later in this PhD within the larger discussion on translation and authorial product.

Content: A Critical Road Map

The three selected poems exhibit verse from group writing projects that represent alternative aspects of collaboration, in line with my own work. It might be posited that each of the following types of joint writing warrants its own anthology, a celebration of both collaborative process and product. Chapter one explores ways in which collaboration can reflect the conversational aspects of art and, subsequently, the ways that discourse between artists can take the form of collaboration. Philip Gross's 'Trialogue . . . *by way of a Preface*' illustrates one example of how creating together can result in a type of communication or exchange of ideas between agents possessing a shared vision within a collaborative project. Applying Foucault's theories of discourse to Gross's poem, a manifesto on writing together, we reflect on the author's equalizing role in honoring all agents in the collaboration, artist and printer, importantly, although they share no authorial credit in the poem. Gross speaks to his collaborators in 'Trialogue . . . *by way of*

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[23] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, ed. by Pam Morris (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 76.

[24] Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach of Literature and Art,* ed. by Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Basil Blackwell), p. 66.

a Preface', creating a meta-poem, forming a union of three, increased to a fourth by involving the reader. Gestalt theories, ideas on *space* in poetry, and examples of collaboration-as-inspiration contribute to the exchange, building an enquiry into what different shapes joint writing can take and how their process and products can bend the boundaries of traditional notions of collaboration. My project with artist Sharon Willson-Immamdin will further inform this chapter's ideas on conversation in art.

This chapter could include distinctions between collaborative projects involving writers with different types of visual artists or practitioners: painters, photographers, sculptors, for example, in order to investigate distinct methodologies and results. How is the conversation different depending on the medium? A longer exegesis might also propose a study of the differing dynamics within a duo, a trio, a quartet: how is shared vision challenged, specifically, with greater numbers of participants? How would these distinctions manifest themselves in both process and product? Additionally, how might this type of collaboration contrast with ekphrasis? Another thesis might study ekphrastic writing notions of *absentia*, possibly proposing that writing from art is a type of collaboration with the original artist. Interviews concerning the topic of inspiration within collaboration might better clarify how artists work within a group or pair, and also how collaboration affects perceptions of inspiration.

Chapter two examines the practice of the coterie and, as a related subject, occasional poetry. Dean Young's 'The Plow Goes Through the World' provides an example of a collaborative project involving a circle of writers, peers working in the same physical space, with common prompts, constraints, and goals, yet penning their own poems. I propose that coterie members, as first readers, operate as controlling and guiding agents in the development of the poem, leading to the application of reader-response theories of Jane Tompkins, Hans Robert Jauss and Jerome McGann. This chapter's research suggests that the critical study of occasional poetry is minimal and that a full theoretical exegesis could be written on this subject alone, exploring distinct types

occasional poetry, with a more in-depth view of its history and impact on the canon. This chapter could be extended by investigating the aspects of translation within Young's project; following the initial collaborative exchange with the first reader, is there an added dimension of collaboration between the translator and the translated? Clearly this would require further research including interviews of participants in order to determine more clearly the parameters of the functional aspects of the event. Of interest to this researcher would be a practical study following on from the theories and suppositions presented within this chapter: do most poets actively consider the reader-function of their audience, including their family, friends, or editor? Specifically, do poets alter their verse when submitting to particular journals? Might a writer alter copy in anticipation of a specific publisher or larger readership involved? An occasional poem from this submission's collection will elucidate how the absent, yet anticipated or contrived reader can help forge verse. This bridge between *in praesentia* and *in absentia* proves critical for this thesis's final extension toward translation as a collaborative exploit.

The most complex of the trio, building on aspects of conversation and coterie, chapter three involves an enquiry into the idea of translation as a type of collaboration, with a close reading of Robert Lowell's 'Pigeons'. Presenting an abbreviated history of translation theory, focusing on imitation and the fundamental nature of language, this chapter will draw largely from Walter Benjamin's 1923 essay 'The Task of the Translator' in proposing that translation is a form of collaboration *in absentia*, in which both authors are duly credited and documented. Finding support from Barthes and Foucault, as well as Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence,* 'Pigeons' will help differentiate between collaboration and influence, reiterating the distinction between the joint writing *process* and intertextuality, the *product*. A poem from this thesis's central sequence, an imitation in the voice of a cowboy, will epitomize the core theory of this chapter, emphasizing the suggested collaborative aspects of the translated poem and its translation, whether the latter is a faithful, literal rendition or an imitation, like mine, or

Lowell's. The interesting parallel myths of solitary genius in writing and that of the archetypal cowboy will be mentioned briefly within a short discussion of my own creative work. It will be suggested that the shared vision of poets, although temporally and physically divided, can still be classified as collaboration; the interpretation of the act can be elasticated to this extent, possibly creating a foundation upon which future studies can be built. Indeed, a larger inquiry into translation with an in-depth analysis of the crucial parameter of reciprocity as the theoretical backbone might prove fruitful. An excavation of the practical differences and possible overlap of influence, intertextuality and imitation would be welcome, especially from a practice-based perspective, documenting process and methodology. An exegetical investigation into collaboration *in absentia,* structured around translation, employing a text such as Adam Thirlwell's *Multiples,* for example, might reveal mechanics that illuminate limitations of the theories presented herein. A more rigorous application of intellectual property law towards translation and translation-as-collaboration might inform my own research in startling ways, exposing dotted or blurred lines, or possibly points of departure for future inquiry. Other areas for useful debate might arise from further textual investigation: could the dimensions of the collaborative process be examined, plotted and compiled in order to provide a working theory as to the scope, margins, overlap and practical parameters of collaboration today? My conclusion makes a tentative effort in that direction. Reflecting on the adjacent topic of inspiration, the question, as presented by Ede and Lunsford, '[w]hat epistemological implications does collaborative authorship hold for traditional notions of creativity and originality'[25] could be extended to that of inspiration.

There are a number of facets of collaboration that this thesis does not discuss in the interest of focus: joint work in science, psychology, economics, politics and education are strategically absent. Collaboration of fine artists is mentioned for the purposes of this

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[25] Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa Ede, 'Collaborative Authorship and Teaching of Writing' *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature,* ed. by Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), p. 417.

poet's practice, but not satisfyingly explored. Many poets and researchers have dedicated studies to the observation and recording of poetic process, a few within collaboration. While these papers have contributed useful information toward new methodologies within the field and doubtlessly encouraged artists of all kinds to reevaluate and reflect on their own practice, this exegesis emphasizes textual analysis with selected theoretical application as a conduit into the study of collaboration, and, as such, it does not replicate nor overly rely upon these efforts. The New York School of poetry, Renga, and Surrealist poetry merit mention, but could handily justify a thesis of their own concerning coterie and the collaborative process. As for translation-collaboration, this is a field which has yet to be sufficiently unpacked in any critical sense.[26] Adopting a more objective attitude toward what constitutes collaboration, readers might come to see that the subject is vast and under-researched, under-reported. This thesis calls for further expansion within the ever-elasticated field of joint writing by examination of process, as it manifests itself within the products of collaboration. This expansion might prove useful in then testing the boundaries of classification, the limits of a new taxonomy within a field which is untenably, excitingly vast.

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[26] As relevant as Claire Davison's 2014 *Translation as Collaboration: Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield and S. S. Koteliansky* appeared initially to this researcher, it chiefly concerns itself with the distinct topics of translation and co-translation as driving forces in cultural exchange.

Chapter 1

Conversation and Collaboration: A Close Reading of Philip Gross's 'Trialogue . . . *by way of a Preface*'

Contact with other people does not lead to art; it leads to conversation.

Robert Bly

Trialogue

. . . by way of a Preface

for Nicolas and Peter

The word, the image, and the space between . . .
Like prints that trail off in a swirl of snow
what's meant is more than it was meant to mean

– by us, at least. '*Be-hind you!*' The unseen
is always creeping up to steal the show.
The word, the image, and the space between

are buddies, lovers, rivals in a teen-
soap romance: boy next door or gigolo?
What's meant is more than it was meant to mean:

three dots, for instance, when the slick machine
of language stalls, a glimpse of depths below
the word, the image, and . . . The space between.

Old songs: '*I saw the young moon yestere'en
the old moon in her lap.*' Words like *afar . . . ago . . .*
What's meant is *more than.* 'It was *meant.*' To mean

is human; to reveal, divine – a clean
break into . . .
                      What's that? Oh,
the Word? The Image? And space, space . . . Between
what's meant is more than it was meant to mean.

Philip Gross

Horizons of Discourse

In 'Trialogue . . . *by way of a Preface'*,[27] the opening poem of *The Abstract Garden*, the collaborative collection by poet Philip Gross and artist Peter Reddick, the reader is presented with a '*Preface*' (emphasized with a capital *P*), a map of the collaborative process and, as such, a manifesto with which to read and interpret the collection. This villanelle, this poem-as-declaration, can be seen to represent three of the chief purposes or strategies of artists entering into many collaborative relationships: competition and a sense of play; surprise and liberation from the self and control; and a platform for the expression of friendship, shared vision and artistic exchange. This essay will propose that 'Trialogue', in fact, contrary to Bly's statement, functions as a fine example of art *and* conversation, representing the complexity of collaboration that places emphasis on process over product, craft over inspiration, relationship over property, and, entering the historical debate, putting co-collaborator and reader on a par with the author. Further support for these ideas will be provided by additional verse from Gross's oeuvre as well as a discussion of the process of writing 'I find traces of you still', a poem from the attached creative submission, also generated by collaboration.

In order to situate Gross's poem and this close reading within the context of the various discussions and debates surrounding collaboration, it is helpful to distinguish the field, specifically where it involves writing and, when available, poetry. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* to *collaborate* is defined as '[w]ork jointly (*with)*, esp. on a literary or scientific project.' In terms of and within poetry, collaboration is, in the most traditional sense, work authored in pairs, trios or sometimes chains; that is to say, writers working in co-operation to create a common piece of work. *Saints of Hysteria*, the most prominent, comprehensive anthology of collaborative poetry in the English language,

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[27] Hereafter referred to as 'Trialogue'.

contains verse produced by 'poets who collaborate directly with other living poets'.[28] The collection comprises jointly authored line-by-line pieces by relatively well-known American poets, as well as insights into process through endnotes: recollections of fun, humor, 'staying up late and drinking with someone'.[29] As such, it is a contained, straightforward compilation: there are no examples of more experimental, boundary-bending material or even mention of any projects outside of text-based media; in short, there is nothing remotely similar in process or product to my own joint writing projects. This disconnect with my own practice, which is full of collaborative exploration, technological exploitation and, above all, individual agency, production and appropriation of material, predicated this research, this desire for validation; it represents a need to find a place for myself and my projects of shared vision within the collaborative canon, as characterized by this model publication.

Benjamin Mako Hill offers an audit of a wide variety of writing, including academic, business, screenplay and music authorship. He claims that collaborative writing, on a whole, 'tends only to imply synchronous and fully consensual group work', citing *literature* as different as it is 'always collaborative' and

> implies connections between, and unity among, different written works over time and between authors in a way that 'writing' does not. These connections may range from traditions and conventions to subtle allusions to quoting and, in their most extreme form, to plagiarism.[30]

These fundamental attributes of reference, inference, association and integration are undeniably present within language itself, an idea unpacked in chapter three. This chapter emphasizes the inherent collaborative nature of discourse as it argues that the conversational aspects of language, already active within discourse, are often further

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[28] *Saints of Hysteria: A Half-Century of Collaborative American Poetry*, ed. Denise Duhamel, Maureen Seaton and David Trinidad (Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2007), p. v.
[29] Ibid., p. 56.
[30] Benjamin Mako Hill, 'Literary Collaboration and Control: A Socio-historic, Technological and Legal Analysis' <http://mako.cc/academic/collablit/writing/BenjMakoHill-CollabLit_and_Control.html> [accessed August 24, 2015], p. 10.

accentuated in a literary or poetic joint writing project. Hill's reference to 'works over time' gives rise to an elastication of ideas of *absentia* that will be launched here and fully discussed in chapter three. Jeffrey Masten offers that 'if we accept that language is a socially produced (and producing) system, then collaboration is more the condition of discourse than its exception'. He surmises that

> [i]nterpreting from a collaborative perspective acknowledges language as a process of exchange; rather that policing discourse off into agents, origins, and intentions, a collaborative focus elaborates the social mechanism of language, discourse as intercourse.[31]

This mightily broad vision of literature and language provides the platform upon which we can build some new textual parameters, eschewing ideas, for the moment, that sometimes accompany studies of traditional collaboration. In other words, we might look beyond the neatly categorized template provided in *Saints of Hysteria;* the manifestly attributed, traceable and contained templates of process and product offered by anthologists. In fact, an increasing number of scholars and writers in the small field of research on collaboration and literature support this perspective, more open and less product-driven than traditional ideas, such as Linda Karell, for example, in *Writing Together/ Writing Apart,* who proposes that 'authorship is actually a form of production that invariably reveals the presence of others'.[32] These ideas, these statements calling for, on the one hand, a type of fundamentalism of 'language as a process of exchange' and, on the other, an unfolding or development toward *others* seem to warrant, even provoke, further hypothesising, leading to a more nuanced examination of the practicalities of collaboration. How do these 'connections' and 'unity' manifest themselves and are they measurable? If 'intercourse' and 'exchange' are inherent, does this imply that rigorous and qualitative study of collaboration is impossible? What might it mean to 'reveal the

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[31] Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 20.
[32] Karell, p. xx.

presence of others' and does this imply the notion of influence and, if so, how might this be meaningfully studied in literature? Karell's claim that 'all literary writing' is 'inevitably collaborative' leans toward the undisputable tendency of literature to pay homage, to quote, to layer meaning and reference, to honor by means of imitation of form and other traditional devices, to connect with the literary canon. This, at times, may overlap with *influence,* which lacks credit or provenance and contains mingled ideas; barely traceable, un-credited, manifestations of borrowed voice; forged or stolen content or literary conceits; impersonation; and, of course, plagiarism. However, this study focuses on joint projects involving shared vision as *collaboration,* with singularly owned products. As such, it will carve a path toward an expanded exploration, insisting on criteria that differentiate *process / product* and *collaboration / influence*. In order to gain full perspective on the subject, we must acknowledge other scholars, including Heather Hirschfeld, who points out that to use the term collaboration 'for any of the multiple activities and people that make possible a literary endeavour, or to insist that literary work is by its nature collaborative – risks evacuating the term of analytic meaning'.[33] Hirschfeld's appraisal is exactly what is needed here, reminding us that little is gained from oversimplification. We can respect the sense and rigor of Hirschfeld's criticism at the same time that we defend the inclusive sensibilities of Masten, Karell and others for what they might bring to an analysis of Gross's poem and overall practice. In such a way, we might test the integrity and feasibility of their claims, while learning more about trends and developments of poetic process in collaboration. In opening this line of inquiry we can widen our study, testing existing literary theory against this new framework, gaining access to methodological developments and eventually reestablishing boundaries within the studies of joint writing. This chapter will endeavour to analyze Gross's poem and greater collaborative work and process as a mostly *explicit* example of collaboration, whilst paving the way for a discussion of more open, *abstract* notions of collaboration,

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[33] Hirschfeld, p. 619.

allied with Masten and others. The taxonomy Seth Whidden labels as '*in praesentia*' or '*in absentia*' is of paramount importance to the central argument of this thesis. This essay's inclination toward categorization aims for a highly discursive, enlightened exploration of the field, and Whidden provides the terminology as the tools. In particular, *in absentia* will take on distinct meaning in each of the following essays. In this chapter, which establishes the first step toward acceptance of collaborators' participation outside the realm of the product or ownership of collaboratively constructed text, *absentia* will represent the acknowledgement, the extension of the less-restricted theories of Karrell, Hirshfeld, Masten and others; it will provide a ramp to the textual analysis which will more rigorously assess the integrity of these ideas.

The Author

Masten's 'discourse,' and 'socially produced (and producing) system' and Karell's 'presence of others' place emphasis on people, communication and process rather than product, reminding us that '[a]ny utterance – the finished, written utterance not excepted – makes response to something and is calculated to be responded to in turn':[34] a conversation. This focus on 'discourse', society and 'intercourse' suggests fluidity in the absence of a text, an ephemeral exchange with the important communicative functions of ancient storytelling or inspired oral poetry that was 'sung or chanted', with 'the earliest Greeks poets' who 'attribute[d] their poetic gifts directly to the Muses'.[35] '[S]ocially produced' and 'social mechanism' conjure the medieval writer looking to elevate his subject, not to advertise himself or his own skills; or the derivative composer of the Middle Ages adding to a score in the spirit of the advancement of the work, predating the

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[34] V. N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. by Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 72.

[35] N. Kershaw Chadwick, *Poetry and Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), p. 1-2.

concept of plagiarism. These theories presented by Masten and others simultaneously question, almost threaten to destabilize the author's role and status, entering the debate initiated by Roland Barthes in his 1967 essay 'The Death of the Author'. Barthes cites the author as a modern phenomenon, 'a product of our society […] emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation'.[36] He calls for new thinking on the importance of the author, based on the loss of authorial identity in narration, claiming that 'a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where multiplicity is focused, and that place is the reader'.[37] Attributing the more recent importance of the author to 'capitalist ideology' and, in an ancillary way, the market for 'interviews, magazines' and 'criticism',[38] Barthes promotes the idea of focus on language over origin, reader over writer and the acknowledgement of the ubiquity and complexity of influence, extremes of imitation, a 'tissue of quotations'.[39] Although critics and scholars, most notably Michel Foucault, in his 1969 essay entitled 'What is an Author?' have responded to Barthes's theories, complicating and enriching the discussion through reexamination of the relationship between text and author, Barthes's essay provokes the kind of thinking that has paved the way for Masten, Karell and Gross, the object of this close reading, for example, in their consideration of expansive thought, a less-boundaried, less author-centred context within which the artistic process can be studied. In Foucault's analysis of the 'author function', or the role of the author in society, he accepts that 'discourse was not originally a product, a thing, a kind of goods; it was essentially an act',[40] and acknowledged that that act provided an important introduction to the historical analysis of the subject of discourse

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[36] Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Image — Music — Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1987), pp. 142-3.

[37] Ibid., p. 148.

[38] Ibid., p. 143.

[39] Ibid., p. 147.

[40] Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 108.

itself. He ultimately considers the role of the author as crucial, as a pivot-point for discussions on topics of influence, and overall, 'a necessary or constraining figure',[41] always referred to as an *individual*, although avoiding, even refuting Romantic notions of the author as genius. In comparison, by making a strong argument for the importance of the reader as '*someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted', Barthes's concepts, in their position of challenging set ideas of author-as-individual and the simple need for '*explanation* of a work' […] 'in the man or woman who produced it',[42] lend themselves to less rigid, less formulaic and more comprehensive ideas involving collaboration. With the important understanding of the reader as an agent operating *outside* the collaborative arena, we establish the beginnings of an argument for theories of *absentia* that prove primed for further interpretation. Application of Barthes's and Foucault's core ideas will inform and shape this and subsequent chapters with their ideas on discourse, authorship/authorial absence, and influence.

Philip Gross, the Collaborator

The Abstract Garden is one of several published collaborative collections in Gross's long career as an author of verse, young adult novels, children's poetry, drama, radio and other writing. Most celebrated among this work is the T.S. Eliot Poetry Prize-winning *The Water Table,* in 2009, and *I Spy Pinhole Eye*, a collaborative collection with photographer Simon Denison, which won Wales Book of the Year in 2010. Interested in exploring the natural world as well as human nature, the process of seeing as much as the object seen, Gross's writing has been reviewed as 'full of places off the edge of maps, places which might or might not be quite real – and of people on the edge of things, not quite sure

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[41] Ibid., p. 119.
[42] Barthes, p. 143.

where or whether they belong'.[43] Now a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of South Wales, Philip Gross is a poet who has chosen to write with others throughout his practice. Speaking of the frequency with which he collaborates, Gross states: 'I've done it, published it, written about it, and use it in workshops, for all ages, when I can'.[44] Influential as a tutor, Gross seems poised to inspire a next generation of collaborators. His widely implemented lessons for Key Stages 2 and 3, featured on the Poetry Society's Poetry Class website, include the 'Great Title Randomiser' activity, urging tutors to let students work together with a section on 'Inspiring Collaboration'. One could say that Gross operates on an almost evangelical level, believing deeply enough in the process to wish to instill in young poets his passion and trust in all things collaborative.

Gross was born in 1952 and spent his childhood years in Plymouth, 'within sight of the dockyards and the sea',[45] later spending time in Brighton and Bristol during university and early fatherhood. It was at this time, in the mid-80s, Gross claims that he was briefly 'co-opted into Craig Raine's company of "Martians" – poets who gloried in the witty and estranging shimmer of metaphor and simile across the surface of the world'.[46] Writing from an alien perspective, describing the ordinary in unfamiliar ways, 'Martian' verse was only one facet of Gross's active practice, which was increasingly and is still 'always on the lookout for creative collaboration'.[47] Gross began *The Air Mines of Mistila*, published in 1988, with poet and friend Sylvia Kantaris as posted correspondence, commencing with an idea Kantaris had from a letter from her son in Columbia, mentioning a remote location called 'Mistila'. The poets describe their collaborative process on the back cover of the collection, referring to themselves in the

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[43] Philip Gross, 'Philip Gross: Author of Fiction and Poetry for Adults and Children' <http://www.philipgross.co.uk/life.htm> [accessed August 24, 2015] (para. 2).
[44] Philip Gross, 'Through the Eye of the Pinhole: An Experiment in Looking', *Writing in Education*, 49 (2009), pp. 18-23 (p. 21).
[45] 'Philip Gross: Author of Fiction and Poetry for Adults and Children' (para. 3).
[46] 'Through the Eye of the Pinhole', p. 19.
[47] 'Philip Gross: Author of Fiction and Poetry for Adults and Children' (para. 14).

third person:

> She mentioned it [Mistila] to Philip Gross. All poets steal. Gross was no
> exception. Almost by return post, he sent her a poem. She replied. In three months
> they populated the Mistilian plateau with a cast of characters who live, eke out
> their livelihoods, and die.[48]

Their narrative, a poetic epistolary conversation, grew to a full collection structured in

chapters, like a novel, with the poet's initials indicating authorship in the opening content

page, not on the page of each poem. This decision seems to indicate a greater value

placed on the narrative or project on a whole, rather than 'the "person" of the author', yet

still signposting the property of each contributor. Gross's next published collaboration, *A

Cast of Stones*, in 1996, was a numbered narrative concerning the setting of Stonehenge,

as interpreted by the charcoal drawings of John Eaves and the paintings of F.J. Kennedy,

influenced by the memory of a musical collaboration previously entered into with Eaves's

improvisatory group, Vanilla Allsorts, the sound of which Gross claimed he could hear as

rhythm in Eaves' sketches. In the opening statement of the collection, Gross writes of the

collaborators' aims for the project: 'We knew what we did not want. Not poems with

illustrations, and not poems-about-paintings either'.[49] In the end, as promised, Gross

avoided straightforward ekphrasis, instead interacting with the artwork with the aid of a

stimulus from the museum at Stonehenge: a photograph of a skeleton likely belonging to

a medieval barber-surgeon. Gross's sequence developed from 'metaphor, hints,

implications' associated with character and place, and ultimately 'interconnected

endlessly – into visual image, personal memory, myth or archaeology'.[50] One could align

this concept with Barthes's 'multiple writings', a more complex relationship between text

and author than can be easily categorized, appropriated or reduced for critical study. It

certainly expands upon the examples provided in anthologies such as *Saints of Hysteria*,

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[48] Philip Gross and Sylvia Kantaris, *The Air Mines of Mistila* (Tarset, Northumberland: Bloodaxe, 1988), n. pag.
[49] Philip Gross, John Eaves and F.J. Kennedy, *A Cast of Stones* (Marlborough: Digging Deeper, 1996), n. pag.
[50] Ibid.

embracing the complexity of the collaborative event, featuring by-products such as friendship and conversation. More recently, Gross contributed to *I Spy Pinhole Eye,* comprising Simon Denison's previously taken photographs of electricity pylon bases, with Gross's more holistic responses to the art, in sonnet form, created in the absence of narrative, rather 'in a cloud' with poems not 'about specific images, pairing this with that' but rather about 'meta-subjects: how the camera works, how the eye sees and the brain constructs its images; the small worlds of a pinhole's single glimpse and, sometimes, love and history and God'. *The Abstract Garden* appears to have had special significance to Gross as a 'mutual and integral',[51] collaboration, with poems and prints created in a volley, a conversation unfolding. Interviewed by Carl Griffin on the Wales Arts Review website, Gross speaks of his collaborative history, stating that '[t]he best are the ones where you start to let each other in to parts of the process you don't often share – the notebooks and the first responses, the improvised moments in another form'.[52] Gross's collaborative career is one that has embraced adventurous projects, stimulated by a seeming interest in Keatsian-style Negative Capability, ultimately crafted and presented as product of uncertainty, a lack of imitation: vastly different encounters as manifestations of artistic relationships. His latest, *A Fold in the River,* published in 2015 with painter Valerie Coffin Price, is deemed 'a special collaboration […] a conversation at the water's edge between word and paint';[53] another manifestation of Gross's collaborative conceptualization. In his review of *The Water Table,* poet Sean O'Brien may have touched on an important part of what makes all of Gross's poetry, both alone and in collaboration, involve and engage others, including his co-collaborators and eventual audience:

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[51] 'Through the Eye of the Pinhole', pp. 21–22.

[52] Carl Griffin, 'In Conversation with Philip Gross', *Wales Art Review,* <http://www.walesartsreview.org/in-conversation-with-philip-gross/> [accessed August 24, 2015] (para. 12).

[53] Philip Gross and Valerie Coffin Price, *A Fold in the River* (Bridgend: Seren Books, 2015).

Gross enjoys his work. We might hope, while by being no means convinced, that this is true for all poets, but Gross's pleasure in the task of making a poem is one of the strongest signals his writing gives off, and much of the time the reader shares it.[54]

Conversation in Art: A Close Reading

In *The Abstract Garden,* 'Trialogue *. . . by way of a Preface'*, the opening poem, Gross's

title is the reader's first signpost that the poem, and the collection as a whole, may

originate from, and serve as, a form of 'intercourse'. The word *trialogue* itself suggests

fluidity of speech and ideas, together with an initial pique of surprise at the seeming

manipulation of the more commonly found *dialogue.* From the start, Gross promises the

'more', as frequently stated in the poem: 'more' that the expected notion of two, in a

dialogue. With its equalizing title, Gross immediately declines any advanced status as

author, effectively, if not exactly proclaiming his own death as the author of the poem,

perhaps instead playing his part as one of three parents at the birth of the poem. The

italicized portion of the title acts as a type of stage whisper or dramatic aside directed at

the reader, inviting us, too, to participate in the conversation, to lean in to hear more.

Dedicated to his co-collaborators, Peter Reddick, woodblock print artist, and Nicolas

McDowall, designer, printer and editor, Gross both speaks to and *for* his collaborators

when he states 'what's meant is more than it was meant to mean | - by us, at least.' This is

the reader's first instance of *absentia:* an example of collaborators who contribute to the

whole of the project without clear authorial credit. In fact, removed or at a distance from

the *product* that the reader holds in their hands, the opening poem, Gross inserts his

collaborators back into the project by means of focus on their *process.* By including

Nicolas McDowall in this conversation, Gross elevates the craft of printing, this applying

a sensibility appropriate to the Middle Ages, when 'there was no distinction made

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[54] Sean O'Brien, 'Waterworks', *Poetry Ireland Review*, 100 (2010), pp. 129-132 (p.129).

between the person who wrote a text and the person who copied it',[55] thus, tangentially acknowledging the myriad of operatives involved with literary production, past and present: agent, mentor, web designer, publisher, to name a few. This *us,* this triangle, represents the poet, artist and editor, respectively, objectified by 'The word, the image, and the space between…'. [56] Gross alludes to the classic trio, the love triangle, as 'buddies, lovers, rivals in a teen-/soap romance'. Further language and imagery support this overarching theme, from the triple utterance of 'meant', 'meant' 'mean', to the roughly triangular foot 'prints that trail off in a swirl of snow'. The 'three dots' and trio of questions and question marks in the final quatrain preserve the prevailing shape. Through this imagery, the waltz of rhyme, traced over and over in repeated *aba* fashion, we can feel the embodiment of an equilateral triangle. This shape and reoccurring action creates an energy that one can imagine led up to and fed the project, with its three main protagonists possessing equal billing *in absentia,* a tripartite system of checks and balances designed not to keep power or artistic genius down, but to organically fuel the 'discourse', the collaborative relationship, without interruption. We, the reader, a bit dizzy from this repeated motion, might feel the disorientating effect of this lack of focal point, lack of central author figure. At the same time, we are reminded of Gestalt psychological theories, promoting the idea, among others, that objects, including people, in proximity to each other form a group and that the whole of this group is greater than the sum of each distinct part. This concept is explained by the poet himself in describing the working dynamic in this, and other collaborations:

> [t]he space between two individuals [has] a shape and dynamics of its own. At its simplest, this might be the visual trick in which the profiles of two faces is simultaneously a candlestick. Working artists and teachers use the concept of 'negative space' as a way to circumvent the habits of the eye and brain in seeing only what they 'know'. Negative space can be a positive element in the composition, and when the 'composition' is the working relationship between

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[55] *Singular Texts,* p. 78.
[56] This repeated line, with the final four words in italics, appears at the collection's start as an epigraph, signaling its importance.

collaborators, that space-between can be experienced as generating ideas that neither party quite sees as their own.[57]

The associated idea of the trinity, with secular and religious connotations, is inherent in 'Trialogue' and its villanelle form. The villanelle, arriving in the English language via French poet Jean Passerat, and believed to have originated as an Italian rustic song, is one of the most strictly patterned poetic forms, revolving around triplets of frame and sound. Comprising five stanzas of three lines each, followed by a quatrain, the villanelle is structured with the first line of the first stanza repeated as the final line of the second and fourth stanzas. Similarly, the third line of the opening stanza appears again as the last line of the third and fifth stanzas. These same lines close the poem, serving as the penultimate and final lines of the quatrain. With this level of repetition and refrain, circularity and déjà-vu, as the previously mentioned opening stanza's *aba* rhyme scheme reoccurs throughout the poem, narrative forward motion is doomed and the tone feels too senile, affected by amnesia, too one-way to support conversation. So, in choosing to write 'Trialogue', a poem about a three-way conversation via art, in villanelle form, it could be said that Gross has contrived simultaneously to sabotage a naturally *productive* conversational tone. But *product* is ostensibly not the focus of the poem or the collaboration. Gross's repeated sounds, words and full lines ('what's meant is more than it was meant to mean'), opt to foreground this triangular nature of the collaborative relationship as a representation of *one type* of communication belonging to this project and its players, a remembrance of the repetition of mediators and storytellers responsible for education, tradition and posterity. And despite these cyclical, more lyrical formal devices that seem to work against the flow of normal natural conversation, the rhythm of each individual line unit supports the pace of speech in predominately iambic tetrameter,

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[57] Philip Gross and Wyn Mason, 'Surface Tensions: Framing the Flow of a Poetry-Film Collaboration', *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* (2013) < http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14790726.2013.806557>, pp. 1 – 13, (p. 8).

with occasional trips into anapaestic and spondaic stress. In other words, Gross chooses a conversational pace within a repetitive form to emulate a different kind of experience of human discourse: one that appreciates words for their performative qualities, that puts language on the pedestal rather than the author, and is true to life and the 'social mechanisms of language.' Interestingly, Gross chooses a form that showcases the poet's skill, one that invites admiration for the author and craft; in Gross's case, it is an invitation he then extends to his collaborators.

On the surface, 'Trialogue' doesn't appear to deal with the villanelle form's typical subject of loss; its repeated line 'what's meant is more than it was meant to mean' suggests an addition or 'more', as if one (line) plus one (line) plus one (line) could equal three, or even four, following Gestalt theories. Yet, perhaps this 'more' might imply loss as its shadowy opposite, its converse, as associations go. By Barthes's theories, loss can lead to 'more' as when 'the author enters into his own death, writing begins'.[58] Equally, 'Trialogue' could be evidence of the associated, yet counter, argument by Foucault that the death or disappearance of the author has the unintended effect of 'subtly preserving the author's existence'.[59] On the other hand, 'Like prints that trail off in a swirl of snow', 'Old songs' and 'Words like *afar ... ago...*' point the reader toward a nostalgia, a search or longing for what one can no longer see or hear. Even the elongated ellipsis (. . .), used six times in the poem, could be read as a loss, this time for words, when seen as the 'three dots, for instances, when the slick machine | of language stalls'. When this 'machine', a reference to William Carlos Williams's poem as a 'machine made of words',[60] although 'slick', leads us to 'a glimpse of depths below', these 'depths' may be considered, counter-intuitively, entirely positive and necessary, as the dependency of a poem or an image on the white space: like 'the swirl of snow' surrounding them or the kerning as

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[58] Barthes, p. 142.
[59] 'What is an Author?', p. 104.
[60] William Carlos Williams, 'Author's Introduction to *The Wedge', Selected Essays of William Carlos Williams* (New York: Random House), 1931, p. 256.

referred to in the 'the space-between'; as all sides of a triangle; as all involved parties in a

successful trialogue; all agents in a collaboration, voluntary and involuntary, *in*

praesentia or *in absentia.*

Careful scrutiny of the repeated lines of 'Trialogue' is of value by virtue of their

frequency and their importance in controlling the temporality and momentum of this

villanelle. By substituting 'The word, the image, and the space between' for the

collection's actors and authors, Gross may be once again channeling Williams: 'No ideas

| but in things'; language as a substitute for all, by choosing the craft, the visible, the

things with which the reader will interact and relate to. The reader is an important, yet

last-minute collaborator in this conversation, playing the crucial role of listener whose

presence creates the need for a lengthy pause and stanzic break from the traditional

villanelle form with

> To mean
> is human; to reveal, divine – a clean
> break into …
> What's that? Oh,
> the Word? The Image? And space, space …

We return to the faces and the candlestick, the 'space-between', having to supply the

'between' ourselves. This move, one that might satisfy subscribers to Barthes's theories,

sees the reader assuming the role of collaborator, by somehow interrupting Gross's

reverie, his philosophical musings on humanity, by asking a question. With the reply

'What's that? Oh, | the Word? The Image?' the reader has taken Gross away from the

'human' and back to the *things* that initiated the conversation. We, the reader, might be

asking: *What about these things that you've been speaking of, that you keep coming back*

to? Gross tells us, in almost fortune cookie, prophetic fashion, that just because we don't

see something, as in 'prints that trail off in a swirl of snow' or possess tangible evidence

of the journey from point A to point B, doesn't mean that the result of the combination or

collaboration is diminished ('what's meant is more than it was meant to mean'), further

support for ideas of *absentia*. The pantomime reference, '*Be-hind you!'* is reminiscent of

audience participation, albeit of an imitative nature, reminiscent of Barthes's writer who 'can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original'.[61] As previously outlined, Gross has described *The Abstract Garden* as a collaboration within which 'trust developed'. He explains that 'Peter and I began to respond not to each other's finished pieces but to drafts and sketches, so the next drafts and next sketches were affected in turn by what the other person had seen and done'.[62] Within this nurturing collaborative space, a productive constraint, a positive friction, like 'buddies, lovers, rivals', acting like an artistic trinity or coterie, can yield growth and welcome surprises, as in the third stanza's 'What's meant is more than it was meant to mean:' In the villanelle's intrinsically and ultimately static surface progression, the next instance of the repeated line has gone back in time to 'Old songs' and obsolete words. 'What's meant is *more than'*: Gross parses the repeated line now, giving emphasis by isolation and italics, likening '*more than'* to the otherness, the forgotten and disused, yet remarkably accessible language of the previous century. Like the metaphor of the young/old moon used in the traditional 'The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens',[63] the product of collaboration is about the '*more than',* the sum of its parts, perhaps untraceable, invisible, *in absentia,* Gestalt-style.

This 'more than' can be seen to echo Masten and Karell's broad-scope perspective on the act of collaboration, as well as Barthes's 'multiplicity' in authorial/reader contribution. These themes are also evident elsewhere in Gross's body of work. In 'Materials' from *I Spy Pinhole Eye*, Gross ostensibly begins to list what appears in Simon Denison's photograph on the opposite page:

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[61] Barthes, p. 146.
[62] 'Through the Eye of the Pinhole', p. 21.
[63] Anonymous, 'The Battle of Sir Patrick Spens' in Scottish Poetry Library http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poems/sir-patrick-spens, [accessed August 25, 2015].

> high tensile steel   L-section and T-section girders
> flat struts   twenty-four two-inch bolts twenty-four
> nuts ditto in four rows of six   heavy duty poured
> rough-moulded concrete

Gross elevates the raw materials to give them agency, a starring role. Almost acting like a film roll of credits, a Gestalt inventory of objects, projecting patterns, Gross continues to list what makes up the whole of the pylon foot:[64]

> pennywort   spiderweb   sheep's wool   snail slime

eventually involving the elements of nature and the photographic process itself with

> wind   rain   black box   photographic paper

Finally, Gross travels to the 'unseen', those intangibles that serve as the meta-study:

>   God's
> impartial sunlight   time[65]

Gross further separates and contemplates the repeated line in 'Trialogue' to comment on one of poetry's tenets: 'To mean | is human', a sentiment iterated by Glyn Maxwell, that poetry 'arises from the urge of a human creature'.[66] Certainly, if we view language as a 'social mechanism' always hinting at 'the presence of others', there is an inclination to place emphasis on the 'human' element of the project. What is meaning for if not to tell of the human condition? This reverie

>   To mean
> is human; to reveal, divine – a clean
> break into …

is where Gross begins to show a higher level of excitement and inspiration, as indicated by his less controlled, more urgent line breaks. The language and its presentation signpost the importance of the message, almost performed shaman-style, evading authorial isolation, that 'To mean | is human' (with added suspense and gravity supplied by the weighty stanza break) before cut and brought back to earth by the reader:

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[64] The following indented presentation has been chosen to faithfully represent the original's spacing.

[65] Philip Gross and Simon Denison, *I Spy Pinhole Eye* (Gwynedd: Cinnamon Press, 2009), p. 43.

[66] Glyn Maxwell, *On Poetry* (London: Oberon Books, 2012), p. 22.

> What's that? Oh,
> the Word? The Image? And space, space …

Now 'Word' and 'Image' are capitalized as if provided via divine communication, an act of spiritual knowing. The poem's anchor and final echo is delivered twisted and in koan fashion, 'Between | what's meant is more than it was meant to mean', offering much the same by way of meaning, with slightly replaced focus. This is yet another way of seeing things: another angle on the topic, another example of Barthes's 'multiplicity'. The reader is left feeling as though he has heard another opinion on the matter as part of the on-going conversation. As if to say *I mean this, it ends up meaning more*, another instance of Gestalt patterning, there is the implication that this system of relationships, albeit confusing, almost troubling in its complexity, is a type of influence from another, a silent reader, a voice from an afterlife. In a highly ordered poem, we have space and incompletion, through ellipsis, yet it is essentially because of this space-between that we have a coherent whole.

Within 'Trialogue' Gross refers to other strategies and results associated with collaborative projects: the element of play and camaraderie, as well as a strategic loss of control and its subsequent reward of surprise. The villanelle form employs the wit often associated with constraint. The poem's deviation from the traditional form, with its frequent use of the ellipsis, the dash and the split final stanza with its interactive questioning, act as a form of experimental sport. Language trades in the spirit of fun utilizing sound '"Be-hind you!"' and popular culture 'teen- | soap romance'*,* 'gigolo'. The final stanza's humorous exchange between speaker and reader not only provokes a heightened involvement, a stepping into the poem, but also, mimicking a real social interaction, puts a smile on the reader's face. Collaborative play belongs within the lineage of the Surrealist movement of the 1920s, including the Oulipo gathering of the 1960s in France, both groups that, borrowing Barthes's phraseology 'contributed to the desacrilization of the image of the Author by ceaselessly recommending the abrupt

disappointment of expectations of meaning' […] by accepting the principle and the experience of several people writing together'.[67]

      Gross states, at the close of *The Abstract Garden* that '[w]e have all done work we would never have planned in advance, and that has been the joy of it'.[68] Collaboration requires negotiation and communication, skills not normally needed in the solo writer's process. The rewards include a distinct set of ideas, values and associations brought into the relationship by the co-collaborator(s). In addition to obvious related aspects such as accountability and useful deadlines, other advantages revolve around aspects of revelation: the novelty of fresh definition, the fruit that can come from strict rules, and the tapping into latent or sub-conscious associations.'[T]he unseen' that 'is always creeping up to steal the show' can be seen as the unbidden inspiration that many poets often speak of when describing their poetic practice: here, in a representative statement by American poet C.K. Williams:

> Every time I read that poem I think, How did I get that? Where did that
> come from? I suppose I could try to trace back all the figures… I
> suppose I could, but in a way you don't want to, because then I'm afraid
> it will never happen again. Which it might never, I don't know.[69]

Gross links this 'unseen' with the collaborative event, with the 'depths below | the word, the image, and … The space between.' Connections, associations and unforeseen, unpredictable directions taken within a collaborative endeavor comprise the '*more than*' of 'Trialogue'. The exchange, like a game of leapfrog between poet and artist (then later, a juggling act with the designer), is a conversation of three distinct, yet related and relatable languages, acknowledged by the poem's three presentation types: regular script, *italics* and space, represented by both the white space surrounding the poem as well as the ellipses within. Each of these textual representations brings a flavor that aids the register and atmosphere of the poem on a whole, as each practitioner brings the expertise of their

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[67] Barthes, p. 144.

[68] *The Abstract Garden*, n. pag.

[69] *Poetry in Person: Twenty-five years of conversation with America's poets*, ed. by Alexander Neubauer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), p. 183.

craft to the poetry and to the collaborative table. With multiple creators, intentions and meanings, the result is an unplanned yet traceable path, a conversation containing evidence of what it is to be human, an imitation or homage to Alexander Pope's 'To Err is *Humane*; to Forgive, *Divine*': (original emphasis)

> To mean
> is human; to reveal, divine – a clean
> break into …

The reader, as co-collaborator, can be seen as erring by interrupting Gross before he can complete the meditative thought. As previously intimated, his choice of 'divine' while evoking Pope's original verse also carries spiritual connotations and reinforces the impression that this verbalized daydream is inspired; possibly beyond Gross's own control. What was the speaker about to 'break into'? Heaven, a higher understanding, an intuitive breakthrough, and artistic truth all come to mind. In other words, and more in keeping with the fundamental argument of 'Trialogue', Gross implies an arrival to a place of surprise or an unknown territory. However, this is not the Romantic, inspired genius that Gross describes; it is more Barthes's idea of writing, 'that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing'.[70]

Gross frequently expresses his thoughts on his process and the benefits of collaboration outside of his poetry. In an interview regarding *Deep Field,* published in 2011, an account, in verse, of his late father's aphasia, Gross makes connections between speech and thought:

> [r]eal quality conversation is as much about listening, paying attention to words
> and beyond them, as it is about holding forth. It has quietnesses in it – if you
> like and trust each other, if you're really interested. Don't you think what I've
> just said about good conversation could be describing poetry?

He claims, in the same interview:

> I know a good conversation when I, when both people in it, find themselves
> saying things that we didn't expect – things we didn't know we thought until

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[70] Barthes, p. 142.

we said them, and maybe wouldn't have got to by ourselves or with anyone else. The same goes for those moments when you know that something has happened in a poem. And that is a conversation, too. [71]

Self-reflection: Remaking and the Conversation with Many

My poem 'I find traces of you still', written in 2011, exhibits a similar fusion of

conversation and collaboration as previously evidenced in this essay. It is a poem that

arrived from a shared vision within a long-term collaborative project with friend and artist

Sharon Willson-Imamdin. It began as a response to the visual prompt that follows the

poem.

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[71] Carl Griffin, 'In Conversation with Philip Gross', *Wales Arts Review* (April 29, 2013) <http://www.walesartsreview.org/in-conversation-with-philip-gross> [accessed June 12, 2015] (para. 7–9).

I Find Traces of You, Still

Your waxy lip print
below the rim of the flute, somehow, after
so many washes,
all this time.

I hold
the stem
just so,
to the light,
then
lower it
until your kiss
presses
my forehead.

I hold you
responsible
for
everything.
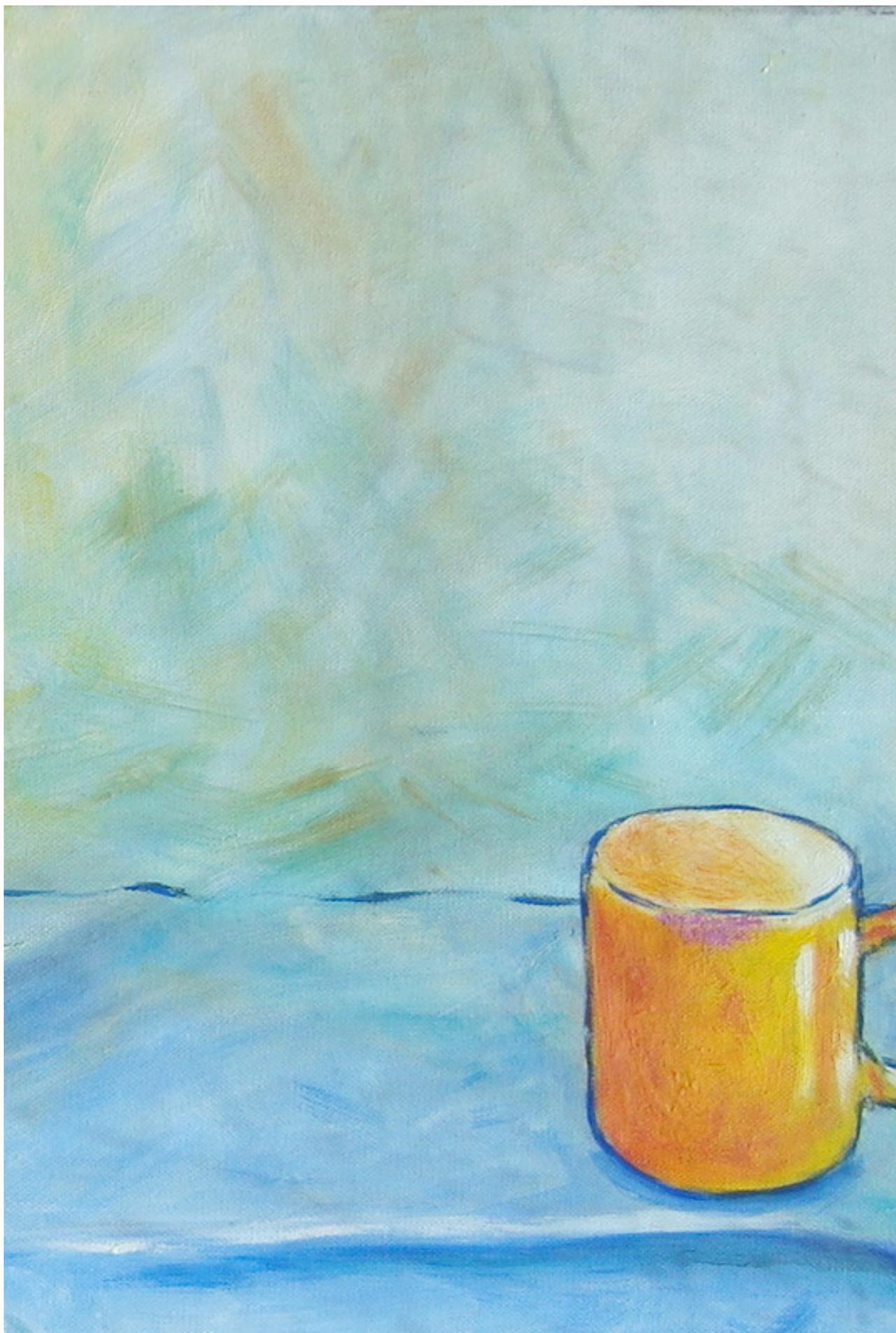
The collaborative practice that Willson-Imamdin and I engaged in attempted a blend of shared vision, the forward motion and volley of *The Abstract Garden,* together with the meta-sensibilities exhibited by Gross and Denison in their project; what poet George Szirtes describes in *I Spy Pinhole Eye'* as '[t]he linguistic imagination address[ing] the evidence before it not by defining it but by remaking it'.[72] Although initially aspiring to the spirit or manifesto of Gross's combined collaborative relationships, all of which seemed playful, productive and sensible, and, importantly, suitable for our geographical distance, our project soon took on its own characteristics and trajectory. [See Appendix A for excerpts of email correspondence documenting the initial stages of our project.] It is interesting to note that in early February 2010, before we fully discussed and agreed the parameters of our exchange, Sharon forwarded me work which precipitated a creative volley that soon thrived. Due to the time difference, we began to settle on a pattern of sending work to each other overnight: poems in time for Australian morning, paintings in my in-box early the next day. Concerned that we weren't involved enough with each other's process, as modelled by Gross and Reddick, I asked Sharon if she was bothered; we agreed to simply proceed until which time we felt like examining the relationship further. By mid-February, I was curious and she was ready to share her experiences. We continued to produce large amounts of work in call and response mode, confirming the health of the project in early March. We had found a way of working together that began by example, but ultimately eschewed the exploration of process in favor of creative communication, what I deemed 'a more meaningful way of sharing then me telling you about the shitty weather here, finley's [sic] temper tantrums, etc.' (March 6, 2010) I was notably pleased to create my own narrative from Sharon's paintings, while benefitting from the generative aspects of the project's momentum. Although one of our final emails promised to 'note the process' (March 7, 2010) the overriding volley of the conversation prevailed. We did spend time on Skype, mainly with an aim toward discussing process,

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[72] *I Spy Pinhole Eye,* p. 8.

but this often devolved into more personal chat, with a promise to document the project in the future. Interestingly, we never truly followed my supervisor's advice to organize ourselves, resulting in a haphazard, yet prolific exchange that took on a life of its own. Interestingly, the collaboration eventually waned, some months later, due to Sharon's lack of art supplies and the cost of replacing them: a complication unknown to poets.

As an example of our project, 'I Find Traces of You Still' is one small exchange, somewhat less typical of the overarching nature of the relationship. With it, I practiced the art of 'remaking' by turning Willson-Imamdin's visual prompt, the mug, into a wine glass. The print's lipstick is changed to a 'waxy lip print' for my own purposes, to aid ambiguity and create a level of obliqueness regarding gender, which I felt was necessary to universalize the poem. There are other collaborative characteristics: an attempt at a sense of play with the shape of the poem, thin in the centre, representing half of a wine glass, or something left behind, hidden, cut off. It is a concrete or visual poem, typographically arranged to contribute to the poem's meaning and a contrast to Willson-Imamdin's chunky coffee mug; my verse chose to parallel the painter's off-set, partly hidden placement, a clue towards the theme of loss, hinting at the function of space.

As one small part of the project, the poem is a conversation. Willson-Imamdin and I were friends prior to the collaboration and she had recently moved away from our London neighborhood to Western Australia; we were treating the poem-painting-poem volley as a type of communication in each other's physical absence. Willson-Imamdin, as an expatriate in Australia and I, an American living in London, now had the themes of displacement, otherness and all the associative emotions, in common. The title, 'I find traces of you still', as well as the final line served to convey these shared feelings and our growing relationship as a result, albeit in an oblique way. The 'traces' might have included the work we were producing and how it was symbolic of our developing project, a meta-subject, the process of artistic creation-as-therapy, in a way. Willson-Imamdin had previously painted her deceased father as part of our collaboration, which led to a Skype

discussion concerning my father who had passed away some ten years prior, about whom I was just starting to write. The poem, then, touched on our similar emotions and experiences and took on new perspectives. From this shared vision, revolving around our fathers, our individual agency allowed us to produce our own distinct works as part of the collaboration. Willson-Imamdin painted the mug first, following on from a poem that I had written previously; then I wrote 'I find traces of you still'. The poem came from the painting as a partial prompt; however, the shared grief, the loss that we bonded over was present, too. Of course, the poem's first reader, Willson-Imamdin, would have likely seen the 'you', or at least a level of 'you', as addressed to her, in conversation; however, our fathers, as an evolving topic in our personal talks, became another possible 'you' that we were both aware of. Without knowing the theoretical terminology at the time, as I had only begun my exegetical research, my desire to universalize the 'you' would have also included the reader, *in absentia.*

The collaboration 'I find traces of you still' is chiefly concerned with modes of discourse; it uses conversation, as well as the exchange of the art, as inspiration. It demonstrates Gross's 'space-between,' the surprise, the unplanned, the swerve involved with the poem's closing stanza: 'I hold you | responsible | for | everything.' The painting and the poem, the products of the collaboration speak about its process, as well; it becomes a third *thing* that represents the collaboration between Willson-Imamdin and I, not one or the other, but *us.*

The poems in this chapter would not meet the criteria for inclusion in an anthology such as *Saints of Hysteria.* Many would consider Peter Reddick and Nicolas McDowall as contributors *in absentia*, just shy of collaborators, despite Philip Gross's own classification. Hirschfeld's writes that 'future criticism must find another word to describe the relation and experience of authorship by two writers who contribute,

calculatedly, to the same text'.[73] I would argue that this could include any person who contributes to the text, voluntarily or involuntarily. Perhaps further discursive analysis that will lead us toward a new taxonomy that rationalizes, recognizes and names the many influences behind a literary act. Masten, Karell, Barthes and others might encourage the idea that 'I find traces of you still' is in collaboration with many: the painter, the father, the reader, and the tradition of concrete poetry, for example. Philip Gross would likely agree:

> Collaboration is a relationship, of course. But writing alone is conversation too. It just happens to be a conversation with people who aren't there, or aren't real, or died five hundred years ago, or spoke another language. Sometimes, maybe always, writing is a conversation with the silence.[74]

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[73] Hirschfeld, p. 620.
[74] Griffin, (para. 13).

Chapter 2

Coterie and Collaboration: A Close Reading of Dean Young's 'The Plow Goes Through the World'

No poem is intended for the reader, no picture for the beholder, no symphony for the listener.

Walter Benjamin

The Plow Goes Through the World

My friends, the plow goes through the word,
laughter cleaved from slaughter, aster
from disaster, rot from erotics. Smoke comes
from the halo, maybe a benefit of mistranslation.
This morning waking: a slip, a spill, a slur
while the sky gave up its color yet somehow
we find each other. I don't believe in shouts,
don't believe in whispers heavy in fat air
but under dripping umbrellas we fall in love
like giraffes, like sopped sky rockets.
There's never one language for that. Poetry
is always cockeyed, obedient to only other,
what we whisper for, wish to be true, to woo
unto woe. Unsmother me my darkling divisible
words from other tongues.

Dean Young

Reader-response and the Original Audience

In their 1990 study of group writing in the workplace, *Singular Text/Plural Authors,* Ede and Lunsford note that in the field of Creative Writing 'solitary writing is the norm'.[75] In *Writing Together/ Writing Apart,* Karell emphasizes that '"solitary writing" is not necessarily *single authorship'* (original emphasis),[76] subsequently challenging the widely held notion that collaboration is simply and predominantly 'the creation of a text by two or more individuals working together'.[77] In the previous chapter, this exegesis examined the 'solitary writing' of Philip Gross as it contributed toward and represented a conversation, involving illustrator and printer, depicted in the poem 'Trialogue'. In this chapter, Karell's argument is applied to and tested with Dean Young's poem 'The Plow Goes Through the World',[78] a sole-signature poem from the group-writing experiment embarked upon by seven poets, István László Geher from Hungary, Simone Inguanez from Malta, Tomaž Šalamun from Slovenia, Ksenia Golubovich from Russia, and Americans Marvin Bell, Christopher Merrill and Dean Young, culminating in the 2009 publication *7 poets, 4 days, 1 book.*[79] Young's poem, and the project's operations on a whole, present some distinctive characteristics and aims of collaboration: the formation of a coterie for purposes of camaraderie, community, constructive exchange and the commemoration of the literary gathering as an event; the strategic extension of and association with collaborative poetic tradition; and the advancement and enjoyment of playful or inspirational writing practice through generative constraint. In examining Young's text and the group's collaborative process, this essay will propose that Young's 'The Plow' also exhibits the nuanced encounter that can exist between poet and

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[75] *Singular Texts*, p.72.
[76] Karell, p. 19.
[77] Ibid., p. 2.
[78] Hereafter written as 'The Plow'.
[79] Christopher Merrill, ed., *7 poets, 4 days, 1 book* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2009). Hereafter written as *7 poets.*

sympathetic collaborative audience and its resulting effect on the writing process and product, not wholly dissimilar to that of the traditional occasional poem. In this way, the collaborative poem becomes, like occasional verse, a meta-artifact, an interesting case study in reader-response theory involving the first reader as co-collaborator or specialized reader in the poem's making, fundamentally challenging Walter Benjamin's claim that '[n]o poem is intended for the reader'.[80] In addition to Young's poem, this author will present an example of her own occasional verse, 'Graves Avenue', in order to further investigate the developing theory of audience-as–witness and co-collaborator and to open the way for further expansive thinking on shared vision and other complexities of the act of writing together.

In order to efficiently and comprehensively explore these suggested routes of inquiry, it will be useful to survey and review a number of associated theories, genres and historical factors, albeit in a regrettably swift fashion. The emphasis on the collaborative act and the extended definitions of collaboration initiated in chapter one inform the fundamental considerations of this chapter and its findings. Previous collaborative features including conversation and friendship are reiterated. This exegesis continues to regard Hill's theories on literature as 'always collaborative'[81] and Hirschfeld's diametrically opposed view that this all-inclusive perspective 'risks evacuating the term of analytical meaning' in balance, aiming to rigorously and constructively explore and reflect upon positions in between in an effort to construct new knowledge on methodology and the act of writing together. Advancing the concept and context regarding the reader as co-collaborator, an idea mentioned in chapter one, presupposes the possibility of collaboration *in absentia*, with memory, anticipation of habit, known preference and shared understanding as active agents. As such, Benjamin's essays on writing and translation, including his thoughts on the reader, which this chapter intends to

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[80] Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 70.
[81] Hill, p. 10.

interrogate, and his influential ideas on *pure language*, will inform this discussion. Roland Barthes, whose theories strategically relegate the status of the author and elevate the function of the reader, also finds continued employment in this exegetical phase.

Barthes's theories, already introduced in this thesis, are by no means unique, isolated or without challenge in the field of twentieth-century critical literary theory: Michel Foucault's ideas on the author, cited previously, represent only one such additional contributor to the debate. Prior to Barthes's essays, New Criticism, a mid-twentieth-century movement comprising an informal group of American scholars teaching and publishing in the fields of poetics and aesthetics, including influential contributions by I.A. Richards, John Crowe Ransom and T.S. Eliot, awarded absolute authority to the text itself through the performance of close poetic analysis. William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, two affiliated scholars, penned 'The Intentional Fallacy', a 1946 essay published in *Sewanee Review* under the New Critic banner, which anticipated key elements of Barthes' chief theories, including that of the unknowable nature of the author's intention in literary analysis. Wimsatt and Beardsley extended this concept of absolutism of the reader in their 1949 'The Affective Fallacy', rejecting interpretive reaction in analysis, again placing iconic importance on the text itself. While these publications and the movement that encouraged them may have been determined, in time, to be somewhat reactionary and reductive, they were nonetheless responsible for the advent of reader-response theory, a field of criticism that has ultimately inspired various schools of research and interpretation, many similar in nature to foundational findings of Barthes; most crucially and as previously presented in chapter one, that of the reader as '*someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted'(original emphasis) .[82] It is this more reader-focused theory that this essay will investigate in greater detail as it turns to the process and product of group writing such as

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[82] Barthes, p. 148.

the collaboration that produced *7 poets* as well as other occasional poetry which similarly exposes the influence of the reader on the text.

While there are numerous essays pertaining to reader-response study, initiated by I.A. Richards's writings of the 1920s, the present-day scholar owes much to the research and fundamental definitions as summarized by Jane P. Tompkins in her superlative 1980 collection of essays on the topic: *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-structuralism*. Tompkins writes in her introduction that

> reader-response critics would argue that a poem cannot be understood apart from its results. Its 'effects,' psychological and otherwise, are essential to any accurate description of its meaning, since that meaning has no effective existence outside of its realization in the mind of a reader.[83]

Essayists featured in Tompkins's comprehensive overview represent a range of theoretical positions including 'New Criticism, structuralism, phenomenology, psychoanalysis and deconstruction',[84] in a field which James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, in the introduction to their 2001 compilation of essays entitled *Reception Study*: *From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* claim has, since the 1980s, 'marked a virtual explosion'.[85] Machor and Goldstein conclude that in modern thinking, reader-response 'preserves traditional notions of textual autonomy', while post-modern theory 'challenges such aesthetic "foundations"'.[86] While the overarching concept of reader-response is, in its own right, serviceable to the study of collaboration, in this populated field there are a few theorists, in the spirit of Steiner's 'useful critic', whose specific ideas regarding the reader may prove enlightening to this thesis. The theories of Hans Robert Jauss, for example, adhere to this exegesis's developing focus on process as he emphasizes the constructive activity of the reader, proclaiming the 'coherence of

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[83] Jane P. Tompkins, ed., *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. ix.
[84] Ibid.
[85] James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, eds, *Reception Study*: *From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies,* ed. by (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), p. ix.
[86] Ibid.

literature as an event';[87] ideas that this researcher propose could be critically and constructively applied to the study of collaboration. Jauss explores the importance of the original audience which 'can disclose the attitude implied by the text, which initially makes it understandable as a condition of possible meaning',[88] as well as the overarching role of the 'recipient of literature' and their 'part in the establishment of meaning'.[89] Jerome J. McGann in 'The Beauty of Inflections' echoes this particular nuance as he states that

> the poem's critical history […] dates from the first response and reviews it receives. These reactions […] modify the author's purposes and intentions, sometimes drastically, and they remain part of the processive life of the poem as it passes on to future readers.[90]

McGann proceeds to explain that a poem possesses 'two interlocking histories, one that derives from the author's expressed decisions and purposes, and the other that derives from the critical reactions of the various readers'.[91] In this researcher's experience, a contemporary writer often has the reader in mind, ultimately, in anticipation of an intended editor or publication. These perspectives on the 'original audience' and 'first response' are particularly appropriate in the realm of the coterie where the collaborative audience arguably influences work as it is being written by virtue of shared goals, a probable collective style, communal knowledge and vision, a sense of kinship and mutual ambition, and a heightened awareness of the writing event as a documented occasion of note.

In chapter one, it was determined that the conversation, the 'trialogue' among poet, illustrator and designer, represents a collaborative act wherein the reader enters into

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[87] Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 22.
[88] Hans Robert Jauss, 'The Identity of the Poetic Text in the Changing Horizon of Understanding', *Reception Study*: *From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies,* ed. by James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 7-28 (p. 21).
[89] Ibid., p. 11.
[90] Jerome J. McGann, *The Beauty of Inflections: Literary Investigations in Historical Method and Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 24.
[91] Ibid.

the discursive arena, ultimately, in the manner of co-collaborator *in absentia*. In this

chapter, we will see how a coterie, a community of writers in collaboration, can shape

group work as carefully selected readers both *in praesentia* and *absentia,* 'absent both

physically and from the consciousness of the author or authors during […] creation'.[92]

Through the preconception of expected feedback, it can be argued that a coterie member

in a collaborative project might write in a specific way for that intended 'original'

audience with a 'first response'. By order of a common constraint or simply by occasion

of the collaborative gathering, the poet writing with others will likely utilize his first

reader as a type of co-collaborator, catering to their literary interests or biases, referencing

their shared knowledge base or addressing one another as an act of homage, intimacy,

humor or memorial. In the case of Young's poem and associated project, collaborative

poetry validates the act of writing; or, in the words of poet Wallace Stevens, 'the poem is

the cry of its occasion'.[93]

The Occasional Poem and the First Response

It will benefit this study to look more closely, albeit compendiously, at the occasional

poem, defined and provided historical context by Marian Zwerling Sugano in *The Poetics*

of the Occasion: Mallarmé and the Poetry of Circumstance (1992), one of the very few

academic studies of the occasional poem to date. Sugano's thesis, which examines

occasional poetry through the work of Symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé, offers the dual

nature of the occasional as, on the one hand,

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[92] Whidden, p. 9.
[93] Wallace Stevens, 'An Ordinary Evening in New Haven' *The Auroras of Autumn* (New York: Knopf, 1952), p. 132.

> the body of 'serious' poetry written for special occasions such as memorial pieces composed in honor of royalty or aristocratic patrons, sonnets or odes commemorating state occasions or historic events, epithalamiums, funeral elegies, and the like.

She continues by stating that the history of this type of occasional poetry 'would necessarily take into account the long-standing tradition of the court poet and poet laureate' and 'would be a history of public poetry, a history of the victors and the monuments, imposing or mediocre'. On the other hand, Sugano explains that the occasional would also include

> verse written in a lighter vein, not for the public at large but for a private circle of friends or lovers, a poetry commemorating birthdays, containing invitations, expressing condolences, offering gifts, and so on.[94]

Praise for the occasional poem has been plentiful throughout the years, with seventeenth-century German Writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for example, proclaiming 'Occasional Poetry is the highest kind';[95] however, by the end of the patronage system there was widespread criticism of occasional verse, contributing to the documented lack of credibility given to the study of the genre: German Idealist Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, in *Aesthetics* (1835), for example, questioned 'treating and presenting the external given occasion as an essential end', recommending that poetry 'preserve its independence' from the 'entanglement with life'.[96] With what John Dolan, in *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth (1999)* calls 'the extension of the rules of epideictic/occasional rhetoric into the unlimited realm of mental events',[97] he references Hunter Davies who claims that '[Wordsworth] used to say that every observation and incident [narrated in his poems] was true, and that if necessary he could name the date

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[94] Marian Zwerling Sugano, *The Poetics of the Occasion: Mallarmé and the Poetry of Circumstance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 5.

[95] Paul Goodman, 'Advance-guard Writing 1900 – 1950', *Kenyon Review*, 13:3 (1951) pp. 357-380 (p. 376).

[96] G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Vol II*, trans. by T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 996.

[97] John Dolan, *Poetic Occasion from Milton to Wordsworth* (Basingstoke; Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), p. 5.

and place',[98] widening the scope of the occasion into a plain and whole-scale

'entanglement with life'. In preparing this chapter, this poet found research that asserts

that 'occasional literature per se is practically nonexistent as a topic in current literary

criticism'.[99] Perhaps this focus, its linkage to collaboration and the field of reader-

response will interest some future researcher in selecting occasional verse for deeper

analysis. In the meantime, key ideas in Sugano's research inform this chapter, including

that which states that '[t]he fundamental difference between occasional and other poetry

may lie less in the way it relates to the occasion than in how the reader's strategies must

be varied to deal with it '[100] and 'the art of address necessarily presupposes a public and a

strategy not only of writing but also of reading'.[101] In other words, it might be posited that

the occasional poem gives rise to and witnesses an extraordinary relationship between the

author and the reader, *in praesentia* and *in absentia,* unlike other types of poetry, with the

exception of collaborative poetry, most notably that of a coterie. Contrary to writer

Samuel Beckett's statements on occasional poetry that the 'analysis of the relation

between the artist and his occasion […] does not seem to have been very productive'

because 'everything is doomed to become occasion, including […] the pursuit of

occasion',[102] the study of occasional verse allows us to draw a unique parallel with group

writing which spotlights the role of the reader. While there may be credible examples in

which the 'pursuit of the occasion' has in fact eclipsed other factors that typically guide

and valorize verse, it may also be argued that this 'pursuit' is didactic in regard to

collaborative structure; it becomes a representation of a transparency of process, the

elevation of the craft, the demystification of the inspiration behind the poetry and the

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[98] Hunter Davies, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson: London), p. xiii.
[99] Sugano, p. 4.
[100] Ibid., p. 14.
[101] Ibid., p. 209.
[102] Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment* (London: John Calder, 1983), p. 144.

acknowledgment and celebration of the active and validated reader with his power to

interpret and create meaning.

Dean Young and Poetic Ancestry

Unlike Philip Gross's long career of writing with others, 'The Plow' and its associated

pieces are the only known collaborative works by Dean Young in over twenty-five years

as a published poet. Young, born in 1955 in Pennsylvania, writes almost exclusively in

verse form, including his 1995 collection, *Strike Anywhere,* awarded the Colorado Prize

for Poetry, the 2005 *Elegy on Toy Piano*, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, and

Primitive Mentor, published in 2008 and shortlisted for the Griffin Poetry Prize in 2009.

Young's poetry has been featured in the influential *Best American Poetry* numerous

times. Described as 'full of wild leaps of illogic, extravagant imagery, and mercurial

shifts in tone'[103] with 'aspects of experimentation and surrealism',[104] Young's work is

firmly in the vein of the Surrealists and their successors, including the New York School

of Poets. In 'The Pedestal Magazine', Young speaks to these connections by professing

that 'Surrealism is part of my heritage', yet qualifies that 'I don't think of myself as a

Surrealist, but Surrealism as a historical movement and practice and philosophy and

concern has had an endless influence on my work'. He proceeds to remark of the

Surrealists:

> I return to their poetry to get brushed up, to get the cobwebs knocked out of me. It
> always seems fresh and dynamic and exciting and unpredictable. Association is at
> the base of what I do, and at the base of what many, many poets do.[105]

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[103] 'Dean Young', *Poetry Foundation*, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/dean-young> [accessed June 18, 2015] (para. 2).
[104] 'Dean Young', *Poets.org: From the Academy of American Poets,* <http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/229> [accessed August 24, 2015] (para. 3).
[105] Lee Rossi, 'Interview with Dean Young', *The Pedestal Magazine,* http://www.thepedestalmagazine.com/gallery.php?item=6809 [accessed August 24, 2015] (para. 33 – 38).

Indeed, André Breton, in his *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1930), notes that

> [e]verything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions'.[106]

Patricia Allmer, in her introduction to *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* further defines the movement, noting that '[c]ommunication, exchange, the passing-back-and-forth, are the foundation of a variety of surrealist activities', also claiming that collaboration, in the surrealist realm, 'celebrates becoming and transformation, the fluidity of identity rather than its fixedness',[107] exalting the process. For the purposes of this research on coterie and the *7 poets* project, in particular, we can see that collaborative participants, including Young, who affiliate themselves with the Surrealist movement, would want to emphasize their adherence to these rules of play and their traditions; they would strive to interact fully with other project members as their first readers in an effort to create a culture of 'fluidity of identity', breaking boundaries and embracing associations and 'contradictions' and using them as inspiration for their philosophy, process, group occasion, and their joint production.

In mapping Dean Young's poetic ancestry, in addition to Surrealism, there are other lines that warrant introduction. To do these few mentions full justice would be at the expense of the essential and instructive reading of the poem to follow; however, to omit this regrettably brief summary would impoverish the understanding of the traditions that have always, at their core, elevated the collaborator, the co-writer who is the first reader. Toward the beginning of this lineage is the Renga, as written by twelfth-century Japanese poets and first anthologized in *Manyōshū*, one of the earliest collections of Japanese poetry reflecting Japanese life in the seventh and eighth centuries. Renga, referred to as

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[106] Andre Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 123.
[107] Patricia Allmer, ed., *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism* (Munich: Prestel, 2009), pp. 12-13.

'chain' or 'linked' poetry, is an early example of collaboration in the spirit of competition in Japanese court life: poets wrote in small groups composing alternating stanzas in strict cadence and line length, contributing to a dialogic string of verse that often occasioned the court and its rituals. Renga is, according to Timothy Clark in *The Theory of Inspiration*, a group practice or experiment that 'breaks the taboo that, in the West, tends to associate writing with privacy and interiority'.[108] Renga often addresses the 'you' in an epistolary, love-poem fashion. Here, in a verse exchange between husband and wife, we can begin to intuit the audience, the conversation, the occasion of the poem:

> Had I foreknown my sweet lord's
>   coming,
> My garden, now so rank with wild weeds,
> I had strewn it with pearls![109]

The form, developed and adapted, has become influential with many collaborators over the years, including French Surrealists, The New York School of Poets, and The Beat Poets. As a jointly composed and attributed form of poetry, several examples of Renga-style poetry qualify for and appear in the pages of *Saints of Hysteria*.

The New York School poets, including John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch and Frank O'Hara, are renowned for their inherently collaborative lifestyle and community poetry, frequently occasioning events, with Frank O'Hara's 'On Rachmaninoff's Birthday' and celebrating each other, with O'Hara's 'For the Chinese New Year & For Bill Berkson' and Ashbery, O'Hara and Koch's 'The Coronation Murder Mystery', written for fellow-poet James Schuyler. David Herd states in his 2003 *John Ashbery and American Poetry,* that for the New York Poets, '[t]o collaborate was … to have a reader'.[110] Koch summarized their friendship and joint writing by claiming that collaboration offered 'an

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[108] Timothy Clark, *The Theory of Inspiration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 225.

[109] Donald Keene, ed., *The Manyōshū: The Nippon Gakugutsu Shinkokai Translation of One Thousand Poems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 283.

[110] David Herd, *John Ashbery and American Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 57.

instantaneous perceptive audience for every move I made (word I wrote)'.[111] While Dean Young explicitly acknowledges his personal poetic lineage as the French Surrealists and the New York School of Poets, it can be argued that his work, especially the collaborative writing that appears herein, is somehow related to the particular strand of occasional poetry that has predated and possibly influenced him: Renga, Percy Bysshe Shelly and Lord Byron, the Movement, the Beat Generation, to simply name a few; verse that shares traits in common with much collaborative poetry, verse that addresses the partner in writing, either *in praesentia* or *in absentia*; verse that is aware of and speaks to the first reader whose expectations and reviews help form the language and tone of the poem.

Unions and Springboards: A Close Reading

Gathering on the campus of the University of Iowa, under the auspices of the International Writing Program, which hosts writers from around the world on residencies, *7 poets* was overtly modeled on previous language experiments by French Surrealists. Inspired by what Christopher Merrill, the curator and editor of the group, calls the 'serious play'[112] of André Breton, Philippe Soupault, Paul Éluard and others, this project's seven poets gathered in Iowa City and met daily for a four-day period, writing with the word *union* as a springboard. At each session, participants were asked to write individually for thirty minutes on the prompt 'with the loosest formal imperative – fifteen lines, in any meter' (p. vi). Poets then read their first drafts to the group, with Golubovich, Šalamun, Inguanez and Geher writing in their native languages, Russian, Slovene, Maltese and Hungarian, respectively, then sharing drafts in English, with 'translations done on the fly' (p. xi). All participants then chose two of their own poems to revise

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[111] Kenneth Koch, *The Art of Poetry: Poems, Parodies, Interviews, Essays, and Other Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 168.
[112] *7 poets*, p. vi. Hereafter quoted in text.

overnight, returning the next morning with a pair of second-draft poems and notes for a third poem to be begun that day. Rather than pooling their efforts into one text, contributing individually penned lines toward a co-authored, co-owned whole, these participants wrote their own separate poems, under timed conditions, which they ultimately shared with each other in draft form, occasionally borrowing lines and images to incorporate into their own next drafts. This collaboration and its conditions, its individual acts of collective writing with shared vision are certainly not 'solitary' in any literal sense; however, some circumstances of the project's product indicate a clear sense of individual possession. It is notable, for instance, that each poet ascribes his or her initials to their own poems, with Dean Young, the focus of this chapter, publishing his verse contributions as a sequence, some with titles not supplied in the collaborative publication, in his 2011 collection *Fall Higher*. This aspect of agency interests this researcher for its flexible nature, being the property of the individual, while also representing a fully engaged communal process. These decisions toward ownership and credit notwithstanding, the poets were unreservedly united in their enthusiasm for the project and its outcome. Merrill summarizes the participants' zeal in the collection's sentimental preface: 'the thrill of writing with others is that it allows one to experience the sensation of being simultaneously oneself and other: one definition of love' (p. x).

In 'The Plow Goes Through the World', one of four contributions by Dean Young to *7 poets,* the reader is presented with a poem generated by and within collaboration. It is, in part, a literary remark on the collaborative event itself, not unlike Gross's 'Trialogue'; a manifesto of sorts, and a meta-phenomenon this exegesis maintains is a common occurrence within a group-writing situation. Showcasing the workings and rewards of the collaborative constraint, 'The Plow' provides a useful model of how coterie verse, as community poetry, often features a social dimension, emphasizing relationships and communication, creating shared experiences. In paying particular attention to its first audience, the co-collaborator, often the 'you', this type of verse

frequently exploits and promotes the likely expectations of these, and subsequent readers, elevating and honoring the fellow poet and the poetic act itself. In the process of language play, the coterie poet exploits rules as generative, while simultaneously treating the collaborative event as an occasion, with otherwise ordinary collateral details celebrated by association.

Here, the predetermined collaborative cue, the single word *union,* establishes a prevailing productive pulse and drive to the project. Young's poem's title, 'The Plow Goes Through the World', contributes to the prompt's overarching theme through symbolic insinuation that the rationale for and the by-product of the collaboration and the collaborative product clearly include the communal, social, the 'world'. Plow, a word with an uncertain origins, and a remarkably long etymological listing, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is most well known as an instrument for working arable soil, most centrally possessing the associated notions of livelihood, fertility, sustainability and life, necessary conditions for generating and nurturing healthy growth. The group's project, comprising poets working together, in union, can be seen as an agricultural parallel: words as seeds, the poets collectively working the language as farmers till their soil. The plow can be seen as a symbolic reference to the group of individuals themselves: the seven poets involved in the collaboration, estimable in their field in their own countries, as ones who labor for and cultivate poetry. In scientific, or constellatory terms, these poets are, at first, respectfully reimagined in Young's poem as the seven stars of the Big Dipper, Ursa Major, otherwise known as 'The Plow'. This proves to be the first of several seemingly half-ironic self-congratulatory associations; the humor involved with this self-appointed 'star' status only serves as mock-gravitas, cajoling the intellect and good-natured insight of the reader, but also enlightening and challenging the project and its participants. Stating in the collection's preface that 'it was bliss to be alive' in the company of the 'remarkable group of poets who guided themselves by stars different to mine' (p. xv), Young furthers the gag. This 'bliss', an obvious allusion to Wordsworth's

'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive' in his 1850 *Prelude, Book XI*, at once honors and teases his peers by association. The poem and the reader are further promised a similar brand of wit through the title's dignified veneer: a series of long vowel sounds that seem a pronouncement or official declaration. There is the suggestion, through the likeness of phrasing of the title, that the collaboration is not unlike 'the shot heard round the world', a line from Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Concord Hymn'. Allying itself, albeit obliquely, with Emerson's poem, written for the occasion of the dedication of the monument honoring those fallen at the 1775 Battle of Concord, a skirmish in the early days of the American Revolution, together with the Wordsworth allusion, written on the French Revolution, not only provides the poem the commemorative feel of an occasional poem, but elevates the community of collaborators to the status of revolutionaries, international movers and shakers and famed deities, perhaps, subtly, with a prevailing, mostly sardonic tone.

In its sound and form, 'The Plow' also embodies the prompt, 'union', and the associated alliance of the coterie and its collaborative event. With its one stanza, its single unit of poetic measurement, the poem is contained by its frequent enjambment, one subset of thinking sewn into another to create a cohesive whole. Comprising the subtlest forced assonantal rhymes (word/comes; somehow/shouts; love/other) and weak consonantal line endings (aster/mistranslation; slur/air), the poem has a loosely unifying sound scheme. Perhaps like the disparate, but functioning crew of the collaboration itself, this is a reminder that 'union' needn't mean uniformity or categorical agreement, but simply, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a 'joining or uniting one thing to another so as to form one whole or complete body'. It is with this aspect of the poem, the creative prompt, together with the language that is both derived from and supports it, that some of Walter Benjamin's fundamental ideas connect. With Young's 'There's never one language for that', 'Poetry | is always cockeyed, obedient to only other' and 'words from other tongues' we see a rather superficial embodiment of Benjamin's 'reciprocal

relationship between languages',[113] a concept taken from his introduction to the translations of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*, entitled 'The Task of the Translator'. A philosopher, aesthetic theorist and working translator, Benjamin envisions 'pure language', a point further elaborated upon in chapter three and, on the surface, akin to the *7 poets* project, in its theoretical conception and practical application. He writes of

> the intention underlying each language as a whole – an intention, however, which no single language can attain by itself but which is realized only by the totality of their intentions supplementing each other: pure language.[114]

'The Plow' can be read as meta-verse again, not only of the poets' project and collaborative event, but also, ostensibly, the essence of language itself. These 'words from other tongues', 'obedient to only other' resemble Benjamin's core ideas in which he claims that 'there is a philosophical genius that is characterized by a yearning for that language which manifests itself in translations'. But with Benjamin's quotation of Stephen Mallarme, we can see profound differences:

> The imperfection of languages consists in their plurality, the supreme one is lacking: thinking is writing without accessories or even whispering, the immortal word still remains silent; the diversity of idioms on earth prevents everybody from uttering the words which otherwise, at one single stroke, would materialize as truth.[115] [116]

While Young implies that *our* words from *our* tongues are a part of this whole, we understand that this represents a simplified interpretation with the event of the coterie. Young's emphasis is on his first readers, his collaborative team, the many, rather than the spiritual 'truth' that Mallarme and Benjamin reference. While Benjamin mitigates the reader's involvement in the process, focusing on the language itself, Young's poem celebrates the coterie. The 'benefit of mistranslation' is not the same as their 'plurality'; their 'obedient' nature of poetry is a more trivialized idea compared to 'the supreme one'; the 'unsmother[ing]' by these 'words from other tongues' is less about 'truth' and more to

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[113] Benjamin, p.73.
[114] Ibid., p. 74.
[115] Ibid., pp. 78-9.
[116] An alternative translation appears in Mary Ann Caws's, ed., *Stéphane Mallarmé: Selected Poetry and Prose* (New York: New Directions, 1982), p. 75.

do with the process, the particular collaborative game. Young's poem may be obliquely referring to the nature of language, falling shy of the philosophical musings of 'the immortal word'.

The nature of this particular collaboration, comprising seven poets from five countries, is productively complicated in terms of its generative language play, with its added international linguistic aspect. This is signposted early, in the title, by Young's choice of 'Plow', a word spelled differently in the United States and the European countries of Young's co-collaborators, who would adopt the British spelling, 'plough'. This cue, together with the 'World', alerts the reader to the global scope of the collaboration, not contained to any one poet's geographical area, nor the location of the collaboration itself, the state of Iowa. These serve the dual, juxtapositioned purposes of both directing the reader toward the collaborative community gathered and also looking out toward the universality of the event. With a healthy dose of irony in describing his peers and their surroundings and circumstances, likening their project to a Cold War or terrorist meeting, Young claims that this internationality, the polyphony of voice and language led to him 'misshaping something I misheard and copied down wrong from what my comrades in our incendiary cell read aloud'. These complex chance operations were 'inexhaustibly inspiring',[117] prompting Christopher Merrill to state that 'at every turn Marvin, Dean and I heard our mother tongue anew'.[118] Clearly, this led to what Young claims, in verse, as the project's unintended 'benefit of mistranslation', presumably enriching the outcomes of the sessions, establishing a playful linguistic exercise, not unlike the French Surrealist tradition, or, possibly creating opportunities for constructive opposites, an act of Negative Capability. In the absence of anecdotal evidence we can only use textual analysis to surmise what 'mistranslation' meant to the project's poets and how this might have occurred or been ultimately actualized. Perhaps

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[117] *7 poets*, p. xv.
[118] Ibid*.,* p. xi.

some of the many repetitions or near-repetitions within represent a sort of unconscious Chinese-whisper effect; on the other hand, any writer, astute reader or researcher will acknowledge the challenge, especially in a poem written in a Surrealist vein, in determining what might be deliberate associative play and what could be actual 'mistranslation' performed in haste, under time pressure. Any of the above might have been welcome in the spirit of collaborative construction and in the perhaps subconscious, the inherent human quest for 'pure language', albeit presented in a simplified version. As 'smoke comes from the halo', fresh ideas and images come of the linguistic friction, the association, the interaction between writers and important first readers: the stars.

The project's constraints and circumstances define the group, lending it a collective identity and goals. Young's poem is a game with typography and sound, a romp with the meta-language of poetry. Set as a parameter of the project, the 15-line constraint implies play, most immediately with the traditions of the sonnet form. An almost-convention, the almost-form choice both bows to and subverts the history of English poetry. It simultaneously upholds and reveres while toying with its laws. Creating mischief, the 'plow' is no longer a simply a constellation or a collection of writers, but also an instrument of change and disruption in meaningful juxtaposition of destruction and recreation. This 'plow' travels not around, over, across, but 'through' the world, a forcible, violent, physical act, altering the terrain, like a hurricane or other act of nature. Once the plow finishes with the 'world', we are left with the 'word', once a vast, multitudinous object, now a single unit of communication; again, we are reminded, in a more lighthearted way of Benjamin's 'pure language', the fact that [l]anguages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationship, interrelated in what they want to express'.[119] From many to one; an utterly and ultimately reductive, yet profound, change, simply with the absence of one letter. Similarly, we travel from the horror of 'slaughter' to the joy of 'laughter'; the wreck and chaos of

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[119] Benjamin, p. 73.

'disaster' to the fragility and beauty of 'aster', the flower, or the singular brilliance of the star. 'Smoke', generated from the earth, grey, dangerous and possibly sinister in nature, rising from the flames that frame the devil, comes from the 'halo', born of light and sky, celestial and angelic, in Heavenly territory. Or perhaps 'smoke' in another language sounds similar to the word 'halo', representing another 'mistranslation'. We are asked to contemplate, in fact, *celebrate* the sensibility of how a word like 'rot', with its imagery of squalor and decomposition, could come from something so oppositional and ultimately procreative as 'erotic'. We can, on our own, with our newly heightened skills of recreation, knives at the ready, carve 'mother' from 'unsmother', 'darling' from 'darkling' and 'visible' from 'divisible'. Young's 'darkling', a probable reference to Romantic poet John Keats's 'Darkling I listen' from 'Ode to a Nightingale', carries the wider inference to theories of Negative Capability, celebrating alternative meanings, appositions, and exhilarating with openness, associations, and unions. We can, alive to these allusions, to anything of this experimental linguistic nature, see the multiple possible meanings of the final word, 'tongues': the organ that aids speech and communication, a language, the tapered points of a star; while at the same time we are, of course, also, again, aware of the 'pure language' that these 'tongues' are contributing to. Young's 'slip', 'spill' and 'slur' act as, among other things, another manifestation of the productivity of these associations; the acknowledgment of the friction of the 'imperfection of language', the 'plurality' and the playful nature of the English language alone, before involving other languages. Young reminds us that 'Poetry | is always cockeyed, obedient to only other' and we are witnesses to the ordinary made extraordinary in the laws of the generative rules. Collaboration, particularly one with constraint and an added wildcard of translation, can accelerate the union of any word to its opposite, can showcase the tensions that arise from such fragile proximity between these disparate words and their close-knit cousins; can find fruition in seeming desolation.

In every version of the published poem, the address, 'My friends', sets 'The Plow' as both a conversation and a type of occasional poem. The occasion is unnamed, unknown, unlike an inauguration, a commencement or a funeral, and yet Young seems to imply that it is the poetry itself that is the occasion that eclipses whatever social aspect, or act of play the state of writing might afford.

> Poetry
> is always cockeyed, obedient to only other,
> what we whisper for, wish to be true, to woo
> unto woe.

The players are aware of their agency; this is an experiment focused on people as much as language. And it isn't only the 'misshaping' that inspires. Participants lift ideas, words, images, entire phrases from co-collaborators and integrate them into their own verse. The 'sky', for example, appears twenty-three times in the collection, including this essay's focus, 'The Plow':

> This morning waking: a slip, a spill, a slur
> while the sky gave up its color yet somehow
> we find each other.

The publication's first mention of the sky is in Dean Young's day-one contribution entitled 'Re-entry', with the address 'Goodbye sky, | aren't you tired of your war with the invisible?' (p. 12). Marvin Bell, in his untitled day-one poem, employs the final imagery of the sky in his closing lines:

> And you,
> you must wear the light-blue shawl I so love
> that will keep its color when the sky stops. (p. 17)

Knowing that participating poets shared first-draft material, then revised, overnight, goes some way in explaining the practical aspects of this borrowing tendency. This linguistic lifting can be seen as a type of allegiance toward the other poets and their shared vision. In aiming for a 'polyphony of voices' this collaborative lending was encouraged as a feature and a strength of the project, harking back to French Surrealists. Upon close

examination, a web of connections, free and familial, like neighborly borrowing, is established throughout the collection. On day one, for example, Tomaž Šalamun writes:

> Through
> the hut the trees don't blow for-free-
> and-why, but with intention
> to put the sky to death. (p. 18)

István László Geher, in turn, closes an entry with 'A God who got bored with the sky.' (p. 19). Simone Inguanez writes:

> *warring*
> *with ghosts of water waiting at some bend*
> *you do not know*
> *see the bubbles rise and search*
> *the sky* (p. 20) (original italics)

On day two, in addition to Young's skies, we have Inguanez's 'the sky will never lose its color | when the river goes dark' (p. 28), Geher's 'I prayed the sky to keep its color', (p. 29) and Ksenia Golubovich's entreaty:

> I ask, like poor Job,
> Who lost both memory and his good manners,
> And only complains and wails and 'won't'
> Into the open sky – please change your color – (p. 32)

Young's 'Sleep, sky, between my lips' (p. 33), Merrill's opening address, 'Goodbye, sky!' (p. 37), Bell's 'I put the sky to bed.' (p. 38), Golubovich's 'We put the sky to sleep' and 'The sky awakes' (p. 39), within the same poem. Days three and four continue the trend of lifting and reworking the linguistic and imagistic echoes, marking the occasion with a talismanic litany. These poems are nothing if not intended for each other, the first readers and the project's group, the occasion.

Notable for its eccentricity, 'giraffes' feature in six poems; similarly, there are multiple mentions of 'pirates', 'clams', 'light-blue shawls', 'ants', 'apples', 'worms', 'quicksilver', 'Mozart' and 'Duchamp'. The word 'river' appears twenty-nine times in the collection. The color 'red' thirteen times, 'silence' and 'bridges' twelve times each. Two categories permeate the project and its writing: water, in many of its varied forms such as 'dew', 'tears', 'floods', 'ice', 'cascades', 'whirlpools', 'steam', 'the sea', 'snow' and

'leaks', as well as the meta-subject of the poets themselves, and their writing. Significantly, the collaborative project, its participants and its prompt, 'union', are frequently referenced: 'we cook up words to cover silence' (p. 4), 'Our | space which designates the word union' (p. 6), 'A poet leaves untouched, perplexing the translator?' (p. 26), and 'My lines are creeping through to your palm' (p. 11). The poets themselves name drop and self-refer: 'Dean is your friend' (p. 10), 'Nothing breaks down quicker than Dean | Youngium' (p. 77), 'Šalamun moves among us', (p. 12), 'a four-day union of seven who write' (p. 4), 'today we seven are the rabbis' (p. 44), and their location cited 'This is radio Iowa City, anyone out there?' (p. 12), 'Iowa's guardians' (p. 66) and 'Iowa' as the title of one of Inguanez's day-three poems. This borrowing of language harkens back to the parlor games of Breton, and the Oulipo members of the 1960s. A communal sense of propriety colors these group-writing experiments and appears to foster a special sense of group identity, shared vision and coterie, albeit, importantly, with an individual ownership of and credit given each poem. A sense of cooperation and harmony is fostered with Young's 'I don't believe in shouts, | don't believe in whispers', eschewing extremes, renouncing the limelight for the greater good of the collaborative whole. A gift economy prevails, debunking theories of Romantic genius and solitary inspiration, transparently acknowledging the influence of the audience's 'original response' on one another and on the poetry.

From Young's opening words, 'My friends', we are directed towards an audience. We are presented with an act of rhetoric, a speech not unlike Mark Antony's funeral oratory in *Julius Caesar*, an arm outstretched toward a collection of listeners, amassed for an event, awaiting news, direction, perhaps inspiration. While Young's poem neither possesses the emotionally charged atmosphere of Caesar's funeral speech, nor such a serious mission as to turn men against one another, it is the deliberate rhetorical device that causes the reader to take notice, to focus on the audience as both others and himself. The initial line commences with a steady iambic cadence that commands and portends.

The listing of examples ('laughter cleaved from slaughter, aster/ from disaster'), the deft repetition of consonantal sounds ('slip'/'spill'/'slur') and phrases ('I don't believe in shouts/don't believe in whispers'), the large breath needed to get through the lengthy, frequently enjambed syntactical units are all the oratorical tricks of a preacher or eloquent politician; in other words, one composing verse for a specific function. In this sense, 'The Plow' carries the unmistakable trademark of an occasional poem. 'My friends' would certainly refer to Young's co-collaborators with whom he embarked and participated on the project, an instant sympathetic audience; however, 'My friends' might simultaneously refer to the reader of the poem, first being co-collaborators (not simply as co-makers, but also as first readers) and then a more general audience. We, as some of the project's eventual readers, are invited in the open door of the poem, as 'friends', on par with Young's collaborators, and, as such, agents in the game of 'The Plow'. We become the 'we' who 'find each other', 'fall in love', 'whisper', 'wish' and 'woo'. We, as inhabitants of this 'World', are welcomed into this collaborative group, but we are also audience, humankind, and as such, we share experiences in the poem, we are speakers of these 'words from other tongues' who are folded into Young's social circle, at least for the duration of the poem. We, all of us, are encompassed in the creation of the 'pure language'. The prevalent 'we' of the poem begins to seem to be the axis of and the reason for the poem, the generative laws, and the act of collaboration itself. Spawning more than conversation, the poets, and therefore, we, can experience what one member described feeling as '*What I am now is you*.' The fact that "you" are from so many 'other tongues' strengthens the effect. So much so that the 'we' ends up 'demolishing walls of solitude' (p. xii) often associated with writing or reading poetry, creating a union.

As with any poem, the reader is needed here to complete what the poet has begun. As with an explicitly signposted occasional poem, Young has beckoned us to gather round to listen, as 'friends', a willing audience, not unlike and following on from his collaborative audience. According to Barthes who states that 'a text's unity lies not in its

origin but in its destination',[120] it is clear that it is our encounter as readers, whenever and however we should read, that ultimately reveals the text. Tompkins explains that it is with our understanding and interpretation that the poem will ultimately engender meaning, rendering each of us, as subsequent readers, active contributors and co-collaborators. As such, the details of how, when and where we encounter the poem may be worth considering in terms of reader-response. In exploring this idea, it is instructive to examine Young's poem and project further: co-collaborators would have first heard it read out loud, in the project sessions. Their presence at the penning of the poem, their participation in such a collaborative event with a common goal and responsibility toward each other and the success of the project surely must have created a co-dependency, must have affected thoughts, ideas and language as much as any other creative constraint. Other incidental aspects such as the common space, weather, news and politics of the day would surely influence content and tone. Knowledgeable about the overarching imposed poetic rules and buoyed by the cooperative engine of the project, one can imagine that the poem's first audience was encouraging, respectful and possibly congratulatory. A reader coming across 'The Plow' in the publication *7 poets* would find the poem on page 25, at the start of the second chapter, 'Day 2', under the heading 'ghaqda', or 'union' in Maltese. The poetic premise is, by then, well established: echoed phrases have begun to appear and name-dropping has commenced. Although each poem is afforded its own page, the linkage and overall fluidity of the project has been set. While one reader might feel included, welcomed into the collection's patterns and repetition by virtue of the camaraderie afforded to Young's 'friends', it could be argued that another might feel alienated by the sense of exclusivity surrounding such a coterie, despite the extension to the reader. There is, in other words, the chance that any subsequent reader may be influenced by what they deem the private or inside nature of the verse, either negatively or, oppositely, teased into covetousness, lured into desiring what they feel they've missed.

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[120] Barthes, p. 148.

We, as the later or subsequent reader are aware of the occasion, the 'original audience' and are thus responding to and creating an 'accurate description of its meaning', not only of the verse itself, but also to what we imagine as the 'processive life' of the poem; in other words, the collaborative event and its process and stages or manifestations. If, as Tomkins suggests, a poem cannot 'be understood apart from its results', then we must then widen the study of its '"effects", psychological and otherwise' to include the longer, multi-staged life of an occasional or collaborative poem. This can be seen as instructive toward Sugano's question regarding the 'critical reception' of an occasional poem. Surely, the 'reader's strategies must be varied to deal with it' and the 'strategy' of reading takes on a more complicated dimension, the reader having then to negotiate between insider and outlier, audience and co-collaborator a tension that, while creating a history, threatens to distance the reader, destabilizing the reader's ability and motivation to operate as collaborator with the original artist. Surely it is valid to note the subtleties that might exist in the context of these first encounters and how that might possibly affect the reader's reaction. A Dean Young fan reading the 2011 *Fall Higher* collection would meet 'The Plow' on page 92, towards the end of the collection, if read straight through; here it appears slightly refashioned with a fully capitalized title, and presented as the third in a numbered sequence entitled 'Demon Cycle'. The reader of *7 poets* for example, would be aware of the collaborative aspect of the poem's genesis, while the reader of *Fall Higher* would likely not, as minimal mention is made of the project, only on the colophon page of the collection. This would provide the perfect case study for a more nuanced investigation into reader-response. The knowledge, or lack thereof, of the collaborative aspect of this specific project would possibly add a dimension, a layer or level to the dynamics of the reception overall. Critical questioning might be reapplied to the origins of the verse: to what extent is our response to the poem altered by whether or not we know of its initial inspiration? Does the reader feel a different kinship, adopt a distinct position toward the 'you' that is addressed to him from a group, as opposed to that from an individual? Is the

'accurate description of its meaning' altered with the knowledge of a poem's genesis from a collaboration, or an occasion? Of course, another perspective entirely is that no matter how we first encounter the text, in a sense, Young is inviting us in as 'friends', *as if* we are its original reader, due the fact that it is our first experience with the poem, thus integrating us into his art; an act, as described by Paul Goodman in 'Advance-guard Writing 1900 – 1950' with 'the chief aim […] to heighten the everyday; to bathe the world in such a light of imagination and criticism that the persons who are living in it without meaning or feeling suddenly find that it is meaningful and exciting to live in it'.[121]

Dean Young and the Occasion

In an interview in 'American Poetry Review', Young states 'I like occasioned poetry so much: how immediately it sets up an energy field between the poles of improvisation and law, abandonment and purposefulness'.[122] This 'purposefulness' implicates the occasion, but also the reader, the predicted, predictable audience that will receive the poem. When Young's graduating MFA students asked him to speak at their ceremony, he wrote a mock speech, never actually delivered it at the event. Nonetheless, 'Commencement Address', published in his 2011 *Fall Higher,* exhibits a heightened awareness of the reader akin to the cozy atmosphere of the collaborative project.

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[121] Goodman, p. 376.

[122] Dean Young, 'The Poet on the Poem: Commencement Address', *The American Poetry Review,* 37. 3, <http://old.aprweb.org/article/the-poet-poem-commencement-address > [accessed June 17, 2015] (para. 1).

Commencement address

I love you for shattering.
Someone has to. Just as someone
has to announce inadvertently
the end of grief or spring's
splurge even as the bureaucracy's
spittoon overflows. Someone has to come out
the other end of the labyrinth
saying, What's the big deal?
Someone has to spend all day staring
at the data from outer space
or separating the receipts
or changing sheets in sour room after room.
I like it when the end of the toilet paper
is folded into a point.
I like napkins folded into swans
because I like wiping my mouth on swans.
Matriculates, come back from the dance floor
to sip at the lacrimal glands of chaos,
a god could be forgiven
for eating you, you've been such angels
just not very good ones.
You've put your tongue
into the peanut canister
of your best friend's girlfriend's mom.
You've taken a brown bag lunch
on which was writ another's name.
All night it snows a blue snow
like the crystallized confessions
you've wrung from phantoms
even though it is you wearing the filched necklace,
your rages splitting the concrete like dandelions.
All that destruction from a ball of fluff!
There's nothing left but hope.

'I love you for shattering': Young begins his faux-speech with a demonstrative

declaration for his pupils, speaking directly to them, not surprising in a graduation

address, however, ending with the enigmatic 'shattering'. A jarring association is

presented, a mysterious 'energy field' from the first line. 'Shattering' what? These days,

for a group of students presumably about to enter the work force, the word 'shatter' elicits

visions of glass ceilings; this may be a clever nod to the hopes of the graduates' parents,

also presumably at the ceremony, in regard to their children's future careers.

> Matriculates, come back from the dance floor
> to sip at the lachrymal glands of chaos

Young's graduate students, having previously matriculated, returned to the MFA course

or 'come back from the dance floor' to pursue a degree in Creative Writing, specifically

poetry, where 'to sip at the lachrymal glands of chaos' might imply emotional upheaval, a

tear-inducing experience in sharing one's past and soul-searching, not to mention the

trauma of student loans. All of this would be understood by Young's students: the

closeness created by workshopping rather private material; the sometimes painful and

difficult attempts at forming something in language to match the experience.

> you've been such angels
> just not very good ones.

Again, pandering to the expectations of the commencement speech, Young praises his

graduates, while at once he prepares to expose their fictional secrets, an act akin to a

physician breaking the Hippocratic Oath.

> You've put your tongue
> into the peanut canister
> of your best friend's girlfriend's mom.
> You've take a brown bag lunch
> on which was writ a name not your own

As with Young's collaborative project, he creates an intimacy with his first audience, his

students to whom he presents 'Commencement Address', sharing pretend in-jokes, while

poking fun at the institution of Creative Writing in the university with the awkwardly

phrased 'best friend's girlfriend's mom' and the misspelled 'writ', perhaps also a swift,

comical reference to the legal profession, and its salaries, presumably not in his students'

future. In this way, 'Commencement Address' works as mock-occasional verse: the

'original audience' dictates the tone and content as much as any collaborative poem. The

guiding inspiration from its inception to its salutatory finish is clearly the 'first reader',

with whom Young shares a position, a possibly shaky stance of *us versus them*: those who

regard an MFA as a waste of time and those who pursue and teach the degree. Young's

poem is clearly intended for his chosen reader, his students, and addresses their concerns,

cleverly embedded with his speech, for his students to decode and enjoy.

Despite evidence to the contrary, Young claims, in his 2007 interview with Poetry

Off the Shelf, that 'to conceive of a reader seems to me to be highly laughable'.[123]

Responding to close analysis of his 'Dear Reader', appearing in *Elegy on Toy Piano,* he

further states:

> Writing a poem is a private act. It's not a conversation, it's more like leaving a
> strange object on a trail and you never know if anyone is going to go down that
> trail or not.[124]

Young seems to agree with Benjamin's 'No poem is intended for the reader'. However, as

an exception, clearly, with a collaborative or occasional poem, the poet has full

knowledge that the 'trail' will be populated, at least initially, with co-collaborators, not

unlike the audience members at the occasional event. Of course, one might analyze

Young's interview statement as a protective paean to the myth of solitary genius or

simply a derisive or modest shrug toward the concept of anything poetically para-textual,

in deference to the entrenched concepts of textual autonomy in contemporary poetry. The

basis aside, Young opines contrary to fundamental tenets of reader-response, rejecting

Hans Robert Jauss 'reader's constructive activity' and 'coherence of literature as an

event'. Contrary to Tompkins's idea that 'meaning has no effective existence outside of

its realization in the mind of a reader', Young's theories align with New Critical thinking.

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[123] Dean Young, 'Tough poem: Call the Poet', *Poetry Off the Shelf*
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/features/audioitem/129> [accessed August 24, 2015].
[124] Ibid.

Whether this is a strategic positioning or a preservative stance, only Young could explain. This researcher, however, is of the conviction that, for Young, association and heritage play important roles in what precedes and feeds the act of writing; however, we can see that this is 'influence', with sole credit in the 'private act' awarded to Young himself. Surely, Young's public comments demonstrate how issues of awareness and choice can shape and separate the negative and positive aspects of influence. One can encourage, channel, groom and benefit from, even exploit or manipulate these connections in bad faith; one can ignore, dismiss or actively discourage associations with the best intentions: all interesting fodder for future investigation, perhaps. Nonetheless, a longer, more expansive study would likely demonstrate what this poet has experienced anecdotally: most writers outside of a collaboration also typically, whether at first-draft or revision stage, have a reader in mind, an 'original audience', whether it be a trusted first reader as mentor or soundboard, a tutor or editor, a publisher or an audience at a reading. To defend the opposite may be evidence of a continued emphasis on solitary genius, an extreme and exclusive attitude toward poetic process and a misplaced distrust in the fundamental workings of collaboration.

Self-reflection: the Original Reader as Reliable Collaborator

With 'Graves Avenue', a poem requested by family members to mark the death and burial of my 92-year old grandmother, the 'original audience', close family and friends, directed nearly all aspects of the poem's content and register.

Graves Avenue
i.m.

The light and the dark of it,
                              that house.
We'd enter through the buttery-bright kitchen
where first thing, Dad would lift the dome
to check for chocolate cake.
                              The voodoo doll
hung on a nail across from the cookie jar,
its little brown body wound in threads
of yellow and red.
                              The warm maple
of the family table where we'd sit
in the company of chickadees and robins,
beefy as quarterbacks and, feathery tailed
acrobats, those *damn* squirrels.
                              Tapped on the shoulder
by the tapered arc of a spider plant.
                    Then the armchair where you
and your cousins would tuck up
your legs and lean in toward her
at her end of the sofa,
                    the one cushion worn to a shine.
Crochet needles joined in tablets
         of little sweater fronts and backs.
Watched from the mantle above by creamy faced
         dolls and teapots.
                    And down the hall, a gallery
of high school photos, still lives of teens, decades
of hair-do fashion.
         Things came from cold closets, too:
postcards, the Ouija board for contacting
the dead,   (I confess
         now I would guide one eye open)
         loose ends of
stories of Indian blood
trailing through our veins
                    and fortune tellers,
                              Ferris wheels.

She liked my story of a palm reader
who told me what I already knew:
you have a large family, I can see here, like a net
or a spider web,
         some little lines broken.

What I think of spider webs today
is simple: how dainty,
         how strong.

Wanting to draw from shared experiences and bond the family together for the occasion, the poem references 'that house', knowing that all in attendance at the funeral would have, at one time, visited, would have stepped into 'the buttery-bright kitchen' and sat at the 'warm maple' table. In a way not dissimilar to the shared ownership of language of the participants of *7 poets* this author utilizes language and imagery held in common with those at the memorial service through their relationship with the person memorialized: 'chocolate cake', 'voodoo doll', 'chickadees', 'squirrels' and 'Ouija board' all represent words that determine the union, the collaboration between subject, poet and reader. Employed as symbols of the group, they function to strengthen the sense of community, the connection between writer and audience. The 'chocolate cake' serves as a reference to my grandmother's son, my deceased father, and his love of her baking. The 'one cushion worn to a shine' gives homage to my grandmother's strength as a widower, left to raise six children on her own after my grandfather's suicide nearly forty years prior. As a way of further honoring her memory, there is mention of her 'needles joined in tablets | of little sweater fronts and backs', a nod to her devotion to her grand and great-grandchildren who all wear her handmade knitted clothing and her passion for making things as a sign of love, much like the function of the poem. The passing of time is noted with 'photos' and 'decades | of hair-do fashion', with the 'palm reader' attempting to point toward a future, albeit without her.

Reader-response theory would invite the notion that this poem's 'critical history' is bound to its 'original audience': the Page family at our grandmother's funeral. Knowledge of the audience as a co-creator *in absentia* was crucial in setting the 'intended meaning' of the poem. Certainly, with the event and 'original reader' in mind, I strived to write this poem in a tender, reverent register, mindful of the sensitivity of listeners on the day and the charge of my task, in paying tribute, but also characterizing the deceased woman's sense of humor, her surroundings, her passions, her cherished foibles. The

anticipated audience's reactions certainly informed my 'purposes and intentions',

arguably 'drastically', as I had never written such a public poem before. I chose my

words carefully knowing that I would be representing others' mother, aunt, grandmother

and friend in the poem. It can be argued that the reactions on the day have 'remain[ed]

part of the processive life (of the work) as it passes on to future readers'. Various family

members have since quoted certain passages from the poem that referred to their own

memories. As I revised the poem for possible publication, although I reluctantly

experimented with layout and line-ending, I found myself unable to alter any mnemonic

element of the poem. My first audience members were my most reliable collaborators.

Although this writer can empathize with the sentiment behind Benjamin's claims

that '[n]o poem is intended for the reader'; the impulse toward a sense of artistic integrity,

autonomy, humility and modesty, this exegesis commits to a cross-examination of his

statement within the specificity of the collaborative arena, under particular circumstances,

with the exact practical parameters set to a group writing condition. Although there is

some expectation of presence between collaborators and the audience, it is the anticipated

conversation, the reader's predicted response and the 'cry of its occasion' represented in

the engagement, *in praesentia* or *in absentia*, that creates a type of exchange from which

the result is a togetherness that operates as collaborative. The 'cry' is a dialogue, then, a

conversation, with an explicit co-collaborator or a future reader always in mind. As poet

Paul Celan states (1958):

> A poem, as a manifestation of language and thus essentially dialogue, can be a
> message in a bottle, sent out in the -- not always greatly hopeful -- belief that
> somewhere and sometime it could wash up on land, on heartland perhaps. Poems
> in this sense too are under way: they are making toward something.[125]

It is intriguing to compare Young's backward-looking 'trail' to Celan's 'bottle' with its

forward motion: Young offers his verse to his predecessors as Celan sends his to future

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[125] John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 115.

readers. Language is afforded an agency in both cases. If 'pure language' has 'intention', as Benjamin states, can we say that the author is left behind, *in absentia*, into the past, after the act of writing is complete, with the reader, in the future, also *in absentia?* The imagery paralleling Young and Celan's metaphors is of interest to this exegesis. In both cases, the author was present, then divorced from the text.

Outside the Western tradition, we find a fine parallel to these theories of agency and intention with Choctaw poet LeAnne Howe's ideas on 'tribalology' in her 2013 *Choctalking on Other Realities.* In this memoir of travel, history and culture, Howe tells how each native story 'originates and serves to define the people as a whole, the community'. As an example, Howe presents the tale of a visionary leader, Degenawidah, and a great warrior, Ayonwatha, who unite warring tribes into the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, efforts that Howe explains inspired early European Americans to create the United States Constitution. She further contends that 'a native creation story was one of America's authors. If not acknowledged in the "historical credits", American Indians are certainly the ghost writers for the event, the story of America'.[126] Although credit is not always afforded, for political or other extenuating reasons, this does not affect the agency inherent in the text: the 'making toward something', the 'trail'. Howe further quotes Choctaw/Cherokee author Louis Owens who suggests that the 'concept of a single author for any given text […] would have made as little sense to pre-Colombian Native Americans as the notion of selling real estate'.[127] The oral or storytelling traditions of voice and family, the theory of 'tribalology' are enactments of 'pure language'. We have, from another angle, an example of *absentia*. The question remains: is an act *in absentia* able to affect the other, the predecessor?

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[126] LeAnne Howe, *Choctalking on Other Realities* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2013), p. 30.
[127] Howe, pp. 31 – 32.

Chapter three: Imitation as collaboration: a close reading of Robert Lowell's 'Pigeons'

Now, a collaborator must needs be the closest of contemporaries.

Brander Matthews

Für Erika, zum Feste der Rühmung

Taube, die draußen blieb,   außer dem Taubenschlag,
wieder in Kreis und Haus,   einig der Nacht, dem Tag,
weiß sie die Heimlichkeit,   wenn sich der Einbezug
fremdester Schrecken schmiegt   in den gefühlten Flug.

Unter den Tauben, die   allergeschonteste,
niemals gefährdetste,   kennt nicht die Zärtlichkeit;
wiedererholtes Herz   ist das bewohnteste:
freier durch Widerruf   freut sich die Fähigkeit.

Über dem Nirgendssein   spannt sich das Überall!
Ach der geworfene,   ach der gewagte Ball,
füllt er die Hände nicht   anders mit Wiederkehr:
rein um sein Heimgewicht   ist er mehr.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Pigeons

(*For Hannah Arendt)*

The same old flights, the same old homecomings,
dozens of each per day,
but at last the pigeon gets clear of the pigeon-house . . .
What is home, but a feeling of homesickness
for the flight's lost moment of fluttering terror?

Back in the dovecote, there's another bird,
by all odds the most beautiful,
one that never flew out, and can know nothing of gentleness . . .
Still, only by suffering the rat-race in the arena
can the heart learn to beat.

Think of Leonidas perhaps and the hoplites,
glittering with liberation,
as they combed one another's golden Botticellian hair
at Thermopylae, friends and lovers, the bride and the bridegroom –
and moved into position to die.

Over non-existence arches the all-being –
thence the ball thrown almost out of bounds
stings the hand with the momentum of its drop –
body and gravity,
miraculously multiplied by its mania to return.

Rainer Maria Rilke
Translated by Robert Lowell

[Dove that ventured outside]

To Erika, for the festival of praise

Dove that ventured outside,   flying far from the dovecote:
housed and protected again,   one with the day, the night,
knows what serenity is,   for she has felt her wings
pass through all distance and fear   in the course of her wanderings.

The doves that remained at home,   never exposed to loss,
innocent and secure,   cannot know tenderness;
only the won-back heart   can ever be satisfied: free,
through all it has given up,   to rejoice in its mastery.

Being arches itself   over the vast abyss.
Ah the ball that we dared,   that we hurled into infinite space,
doesn't it fill our hands   differently with its return:
heavier by the weight   of where it has been.

Rainer Maria Rilke
Translated by Stephen Mitchell

Translation: Theories and Classification

In previous chapters, this exegesis examined the process and product of selective group

projects, demonstrating the range of complexity that can occur when two or more people

create together. This chapter will argue that the poetry of Robert Lowell in his 1961

Imitations, a 'small anthology of European poetry',[128] as it is translated and re-presented,

is an act of collaboration between Lowell and the original-language poets. Specifically,

by examining Lowell's 'Pigeons', a translation or 'imitation' of Rainer Maria Rilke's

1926 untitled poem, [*Taube, die draussen blieb*], together with Stephen Mitchell's 1980

translation into English, this essay will further the notion of collaboration *in absentia* as

proposed in chapters one and two, expanding the concept, this time removing the

necessity of reciprocity from the equation. This chapter, then, will represent a departure

from the more explicit examples of collaboration in previous essays toward an implied

joint venture, one with shared vision, yet a distance of time and space. It is with the

reasoning demonstrated in the platform of theories constructed in chapters one and two

that chapter three can begin to tease out a more complex, controversial, tangential

analytic space. Crucially, this essay tests the ideas contained in Philip Gross's probing

statement:

> Can one collaborate with the dead? In a sense, maybe… if your work around their
> work makes a permanent change in the ways that work may be received. But that
> still feels not quite like collaboration to me… maybe because the other person is
> all product, whereas you the respondent-collaborator are still process.[129]

Support for a broad definition of translation will be presented as this chapter edges toward

the proposition that all translation is fundamentally a collaborative act, balancing

Benjamin's ideas of 'the reciprocal relationship between languages' with important

theories of the limiting function of the author from Foucault's 'What is an Author?' As

before, striving to avoid an overly inclusive description of collaboration that 'risks

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[128] Robert Lowell, *Imitations* (London: Faber, 1962), p. xi.
[129] Philip Gross, email to the author, 28 September 2013.

evacuating the term of analytic meaning', this close reading of 'Pigeons', an imitation

that clearly challenges the fidelity often valued in translation, making distinct

contributions transparent and measurable, will demonstrate how translation specifically

credits each contributor, in a documentable trail, distinguishing itself from influence,

intertextuality as well as other types of collaborations, complicating ideas on authorship

presented by Barthes and New Criticism, while reemphasizing the conversational and

coterie aspects of writing together. Further examination of Lowell's poetic relationship

with Elizabeth Bishop represented by their verse dedicated to each other will support

wider boundaries for the notions of translation and collaboration. An example of my own

creative work, 'Headed Toward Montana', which imitates aspects of Andy Adams's *The

Log of a Cowboy,* offers some explanation as to my own exegetical choices, the move

from explicit to the implied collaboration of translation. It is my ambition that this chapter

will stimulate interest in the topic of translation as collaboration as a point for further

investigation.

In order to present the nuances and associated debate surrounding the act of

translation most clearly and efficiently, this chapter will consistently refer to the process

and product ascribed to Lowell and others as, simply, *translation*. Any variations, such as

Lowell's *imitations*, will be articulated, discussed and explored as such. The verb,

translate is defined in *The Oxford English Dictionary* as '[t]o turn from one language into

another; 'to change into another language retaining the sense' (Johnson); to render; also,

to express in other words, to paraphrase. (The chief current sense)'. This entry offers

readers the briefest sense of both the evolution and the variation of emphasis inherent in

the activity. George Steiner, in his seminal *After Babel: Aspects of Language and

Translation* (1975) presents a comprehensive overview of the four major periods of

translation history, culminating in the present phase, which suggests 'a reversion to

hermeneutic, almost metaphysical inquiries into translation and interpretation' as well as

a 'point of contact between established and newly evolving disciplines'.[130] We will return

to Benjamin's ideas employed in chapter two for part of this essay's central argument as

they provide a number of insightful observations and metaphors for better understanding

the essential and universal function of translation and its connection to language in a

broad sense. This will include theories involving 'pure language' and the 'suprahistorical

kinship of languages' that all, ultimately, imply textual relationships powered by process,

as discussed in chapters one and two by Hill, Karell and others. As proposed in the

introduction, I will approach these theoretical topics as practitioner first, and

predominantly, but also as a reader and 'useful critic'. In this way, creative and critical

ideas are encouraged to mingle and spawn, yielding novel approaches to Creative Writing

pedagogy. In this chapter, arguably containing the PhD's most involved hypotheses, I will

study by 'objectifying' the text, while at the same time, as a reader, I will naturally open

myself 'to the anonymous being of the text'. Balancing and prioritizing these tasks will

always favor and opt in service to the applicable. As such, the suggested Venn diagram of

particular practical aspects of theory will be imposed upon collaborative practice in order

to best examine and elicit new language and thinking. Culler's ideas of a 'changing

collection of diverse projects' and Steiner's 'work that succeeds in challenging and

reorienting thinking in fields other than those in which it originates' are employed as a

framework within which we can identify the generative and useful.

As a helpful overview, Steiner also offers a survey of the history and broader

definition of translation, repeated here in long form due to its significance to this

exegesis:

> The theory of translation, certainly since the seventeenth century, almost
> invariably divides the topic into three classes. The first comprises strict literalism,
> the word-by-word matching of the interlingual dictionary, of the foreign language
> primer, of the interlinear crib. The second is the great central area of 'translation'
> by means of faithful but autonomous restatement. The translator closely
> reproduces the original but composes a text which is natural to his own tongue,

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[130] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p 250. Hereafter cited in text as 'Steiner'.

which can stand on its own. The third class is that of imitation, recreation, variation, interpretive parallel. It covers a large, diffuse area, extending from transpositions of the original into a more accessible idiom all the way to the freest, perhaps only allusive or parodistic echoes. (p. 266)

Steiner acknowledges that '[t]he dividing lines between the three types are necessarily blurred' (p. 266), a truth that is amply demonstrated by Lowell in his collection and represented elsewhere within this essay. Steiner's second and third 'classes', excluding the subgenre of parody, as well as the associated topic of plagiarism, will constitute the basis of this study. Steiner's 'freest echoes' describe the modeling Lowell performs with the poetry of poet and friend Elizabeth Bishop, mentioned later, and his 'variation' or 'transpositions of the original into a more accessible idiom' approximates my own work on the cowboy theme, previously introduced. Through the range of associations presented in this exegesis, we will come to appreciate Steiner's conclusion that '*inside or between languages, human communication equals translation*' (original emphasis) (p. 49). Paul Muldoon's evidence that all writing is translation, supported not least of all by ideas of the 'paradise of fecundity', based on Lowell's translation of Eugenio Montale's 'L'Anguilla' as a metaphor for the '"immortal" aspect of poetry,[131] lures us toward a desire to carve, classify and categorize in order to locate a practical application.

For the purposes of exploring Lowell's 'Pigeons' in depth, we will investigate the third of Steiner's classes, *imitation*, a type of translation that possesses a rich and sometimes contentious history. In his 1985 *The Whole Internal Universe: Imitation and the New Defense of Poetry in British Criticism, 1660 - 1830* John L. Mahoney writes on *mimeses*, or the imitation of nature in art, as widely practiced since times of ancient Greek civilization, later supplanted by imitation of other authors as formulated by Greek author Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the first century BCE. Mahoney writes that this later imitation was discouraged by early philosophers and poets, such as Plato who found it

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[131] Paul Muldoon, *The End of the Poem: Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London: Faber, 2006), p. 220.

'distracting and disturbing',[132] beginning a long tradition of discomfort with the act of imitation still witnessed in contemporary literature, also evidenced by critical reaction to Lowell's *Imitations*, to be presented later. Deeming imitation to have didactic importance, Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) wrote a great deal on the subject, stating that it is 'natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation'.[133] The religious impulse of the Middle Ages viewed poetry as an instructional tool, with Mahoney citing that imitation 'captures the transcendent world, and offers models of virtuous action for those beclouded by the moral ambivalence of a shadowy reality' (p. 16). Mahoney rephrases economist Adam Smith's theory from his 'Of the Nature of that Imitation which Takes Place in what are called The Imitative Arts' in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects* by asserting that '[i]mitation is at the heart of the creative process […] and close resemblance is not the best kind of imitation' (p. 74). It is clear that the act of imitation has served a variety of constructive purposes within the creative arts since the recorded beginning. With every examination, we find that imitation taps into the very nature of man: mimesis, learning, inspiration and creativity. In reviewing British critic Joseph Addison, Mahoney purports that 'the concept of imitation is much more subjective; what is involved is a collaboration of nature and imagination, each one giving and receiving from the other' (p. 36). This chapter intends to further extend this notion of collaboration to the imitated, and the person performing the imitation, reminding the reader of Barthes's assertion that 'a writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior', an idea particularly germane to Lowell's work.

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[132] John L. Mahoney, *The Whole Internal Universe: Imitation and the New Defense of Poetry in British Criticism, 1660 – 1830,* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1985), p. 9. Hereafter cited in text.
[133] Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle,* ed McKeon, Richard, (New York: Random House, 1941), p. 1457.

The Text as a Meeting Point: Life, Language and the Reader

The study of translation prompts us to reflect upon the basic nature of language in order to test theories of the fundamentals of authorship and collaboration. In a seemingly contradictory manner, translation, in its interrelation, showcases both the commonality and the difference of language: Steiner, for example, proposes that translation begins 'to descend beneath the exterior disparities of two languages to bring into vital play their analogous and, at the final depths, common principles of being' (p. 77). Classicist Donald Carne-Ross writes of the synergies and 'differentia' that translation can imply:

> Translation […] means that two languages, two cultural traditions, grow into each other, making both demands and concessions, appropriating areas of foreign territory and ceding some of their own. And it involves the confrontation of two literary personalities: Baudelaire remains Baudelaire and yet begins to resemble Lowell; Lowell is always Lowell, but a more Baudelairian Lowell than elsewhere. This dialogue, or tension, between the two texts, the two linguistic and cultural mediums, and between the two writers, is the differentia of true translation.[134]

This growth and 'tension', 'demands and concessions', 'the differentia' all represent activity that embodies Steiner's idea of a 'process of "life between languages"' (p. 251). An agency is assigned to the text and its translator, also a reader, lending crucial support for the possibility of 'life', interaction, or collaboration between one language, one text and another, carried forward with each new translation and each reading of such. And we are reminded of Ion's inspiration regarding the poetry of Homer; the unique response that he has to the latter's corpus, and the lack of feeling that Ion has for other, even great poets. Perhaps Lowell's translations represent this type of inspirational response, Lowell as rhapsode, channeling Baudelaire, his hero.

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[134] Donald Carne-Ross, 'The Two Voices of Translation', *Robert Lowell: A Collection of Critical Essays* as quoted in Hartmut Heep's *A different Poem: Rainer Maria Rilke's Translators Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell and Robert Bly* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 124.

In his imitation of Baudelaire's 'Au lecteur', entitled 'To the Reader', Lowell brings our attention to collaborative aspects of the first or early reader, previously explored in chapter two:

> Among the vermin, jackals, panthers, lice,
> gorillas and tarantulas that suck
> and snatch and scratch and defecate and fuck
> in the disorderly circus of our vice,
>
> there's one more ugly and abortive birth.
> It makes no gestures, never beats its breast,
> yet it would murder for a moment's rest,
> and willingly annihilate the earth.
>
> It's BOREDOM. Tears have glued its eyes together.
> You know it well, my Reader. This obscene
> beast chain-smokes yawning for the guillotine –
> you – hypocrite Reader – my double – my brother![135]

In his 2011 *The Poetry of Translation*, Matthew Reynolds reminds us, in the context of translation, that 'sense […] emerges from a text in collaboration with its readers'.[136] In the case of translation, of course, there are a number of readers. Robert Lowell is one of Baudelaire's readers who re-presents 'Au lecteur' to an English-speaking audience, its subsequent readers. We, the readers of Lowell's imitation, are also readers of the original, albeit with Lowell's imitation as a conduit. As readers we collaborate with both Baudelaire and Lowell, or, perhaps, Lowell as Baudelaire. In any event, in 'To the Reader', reader-response theory is brought to the act of translation, exposing the layers of readers 'who hold[s] together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted', and who McGann surmises 'modify the author's purposes and intentions'. While translation complicates this reader-response collaborative process, it also heightens the plausibility of Karell's claim that 'all literary writing is inevitably collaborative' and provides a practical version of the embodiment of Benjamin's 'pure language', more

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[135] Imitations, p. 47.
[136] Matthew Reynolds, *The Poetry of Translation: From Chaucer and Petrarch to Homer and Logue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 29.

fundamental and significant than Young's example in chapter two; less concerned with the actors involved than the act of 'truth'.

Translation: Temporality and Afterlife

In this chapter, Whidden's concept of *absentia* is extended to its outer reaches. In chapter one, the term referred to Gross, who wrote an individual poem with the shared vision of his designer and artist in mind; all parties participated implicitly in the collaborative project, however, only Gross signed his name to the published poem. In chapter two, Young's poem from the group writing project is also individually ascribed, although Young's co-collaborators were physically present at the penning of the verse, it is only the shared vision that is co-owned, with the poems under individual possession. Lowell's 'Pigeons', on the other hand, arguably of a shared vision of sorts, a meeting of minds located in the text, lacks consensus from and reciprocity with the original poet, causing conflict in terms of classification as 'collaboration'. Utilizing Whidden's theories and associated taxonomy, however, we can see that an elastication of the parameters has already occurred within chapter two, allowing for a less rigid scope when focusing on the authorial process. Eschewing the application of theories of intertextuality for the simple reason that they pertain to studies of product, this essay maintains a focus on the *act* of writing. It should be noted briefly that intertextuality, or 'textual relations'[137] involves '[a]ll utterances depend[ing] on or call[ing] to other utterances'[138] and isolates the text from any 'relational event',[139] wholly separating the product from its process. Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, in *Author-ity and Textuality,* enlighten the discussion on joint-writing process when they illustrate the subtle discrepancies between process and product,

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[137] Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 1.
[138] Ibid., p. 26.
[139] Ibid., p.133.

intertextuality and collaboration: 'In collaboration, the text becomes a site where two or more individuals meet, interact, communicate, and sustain cooperative work'.[140] This, we will see, can involve a meeting across time.

It is not the concept of reciprocity alone that is challenged in the examination of translation: authorial constructs such as Barthes's 'tissue of quotations', his text as 'multiple writings' overlook the fact that translation requires authorial credit in order to negate charges of plagiarism in a way that other writing might avoid or evade. Here Foucault's theories on authorship, in his 1966 *The Order of Things,* are particularly relevant: '[r]esemblances require a signature, for none of them would ever become observable were it not legibly marked'.[141] The chief distinguishing factors between influence or inspiration and collaboration can be seen; the author's signature, signaling a translation work, declares ownership, provides a crucial temporal measurement, a time stamp, and, marking the poem and the collaboration as an event, acknowledges association. Foucault emphasizes the fundamental significance of the author's function wherein

> [t]he author is an ideological product, since we represent him as the opposite of his historically real function. […] The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.[142]

If 'each original poem is the translation of the unknown or absent text',[143] as theorized by Octavio Paz, in an interview with Edwin Honig*,* we can imagine an almost untenably vast network of texts, stretching back, out and forward; a immeasurably huge inter-related framework, too large and complicated for constructive critical exploration. However, if we train our examination on the linear relationship that exists in a translation, authors

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[140] Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, 'Union and Reunion: Collaborative Authorship' *Author-ity*, (pp. 41- 59), p. 52.
[141] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 32.
[142] 'What is an Author?', p. 119.
[143] Edwin Honig, *The Poet's Other Voice: Conversations on Literary Translation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985), p. 157.

clearly documented, building a tradition, we can perceive Benjamin's 'reciprocity' as he

purports that

> no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife – which could not be called that if it were not a transformation – a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change'.[144]

Gross's call for 'permanent change' is satisfied; a resurrection or renewal has occurred.

Indeed, we can see other examples of this notion of revitalization in literature, with Ezra

Pound's *Propertius*, for example, prompting Pound to claim that his 'job was to bring a

dead man to life, to present a living figure'.[145] T.S. Eliot conjectures in his 1921 *The*

Sacred Wood that 'what happens when a new work of art is created is something that

happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it'.[146] If we picture the

trajectory of a translation as an 'afterlife', the 'departure' from the original poem, we can

imagine a straight horizontal line, going forward, fully documented, ideologically

imbricating the original, never substituting, but rather operating as a parallel text

remaking the original in various ways, by association. Foucault's 'author function',

'characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourse

within a society',[147] is important here as it represents the author's position within this

scenario, the author as 'a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits,

excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free

manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction'.[148]

Although Foucault explains that 'discourse was […] essentially an act', the act of

translation requires authentication and, thereby signals appropriation.

Lowell's 'Pigeons' demonstrates this 'life between languages', the act of

translation, as a collaborative venture; the idea is not new nor is it radical. As Language

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[144] Benjamin, p. 73.
[145] Reynolds, p. 242.
[146] T.S.Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Faber, 1997), p. 41.
[147] 'What is an Author?', p. 108.
[148] Ibid., p. 119.

poet Charles Bernstein writes in the preface to Jermone Rothenberg's *Writing Through:*

Translations and Variations, '[t]ranslation is always a form of collaboration: between two

(or more) poets and also between two (or more) languages'.[149] Returning to the definition

of collaboration, to 'work jointly (*with*), esp. on a literary of scientific project', we can fit

translation neatly into this description. Bernstein alludes to reciprocity by maintaining

that 'all translation involves a kind of collaboration – at least in the mind of the

translator,' concluding that, 'however one-sided it may often seem, and I have sometimes

let myself believe that all our writing, all our poetry, is an activity shared with all who are

the users and makers of our common language'.[150] Collaboration, thus, returns to

Benjamin's idea of a 'pure language', a precursor to poet Paul Muldoon's 'ur-poem':

> I want to […] propose (1) that the 'poetic translation' is itself an 'original poem,'
> (2) that the 'original poem' on which it's based is itself a 'translation' and (3) that
> both 'original poem' and 'poetic translation' are manifestations of some ur-
> poem'.[151]

We have circled back to the massive net of art, Barthes's 'tissue of quotations'. Steiner's

'human communication equals translation', when associated with the idea of 'pure

language', appears akin to Karell's claims and supportive of more open ideas of

collaboration. Benjamin's metaphor below provides one of the most useful visual

representations that aids understanding of translation as collaboration:

> Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in
> the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a
> translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and
> in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the
> original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just
> as fragments are part of a vessel.[152]

We will see that Lowell's 'Pigeons' shares a 'mode of signification', making the imitation

and Rilke's original 'recognizable as fragments of a greater language'. We can easily

associate the collaborative aspects of language to this vessel: a translation, 'pure

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[149] Jerome Rothenberg, *Writing Through: Translations and Variations* (Middletown,
CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), p. xiii.
[150] Ibid., pp. xix – xx.
[151] *The End of the Poem,* p. 195.
[152] Benjamin, p. 79.

language' or 'ur-poem' related as it contributes to the thing itself. If, as Steiner says, 'human voice springs from the same hopes and fears, though different words are *said*' (original emphasis) (p. 67), we can begin to understand the possibility of translation as a contribution to a greater whole of language, and, therefore, a fundamentally collaborative act.

Having established a clear differentiation from intertextuality, at this stage of the exegesis it is useful to establish some critical distinction between collaboration and influence. Biographer Norma Procopiow writes that 'Few critics thought in terms of "the anxiety of influence"[153] in regard to Lowell's translation work. Valid observation or not, it is interesting to examine Lowell's work, *Imitations,* in particular, while employing and testing the theories of Harold Bloom in his 1973 *Anxiety of Influence,* a seminal work in the field which offers the argument that poetic theory involves 'a description of poetic influence, or the story of intra-poetic relationships'.[154] This history is based largely on poets 'misreading one another, so as to clear imaginative space for themselves' (p. 5). According to Bloom's scheme, there are a number of different ways that poets can experience influence: *clinamen* or 'poetic misreading or misprison'; *tessera* or 'completion and antithesis'; *kenosis,* 'a movement toward discontinuity with the precursor'; *daemonization* or 'a movement toward a personalized Counter-Sublime'; *askesis* or 'a movement of self-purgation' toward 'solitude' and *apophrades,* 'a return of the dead' (p. 14 – 15). Bloom's ideas marry with those of Benjamin when he suggests that we 'give up the failed enterprise of seeking to "understand" any single poem as an entity in itself'. He offers that we '[k]now each poem by its *clinamen* and [we] will '"know" that poem in a way that will not purchase knowledge by the loss of the poem's power' (p. 43). Bloom captures much of the essence of Lowell's project when he quotes Lichtenberg

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[153] Norma Procopiow, *Robert Lowell: The Poet and his Critics* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1984), p. 74. Hereafter cited in text.
[154] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 8. Hereafter cited in text.

with 'To do just the opposite is also a form of imitation, and the definition of imitation ought by rights to include both' (p. 31). There is an element of Lowell's work that follows Bloom's theories of *apophrades*; that 'the new poem's achievement makes it seem to us, not as though the precursor were writing it, but as though the later poet himself had written the precursor's […] work' (p. 16). Although Bloom does not include translation in his treatise, the description fits Lowell and his imitative efforts, with one chief distinction; whereas influence, as presented by Bloom, often operates in a concealed, subliminal, or unconscious fashion, often not noticeable to the reader, nor to the writer himself, imitation, or any type of translation, lest it be deemed plagiaristic, necessitates open credit, clear attribution, a transparent documentation of lineage and inspiration, as previously stated.

In summary, Lowell strove to find his place in the canon. In attempting to align himself with the European masters, due to personal interest, his fascination with history and the old world, a need to break the 'blockage' in his writing, he took inspiration from his past, 'harmonizing' with Rilke and others. In doing so, he entered into collaborative conversation with his literary heroes, much like Gross did with his designer and artist partners. Ian Hamilton, in *Robert Lowell: A Biography*, calls his 'crime' having 'treated these great poets as his equals – as his playmates, almost'.[155] In fact, Lowell creates a coterie in these 'playmates', acting as if not a type of early reader, a special reader from the future, one who has found Celan's 'message in a bottle': an ambitious collaborator.

Robert Lowell: Writing 'After'

As a precursor to discussing Lowell's poem and collection, it is useful to provide some basic biographical detail on the original poet and his translator in question. The reader

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[155] Ian Hamilton, *Robert Lowell: A Biography* (London: Faber, 1983), p. 291.

must bear in mind that this information illuminates and provides some depth to our study, yet remains secondary to the more important critical study of textual collaboration. Poet Robert Hass writes of Rilke's life in the introduction to *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke,* stating that Rilke's 'father was a failed army officer' and his mother was 'driven alternatively by a hunger for good society and by pious Roman Catholicism' and also 'an affliction to him'. He supposes that '[t]here was probably nothing more suffocating that the life of a genteel, aspiring European household…in which failure brooded like a boarder who had to be appeased'.[156] Lowell's life in Boston society echoed this pattern and this may have contributed to Lowell's attraction to Rilke's work. The similarity seems embodied in Lowell's imitation of Rilke's *Jugend-Bildnis meines Vaters*, entitled 'The Cadet Picture of My Father':

> The hands are quiet, they reach out toward nothing –
> I hardly see them now, as if they were
> the first to grasp distance and disappear,
> and all the rest lies curtained in itself,
> and so withdrawn, I cannot understand
> my father as he bleaches on this page – [157]

Rainer Maria Rilke's life (1875 – 1926) is interesting for this study for the parallels with the life of the featured translator, Robert Lowell, as well as the circumstances surrounding the creation of the featured poem. The little background information that we have regarding this particular poem is that it was written to Erike Mitterer, a 'Viennese admirer' and 'young novelist and poet',[158] one in a pair of poems in Mitchell's collection of translations, including 'Duration of Childhood'. The exchange with Mitterer began in May 1924, when 'at the age of eighteen, she had sent Rilke two poems, initiating an extensive correspondence in verse'[159] which 'ceased only in the summer of 1926, a few

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[156] Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke,* ed. and trans. by and Stephen Mitchell, (London: Pan, 1987), p. xi.
[157] *Imitations*, p. 98.
[158] Ralph Freedman, *Life of a Poet: Rainer Maria Rilke* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), p. 516.
[159] *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke,* p. 342.

months before Rilke's death'.[160] It is notable that [*Taube*],[161] in every incarnation, has

played the role of manifesto-poem, being one of the last poems written in Rilke's life and

anchoring every collection in which it has been published: Rilke's own as well as both

Mitchell and Lowell's batches of translations.

Biographer Jay Martin surmises that Robert Lowell 'concluded that his heritage

was not precisely the one he wanted and that he would need to reshape it if he were ever

to accept it'.[162] Lowell was born in 1917 in Boston, Massachusetts, the 'first son of the

union between two celebrated Boston names',[163] descended from the earliest colonists on

the *Mayflower* in 1620. Claiming notable ranking military, clergymen, politicians, federal

judges and signers of the United States Constitution as his ancestors, Lowell also counted

Romantic poet James Russell Lowell and Pulitzer Prize winning poet Amy Lowell

amongst his relations. A Pulitzer Prize winning poet himself, Robert Lowell, nicknamed

'Cal' for both Shakespeare's 'Caliban', from *The Tempest* and, later, 'Caligula', for the

Roman tyrant, had a wild temperament, a lifetime of mental illness, and, as a result,

institutionalization; he became obsessed with Roman Catholicism, then denounced his

faith; he became a conscientious objector and subsequently spent time in jail. From his

first collection, *Land of Unlikeness* in 1944, to his final work, *Day by Day* in 1977,

Lowell's 'art and his life were inseparably intertwined, and he believed firmly in the

identity of self and language'.[164]A mentee of poet and professor John Crowe Ransom,

Lowell became equally steeped in classics and New Criticism, which was focused on

religion, symbolism, close reading and detail. Committed to formal verse and, later, a

more 'confessional' style of poetry, *Imitations,* published in 1961, was his sixth book, and

not Lowell's sole foray into translation, having written 'after' Rimbaud, Valéry, Villon,

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[160] Freedman, p. 516.

[161] This thesis will refer to Rilke's original, untitled poem as *[Taube]* herein.

[162] Jay Martin, *Robert Lowell* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), p. 8.

[163] Hamilton, p. 3.

[164] 'Robert Lowell', *Poetry Foundation* http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/robert-lowell [accessed August 24, 2015] (para. 1).

Baudelaire and others throughout his writing career, and having previously published a verse translation of Rachine's *Phaedra* in 1961. This juxtaposition between the 'confessional' and the penchant for translation, or writing 'after' another, adds a traceable, conspicuous layer of authenticity to the verse. In other words, the 'I' of Lowell is often clearly documented, almost palimpsestically onto the original translated poem, creating a trail for the reader to follow. Procopiow writes that *Imitations* was 'not an anomaly; it was simply a variation on a habitual process' (p. 96) stating that he also used imitation 'as a teaching device' (p. xiv). This 'habitual process' has been greatly analyzed by his critics and biographers, with Procopiow stating that 'Lowell believed that literature in the Western tradition was reusable', and that classics were, by definition, convertible to modern context and significance' (p. 42). Katharine Wallingford, in *Robert Lowell's Language of the Self* (1988) calls Lowell a "collective poet", claiming that '[t]hroughout his life, Lowell defined himself personally and poetically through his relations with writers, living and dead'.[165] If Lowell 'respected past literary masters and apprenticed himself to them' (p. 42) he did so in order to 'fashion retrospectively a tradition for his accomplishment'.[166] It is here that we see what might be called *influence* presented as a positive and generative force, rather than the passive act, or indeed quasi-plagiaristic deed that it is often considered. We might suggest that Lowell's brand of *pastiche* or *hommage* straddles the border of *influence* and *collaboration*, possessing a charge or energy that lifts it from the unconscious and creates an otherwise active connection in service to the art.

It is worth noting here that, as opposed to the plentiful, far-reaching *implicit* collaborative writing that he engaged with, Robert Lowell had very little *explicit* collaborative experience, apart from a small publication entitled 'Broadsides: a

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[165] Katharine Wallingford, *Robert Lowell's Language of the Self* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 96.
[166] Jonathan Price, *Critics on Robert Lowell: Readings in Literary Criticism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), p. 31.

collaboration of artists and poets'[167] in 1967. European travel certainly influenced his poetic tastes and practice. Hamilton writes that '[i]t became Lowell's habit … to search for an American parallel to each new European marvel; part of this was homesickness, but mainly it was an attempt to impose limits on his own excitement'.[168] Hamilton continues by saying that '[a]fter nearly two years in Europe he was no longer just a "literary man": his whole disposition now was to seek comparisons, connections, genealogies – painting, music, poetry held common ground, and that ground was international'.[169] Much of this was arguably vainglorious; Heep is quoted to say that Lowell's Rilke translations 'serve the purpose of supporting his own poetry, rather than introducing Rilke's poetry and poetic concept into English'.[170] One might say Lowell adopted the act of translation as a *poetic* medium, as opposed to a *translation* medium, utilizing the gaps or differences as a creative resource.

For this study, we will make some comparison to Rilke's original as well as brief reference to Stephen Mitchell's 1980 English translation,[171] giving weight to Lowell's version, a critical favorite.[172] Mitchell's version is furnished in order to emphasize the particular choices made by Lowell in his 'imitation' and to demonstrate the collaborative aspects and associated theoretical claims herein. It should be noted that the thesis concerns itself less with Lowell's detailed decisions regarding the language, syntax and prosody of the original German, and more with Lowell's use of imitation as an occasion for imaginative poetic elaboration.[173]

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[167] Out of print.

[168] Hamilton, p. 170.

[169] Ibid., p.188.

[170] Heep, p. 109.

[171] A third translation can be found in *Correspondence in verse with Erika Mitterer* (1953), translation by N.K. Cruickshank. P. 95. Mitchell's translation was chosen for this study as opposed to Cruickshank's as the differentiation was not significant in terms of stanzic layout, white space and rhyme scheme.

[172] *Imitations* was the winner of the 1962 Bollingen Poetry Translation Prize.

[173] We know very little of Lowell's translation processes; however, in an interview with *The Paris Review*, Lowell claimed to 'read in the originals, except for Russian'. < http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/4664/the-art-of-poetry-no-3-robert-lowell> (para. 99).

At this point, we are reminded of both the inherent promise and risk associated with the movement of collaboration; specifically, the idea of Lowell's type of expansive, some might say *cavalier* or *liberal* use of translation as collaboration. As a contemporary illustration of this phenomenon, at the July 2015 'Poetry and Collaboration in the Age of Modernism' conference at Trinity College Dublin, where this researcher delivered a paper based on this chapter, contributing scholars almost unanimously presented a wholly uncomplicated view on the act of collaboration: between the living and the dead, across time and space, *in absentia*. Needless to say, such thinking eclipsed the fundamental argument, indeed, the *raison d'être* of this exegesis. In the context of an academic gathering, this assumption, lacking the tensions that this research exposes herein, appeared at once exciting and imprudent; progressive, yet solipsistic. Discussions founded on these presuppositions suddenly exposed an aspect of collaboration that I was unwilling to attribute to Lowell: the appearance of self-absorption or self-advancement under the guise of association.

J. B. Leishman, translator of numerous Rilke's poems, calls [*Taube*] 'among his best'.[174] Many critics identified the chief challenges with the collection: nomenclature. Within the collection's introduction, Lowell describes his work as 'self-sufficient', 'one voice', 'a sequence', an 'anthology', 'alive English', 'translation' and 'imitation'. He describes the poems as 'new', 'stripped', 'taken out of dialect', 'cut in half', 'unclotted', 'more idiomatic', 'shifted', 'added to' with 'dropped lines', 'moved lines', changed images', 'altered meter and intent.' In summary, Lowell admits that he's 'been almost as free as the authors themselves in finding ways to make them ring right'[175] for him. Lowell saw the translations as 'speculative exercises', with 'nothing programmatic, or even methodical about their making'.[176] Hamilton records letters in which poet T.S. Eliot urged

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[174] *Correspondence in verse with Erika Mitterer,* Introduction.
[175] *Imitations*, pp. xi-xiii.
[176] Hamilton, p. 289.

Lowell to 'keep the word "translation" out of it'.[177] Favorable reviews point toward a

fidelity, not to the original, but to poetry itself: Reynolds writes that Lowell 'eschews

direct responsibility to his originals; but does so in the name of a higher responsibility,

that of writing a poem'.[178] Lowell writes Eliot a confirmation of this line of thinking:

'some of the translations are almost original poems and I think some of my best work'.[179]

Finally, Frances Ferguson is quoted by Heep, assessing the situation as such:

> If Emerson and Stevens directed their attention to the consciousness acting upon
> the objects of the world, Lowell constructs an imaginative order in which the new
> poem may openly take those very acts of consciousness as objects for a new
> subjective creation.[180]

The differences between Lowell's translation and the Rilke original, as well as Mitchell's

more literal or faithful rendering, are numerous, obvious, and bold, providing unequivocal

evidence of Lowell's individual intentions that signpost a type of departure, inspired by

the original, adding his own voice to Rilke's, in harmony or, as this essay maintains,

collaboration. In fact, poet Robert Fitzgerald calls Lowell's poems 'a version of the

original but something in the nature of a collaboration between Cal Lowell and another

poem in a different language'.[181] We will see, in the close reading that follows, these

translation choices as an approximation or hint of 'pure language', an attempt at exposing

the cultural and linguistic fragments that contribute to meaning. Lowell's imitation,

compared with the later translation by Mitchell, provides a measurable record of a

'reciprocal relationship' that can be applied to translation on a whole. That is to say, what

we are offered in these, and any translation, is an opportunity to glimpse the presence of

language itself; that which contributes to the totality that represents the thing that is

meant. In the Lowell imitation there are remarkable differences as well as a sustained

closeness, an intimacy with the original that suggests conversation or coterie, an implied

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[177] Ibid.
[178] Reynolds, p. 64.
[179] Hamilton, p. 370
[180] Frances Ferguson 'Appointments with Time: Robert Lowell's Poetry through the
Notebook' as quoted in Heep, p. 123.
[181] Honig, p. 113.

camaraderie. The friction, the on-going movement between the 'differentia' and similarities creates the 'life between languages' that operates as collaboration, in a textual sense, pointedly *not* intertextuality, but *in absentia,* containing clear authorial agency and attribution. Rilke's original and Lowell's imitation 'work jointly' in that they present 'life', they demonstrate the 'ur-poem'. That said, although 'the language speaks, not the author'[182], any language without authorial credit or claim cannot be collaboration, but merely influence. While we have no need of '[t]he *explanation* of a work' or 'the *author* "confiding" in us',[183] we do require documentation as a means of verifying the translation, creating a lineage, identifying the agent to avoid a plagiaristic event. In other words, while he has the 'power' 'to mix writings', the decision not 'to rest on any one of them' creates an untenable situation for the reader, calling for Foucault's 'necessary or constraining figure' to provide agency needed in the collaborative act.

Doves and Departures: A Close Reading

Wallingford writes that 'the collaboration between Lowell and the poets of his *Imitations* is fruitful'.[184] Lowell immediately places his own design on 'Pigeons', signposting his textual distinction from both Rilke's original and Mitchell's later translation by creating a title, prominently featuring the creature that otherwise nestles into Rilke and Mitchell's first line, from which their bracketed holding-title is taken. This seems to indicate Lowell's directional stamp on the poem: a decision that implies a certain amount of control, confidence in the poem as its own creative entity, independent agency in its departure, as well as a meaningful collaborative contribution, a reawakening through the release of Rilke's pigeon from the line. Opting for the sturdier bird of the Columbidae

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[182] Barthes, p. 143.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Wallingford, p. 97.

family, Lowell translates *taube* as 'pigeon', the urban, feral creature, as opposed to Mitchell's more poetic '*[d]ove* that ventured outside'. It might be suggested that Lowell's renouncement of Catholicism led to his eschewing the 'dove', the symbol of Christianity and peace. It is possible that Lowell chose the pigeon, the fool, larger, easily swindled and cowardly of the two to symbolize the United States, as opposed to the gentler, harmless European counterpart.

In addition to these probable deliberate nuances, we are reminded again of Benjamin's 'pure language'. With Rilke's 'taube', Mitchell's 'dove' and Lowell's 'pigeon' we understand something of Benjamin's 'kinship', 'modes of intention', of the glimpse that is gained by translation. We are reminded of Mallarme's theories as first presented in chapter two: 'imperfection of language' that 'consists in their plurality', 'the diversity of idioms on earth prevents everybody from uttering the words which otherwise, at one single stroke, would materialize as truth.' In other words, 'taube', 'dove', and 'pigeon', are linguistic representations of a *thing*, noted with distinct differences of sound, doubtless nuanced cultural and historical association, that give us a reminder of the sum of language, the messianic theory. As with chapter two, we see a dimension, a narrow recognition of the concept that all words, in their totality, draw out this *thing* referred to.

Lowell features a flock (flight or kit) of 'Pigeons', rather than a single bird, acting as the reader's first clue that Lowell is writing his own poem, in departure from or 'based on' Rilke's original. The alteration in dedication, Rilke's poem written '*Für Erika'*, with Lowell's version '*For Hannah Arendt'*, is a second, surprising representation of Lowell's independent intentions. Rather than simply omitting an English translation of Rilke's dedication, to young Austrian poet Erika Mitterer, as a subtle mark of his ownership of this new poem, Lowell instead chooses to select his own recipient, providing the poem an entirely distinct, more political direction, suddenly infused with an allusion to the history of WWII, the Holocaust, and, due to Arendt's subsequent controversial 1963 essays on

'the banality of evil'.[185] Critic Jonathan Price refers to Lowell's collection as 'turning the whole to his purposes',[186] and this dedication is a clear example of such; shifting the 'you', even if not explicitly written into the poem, still one implicit addressee of the poem. It is a brassy move, creating interesting tension between the choice of Rilke's verse, by selection a seeming homage to the original poet, yet also a sort of hijacking, from the outset, of Rilke's words and associations. Some critics reacted negatively to this degree of departure, with Marjorie Perloff, in *The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell*, deeming *Imitations* an 'immoral act', 'problematic', opining that 'Lowell's imitation falls between two stools', claiming that his imitation of Rimbaud, in particular 'destroys a carefully conceived imagistic design without replacing it with anything else'.[187] While these may be valid responses to the idea of *Imitations* as *translation*, the project, with its proper credit, authorial ownership, and carefully selected title protects 'Pigeons' and the collection on a whole, creating, instead, a collaboration by proxy, a coterie with the chief aim to contemporize and reinvigorate the past.

Rilke's featured poem is presented in the final position in all of its incarnations, the 1965 *Sämtliche Werke* (or 'Complete Works'), in *Correspondence in Verse with Erika Mitterer,* and Mitchell's translation, chronologically positioned, having been written at the end of Rilke's career and life. Lowell similarly finishes *Imitations* with 'Pigeons', notably forty-nine pages after the group of Rilke's other poetry, in a position of honor and gravitas. This closing place, in all publications, affords the Rilke poem, and its translations, a place where tone and sense might resonate, a sensible post for a manifesto or message that might act as a summary of authorial intent or hope. A position afforded space, like a 'dovecote' or 'pigeon-house' might be perched at the edge of a field so that the birds might easily take off and land. In this sense, there is a connection, an affinity of

[185] Originally published in *The New Yorker.*
[186] Price, p. 10.
[187] Marjorie G. Perloff, *The Poetic Art of Robert Lowell* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), pp. 57 - 74.

sorts, between Lowell and Mitchell's translations, an affirmation of the importance of

Rilke's poem within the Rilke's oeuvre by virtue of its chronology, as demonstrated by

Mitchell, and also within Lowell's 'anthology of European poetry', hence, arguably

within European poetry on whole. Here Lowell is corroborating, conversing, colluding

with the tradition, emphasizing Rilke's contribution to it, while also underscoring the

poem's great importance to his own practice, as well. If we understand, as Procopiow

insists, that 'Pigeons' is about 'going beyond one's territory and the risks involved', the

poem becomes an obvious metaphor for Lowell's 'territory' in the tradition, and 'the risks

involved' with the act of imitation, the jeopardy inherent in collaborating with Rilke, an

iconic poet. Procopiow concurs that 'flight becomes a metaphor for the artist's need to

transcend his familiar boundaries; but in terms of the entire volume it becomes the

imaginative embodiment of Lowell's concept of imitation'.[188]

Mitchell's translation remains reasonably faithful to the original in form and

layout: his rhyme scheme is consistent with Rilke's *aabb ccdd eeff* pattern, where

Lowell's employs no line-end rhyme whatsoever. Both Rilke and Mitchell's lines are

splayed with a gap central to each individual line, yet not tidy in a wholly symmetrical

sense. There is a zigzag to the shape of the poem in both the original and Mitchell's

translation that might represent the wings of the 'Taube' or 'Dove', or the runway or path

of the bird; further, the two jagged columns a symbol of the dual action of the 'venture',

later 'housed and protected again' of the dove, the 'hurl' and 'return' of the ball. The

deliberate form of Rilke's poem is forsaken by Lowell in a pointed insertion of his own

inventive 'differentia': five-line stanzas comprising lines of unequal length, shorts and

longs that seem to have more to do with sound and lyric than any visual representation. In

this sense, Lowell is again collaborating with the original by teasing out his own preferred

emphasis, the opposite of Rilke, and later Mitchell's, near-symmetry, instead, a stanzic

unit as a container for a predominant trimeter, a triangular sound, beginning and returning

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[188] Procopiow, p. 95.

again, like the pigeon. Avoiding a visual repetition, Lowell allows sound to take front stage, heralding drudgery, what Martin calls 'man's impulse toward boredom',[189] in the waltz of '[t]he same old flights the same old homecomings | dozens of each per day', featuring the spondee with emphatic importance in 'What is home' and 'flight's lost moment'. There is a reassuring iambic pace supporting the majority of the poem ('one that never flew out' 'stings the hand with the momentum of its drop'), lending Lowell's rendition a conversational pulse, like a neighbor conveying important information in a familiar tone meant to communicate, yet, containing sporadic areas of emphasis and drive ('Still, only by suffering the rat-race in the arena | can the heart learn to beat' 'miraculously multiplied by its mania to return'). In this way, Lowell may be reminding us of his affiliation with the American lyrical tradition, his birthright, as established by his immediate predecessor, Robert Frost, of whom he poignantly wrote: 'He was a continuer and completer and not a copyist. When he began to write the American cultural scene was unimaginably different from anything we now know. There were no celebrated masters to meet, no one to imitate'.[190] The continued tension between his native heritage and his adopted, European coterie partly plays out in this poem and the collection on a whole.

Lowell places his mark on Rilke's original through significant syntactical amendments. Beyond the introductory notes on process in *Imitations,* we can only speculate as to reasons for some of Lowell's choices; we can say, however, for the purposes of this essay, that they, in one way, represent his efforts to merge his own priorities, biography, perspectives and biases into those already represented in Rilke's poem. For example, while Rilke, and Mitchell, in his later translation, place primary and initial focus on the singular 'dove' itself, Lowell's imitation emphasizes the action of the birds, in the plural, supporting the repeated action, the habit with the aforementioned

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[189] Martin, pp. 24-25.
[190] Robert Lowell, 'Robert Frost: 1875 – 1963', *The New York Review of Books*, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1963/feb/01/robert-frost-18751963/, [accessed August 24, 2015], (para. 5).

sound device 'The same old flights, the same old homecomings'. Perhaps these 'flights'

allude to the American / European journey, including, arguably, the most salient to

Lowell and his founding family, the voyage of his *Mayflower* ancestors in the earliest

days of the colonial United States. Perhaps the 'flights' and 'homecomings' associate

more importantly to the connection between the continents as they apply, not only to

Lowell's heritage, a source of some tension in his family life, but also to his translations.

The foregrounding of this aspect, rather than of the birds themselves, bears some scrutiny

as it might apply to Lowell's passions and concerns. The emphasis of 'home', with

'homecomings', 'home' and 'homesickness' would indicate a primary position in

Lowell's thinking, eclipsing the 'dove' or 'pigeon' as the subject of the stanza. The

admission by Lowell that the translations in 'Imitations' were 'written from time to time

when I was unable to do anything of my own'[191] may inform our reading of this first

stanza, imagining 'flights' and 'homecomings', especially with the trimeter adding a note

of workaday depression, as musings and realities, inspiration and blocks, starts and

pauses, perhaps, more hopefully, imitations as creative departure and grounding. Poet

Ben Belitt says in Honig that he sees Lowell's 'Imitations' 'as a kind of dramatism – a

histrionic or supportive use of "the individual talent" of the original at a time when, for

one reason or another, the translator's initiative has lapsed or sagged or withdrawn from

easy accessibility'.[192] In this way, we can see that the imitation that Lowell performs

relies on the 'life between languages' to breath inspiration into his own practice: the

original author becomes the lead in collaboration, with chief guidance soon appropriated

by Lowell, with a kind of 'fruitful' conversation ensuing. When Lowell's pigeon is 'clear

of the pigeon-house', we imagine creative flight and freedom, the collaboration's

inspiration as wind under its wings. The importance of this imagery and its sense, the

value of the line is proven by the ellipsis at the end; one can almost see the pigeon /

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[191] *Imitations,* p. xii.
[192] Honig, p. 70.

inspiration taking off, with the line-end punctuation helping this to linger in our view. The inspiration evident in this joint work is akin to that observed in the conversational collaboration in chapter one and the coterie of chapter two. Needless to say, the 'fluttering terror' has a dual correlative in both his inability 'to do anything' of his own, but also the uncertainty of even the most successful beginning. Returning to Lowell's dedication, one could consider the 'homesickness' and 'fluttering terror' as possible reference to the persecution and genocide of World War II. Thus, Lowell's desire to inject his political thoughts and feelings provides weight and resonance, as opposed to Mitchell's later 'distance and fear in the course of her wanderings'.

Interestingly, while Mitchell's second stanza contains 'doves', in the plural, Lowell opted for the singular in the second stanza, narrowing in on a particular 'bird', 'the most beautiful | one that never flew out, and can know nothing of gentleness'. Lowell may have forsaken the 'pigeon-house' for the Old English 'dovecote', a mixture of old and new, Europe and American, while also perhaps alluding again to the political in the etymological shadows, with dovecote's antiquated association with 'one who causes a stir in a conservative place', possibly a nod to Arendt's *The New Yorker* essay. Mitchell's choice of 'loss' appears staid next to Lowell's modern, jazzed-up 'suffering rat-race'; Lowell's 'arena', like a Roman coliseum, in which 'the heart' can 'learn to beat' contains more energy than Mitchell's 'satisfied' and 'won-back heart'. We can see that Lowell is further reordering, reprioritizing Rilke's original ideas and language to suit his own register and poetic sensibilities, to ventriloquize Rilke, to afford him contemporary language for an American audience. On the other hand, Lowell's 'suffering/gentleness' is nothing if not an example of Lowell's faithful affinity with Rilke's original, in contrast with Mitchell's later overriding sense of Negative Capability, of 'loss/tenderness'. This may be a fine example of Rilke remaining Rilke and yet beginning 'to resemble Lowell', perhaps a mixture of conversation with the dead and assumed coterie. It also, as we will see in the following stanza, echoes Martin's observations on Lowell's writing, that

'though violence and ennui seem to be opposites, they are really, Lowell suggests, but the two faces of the single mania of the human condition, the alternating poles between which human activity runs'.[193]

The third stanza of 'Pigeons' demonstrates most cogently Lowell's bold collaborative practice and introduces us to the 'violence' of his writing.[194] Lowell writes to Arendt on January 9, 1961:

> Dear Hannah:
>
> Here's the Rilke, almost unrecognizable, and really more my reply or extension than a translation. Stanza 3 which I added is something I have wanted to write since I first read military history as a small boy - and especially somehow all this winter. I want to put it out of chronological order and away from my other Rilke pieces and let it end my book, for it's really my own credo, and hope you'll let me dedicate it to you in gratitude - I wonder if it isn't quietly my finest poem?[195]

George Steiner, in 'After Babel', provides examples of musicians 'altering, omitting or "improving" on text in order to suit their own agenda. Steiner recounts how 'Mozart tacks on an extra verse to Goethe's "Veilchen"' (p. 439) and Lowell similarly contributes an entirely new stanza to clearly add his own manifesto to what Rilke and later Mitchell consider to be Rilke's manifesto. Lowell also drastically reduces Victor Hugo's 'L'expiation' from three sections to one in 'Russia 1812',[196] and uses only two of six stanzas from Pasternak in his 'Hamlet in Russia'.[197] Again, awareness and choice are considered herein as positive, generative aspects of influence; however, it is

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[193] Martin, p. 25.

[194] This third stanza is published as a stand-alone poem in Lowell's 1964 *For the Union Dead.* Retitled 'Epigram' and dedicated to Hannah Arendt, it appeared with the following line-break changes:

Think of Leonidas perhaps and the hoplites
glittering with liberation,
as they combed one another's golden Botticellian
hair at Thermopylae – friends and lovers,
the bride and the bridegroom –
and moved into position to die. (p. 23)

[195] Saskia Hamilton, *The Letters of Robert Lowell*, (London: Faber, 2005), p. 376.
[196] Philip Hobsbaum, *A Reader's Guide to Robert Lowell* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988) p. 104.
[197] Ibid., p.121.

acknowledged that a researcher wishing to employ these same acts as negative, diverting toward plagiarism, could equally do so. The tale of courage over the overwhelming odds that the story of Leonidas brings to 'Pigeons' would appear to bring the overarching theme of death to the fore. One can imagine the young Lowell, like most boys, seduced by the Greek military account, compelled and captivated by the darkly magical moment of blissful ignorance, the poignant corollary between marriage and death, love and battle. Although the collection on a whole contains an overwhelming amount of reference to death and dying, and, in particular, that moment just before death, here he has created a swerve in the poem that delivers all the more impact for its lack of obvious build-up or connection. The dedication to Arendt, the 'fluttering terror', the fear of the 'arena', take on darker nuances with the association with Thermopylae. Spartans 'glittering with liberation' as they 'combed one another's golden Botticellian hair', the 'friends and lovers, 'bride and bridegroom' contain prophetic horror by affiliation. It might be postulated that Lowell has, in a sense, changed Rilke's original in retrospect in the same way that the Holocaust has altered the whole of human history. The lack of ellipsis in this third stanza, breaking with the pattern established in the preceding two stanzas, symbolizes Lowell's own break with Rilke's original poem and a difference from Mitchell's later translation. Instead, Lowell adds a long dash after 'bridegroom', asking the reader to give greater pause to the doomed imagery before finally revealing their fate. In this stanza we can also see evidence of several of Martin's suppositions. He proposes that Lowell 'regarded the act of translation as an act of culture – the retrieval or the preservation of a heritage of sense and sensibility, for the sake of contemporary life'.[198]

While the final stanza returns, in a sense, to the original, Lowell in no way adopts any late sense of fidelity. He again mingles the archaic ('thence') with the more contemporary ('out of bounds'). Lowell rounds up his collection with the circular, with reference to 'mania', certainly more agitated and exciting than Mitchell's more pedestrian

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[198] Martin, p. 23.

'heavier' ball for being 'miraculously multiplied'. He points toward the 'mania of Achilles' in his imitation of Homer's 'The Killing of Lykaon', the initial poem of the collection. Moving through the seasons, we begin with Greek warfare and end with a poem that makes pointed comment on the nature of war. While the 'return' of Mitchell's translation seems to imply the movement of the 'ball' alone, Lowell's 'return' might also, like the first stanza, intimate both the writing process and travel between the old and new worlds, both literally and figuratively, with the imitations. Interestingly, while one might guess that Lowell would have opted for language like Mitchell's later 'infinite space', as the word 'infinite' appears six additional times in the collection, including the title for Giacomo Leopardi's poem of the same name, he opts for the somewhat awkward 'almost out of bounds', partly, as above, for its tone and scansion, but also, one might surmise, for its reflection on the process of imitation. Lowell seems to be confronting reviews of his imitations as 'unacceptable' and 'dishonorable', 'out of bounds'. Furthermore, there is a passion and energy in the 'mania to return', perhaps to return to these classic poems, or perhaps to return to one's own work, fortified, 'multiplied' and full of 'momentum' to write again. As Lachlan Mackinnon writes in *Eliot, Auden, Lowell: Aspects of the Baudelairean Inheritance*, '[t]his insistence that past poets become versions of himself is what enables Lowell to make *Imitations* into a sequence running from the "mania" of Achilles to the "mania" of the ball caught between the sky and gravity'.[199] Martin also explores the 'mania' of 'Pigeons' as a thread through the collection. He maintains that the 'self confronts itself chiefly through what Lowell calls the "mania" in man and physical nature' and that there is a 'persistence in modern times of the ancient Achillean way'.[200]

Habits and 'Writing Together'

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[199] Lachlan Mackinnon, *Eliot, Auden, Lowell: Aspects of the Baudelairean Inheritance* (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1983), p. 106.
[200] Martin, p. 24.

My own practice does not include translation of a traditional kind; however, the sequence

contained within this PhD submission does include an imitation, a model not unlike

Robert Lowell's 'Skunk Hour', published in 1959, and Elizabeth Bishop's 'The

Armadillo', first printed in *The New Yorker* in 1957. Here we can see evidence of what

Procopiow refers to as Lowell's 'variation on a habitual process'.

The Armadillo

for Robert Lowell

This is the time of year
when almost every night
the frail, illegal fire balloons appear.
Climbing the mountain height,

rising toward a saint
still honored in these parts,
the paper chambers flush and fill with light
that comes and goes, like hearts.

Once up against the sky it's hard
to tell them from the stars –
planets, that is – the tinted ones:
Venus going down, or Mars,

or the pale green one. With a wind,
they flare and falter, wobble and toss;
but if it's still they steer between
the kits sticks of the Southern Cross,

receding, dwindling, solemnly
and steadily forsaking us,
or, in the downdraft from a peak,
suddenly turning dangerous.

Last night another big one fell.
It splattered like an egg of fire
against the cliff behind the house.
The flame ran down. We saw the pair

of owls who nest there flying up
and up, their whirling black-and-white
stained bright pink underneath, until
they shrieked up out of sight.

The ancient owls' nest must have burned.
Hastily, all alone,
a glistening armadillo left the scene,
rose-flecked, head down, tail down,

and then a baby rabbit jumped out,
short-eared, to our surprise.
So soft! – a handful of intangible ash
with fixed, ignited eyes.

Too pretty, dreamlike mimicry!
O falling fire and piercing cry
and panic, and a weak mailed fist
clenched ignorant against the sky!

Skunk hour

For Elizabeth Bishop

Nautilus Island's hermit
heiress still lives through winter in her Spartan cottage;
her sheep still graze above the sea.
Her son's a bishop. Her farmer
is first selectman in our village,
she's in her dotage.

Thirsting for
the hierarchic privacy
of Queen Victoria's century,
she buys up all
the eyesores facing her shore,
and let's them fall.

The season's ill –
we've lost our summer millionaire,
who seemed to leap from an L. L. Bean
catalogue. His nine-knot yawl
was auctioned off to lobstermen.
A red fox stain covers Blue Hill.

And now our fairy
decorator brightens his shop for fall,
his fishnet's filled with orange cork,
orange, his cobbler's bench and awl,
there is no money in his work,
he'd rather marry.

One dark night,
my Tudor Ford climbed the hill's skull,
I watched for love-cars. Lights turned down,
they lay together, hull to hull,
where the graveyard shelves on the town ….
My mind's not right.

A car radio bleats,
'Love, O careless Love ….' I hear
my ill-spirit sob in each blood cell,
as if my hand were at its throat ….
I myself am hell;
nobody's here –

only skunks, that search
in the moonlight for a bite to eat.
They march on their soles up Main Street:
white stripes, moonstruck eyes' red fire
under the chalk-dry and spar spire
of the Trinitarian Church.

I stand on top
of our back steps and breathe the rich air –
a mother skunk with her column of kittens swills the garbage pail.
She jabs her wedge-head in a cup
of sour cream, drops her ostrich tail,
and will not scare.

It is not difficult, upon a studied reading, to see the resemblance, the influence of

Bishop's 'armadillo' on Lowell's 'skunk'. Bishop sets the scene with:

> This is the time of year
> when almost every night
> the frail, illegal fire balloons appear.

And describes how:

> Last night another big one fell.
> It splattered like an egg of fire
> against the cliff behind the house.
> The flame ran down. We saw the pair
>
> of owls who nest there flying up
> and up […]
>
>   until
> they shrieked up out of sight.

Half-way through the eighth stanza 'a glistening armadillo' make its entrance, 'Hastily,

all alone' 'rose-flecked, head down, tail down,'

In a similar fashion, Lowell's skunk takes its time. After six stanzas of describing

> Nautilus Island's hermit | heiress', 'our summer millionaire, | who seemed to leap
> from an L.L Bean | catalogue.', and 'our fairy | decorator', 'love-cars. Lights
> turned down',

we are finally introduced to Lowell's skunks:

> that search
> in the moonlight for a bite to eat.
> They march on their soles up Main Street:
> white stripes, moonstruck eyes' red fire

and

> a mother skunk with the column of kittens swills the garbage pail
> of sour cream, drops her ostrich tail,
> and will not scare.

While a more detailed close reading would allow for more of these interesting

comparisons, this exegesis offers this Lowell imitation, of a different nature, to evidence

the collaborative aspects of writing together *in absentia.* Lowell has found inspiration in

the basic form and characterization of Bishop's poem. Not dissimilar to his imitations of

European masters, he has written a 'new poem' that presents a great deal of departure, yet

obvious connection to the original, this time, in the English language, rather than a

foreign language. As such, Lowell's poem converses with Bishop's collaboratively, given

the important fact that both poets dedicate their poems to each other, Lowell effectively

crediting Bishop's earlier poem, acknowledging her poem's part in his own, with Bishop

adding her dedication to Lowell in a later publication, in 1965. The idea of this long-term

conversation between the poets is further supported by Lowell's inscription '*For

Elizabeth Bishop'*, at the beginning of *Imitations*. In sum, the poems collaborate, the

earlier rewritten, reawakened and resurrected by Lowell's response; the two are forever

connected.

Self-reflection: Writing Through Time

Steiner includes 'transpositions of the original into a more accessible medium' in his

classes of translation. This, obviously, includes a 'barrier of distance', such as time,

which is 'exactly the same' as that created by the' difference between languages'.[201]

Viewing German artist Julian Rosefeldt's 'American Night', a five-screen installation at

the British Film Institute in 2010, in which he

> uses stereotypes and iconography of western films - the lonely cowboy, a western
> village in the middle of the desert, cowboys around a campfire, the saloon, a lone
> woman waiting - and juxtaposes them with modern battle imagery to create a
> critical view of the American military intervention in the Middle East[202]

I became interested in researching this area of my country's past from a creative

standpoint. Unlike Lowell, I wasn't 'unable to do anything of my own'; however, I did

want to take the cowboy and his genre and 'make them ring right for me.' The fictional

diary of a ranch hand in Andy Adams's *Log of a Cowboy* (1903) provided imaginative

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[201] Steiner, pp. 28-9.
[202] 'Julien Rosefeldt on American Night', *BFI,*< http://www.bfi.org.uk/live/video/435>
[accessed August 24, 2015].

inspiration and soon seemed an excellent prototype-as-inspiration for a central character of my poems. In a sense, I wanted my sequence to be, like Lowell's imitations, 'partly self-sufficient', a 'small anthology' of cowboy poems, based on Adams's cowboy's diary entries; however, a modern, female-perspective, verse imitation of cowboy literature. It strikes me now, upon reflection that I may have latched onto the cowboy genre and character for other reasons; there was some doubt and thrill involved with rewriting or collaborating with such a male-centered body of work. Until then, I didn't realize that I had been searching for a way to write about my father, and the cowboy, a character he idolized in film from his childhood to his death, proved ideal. Adams's diarized account captured for me for the western imagery and journey that I wanted my own sequence's character to undertake. I was excited by the possibilities of creating an elegy to my father through a recreation of Adams's central cowboy figure. My 'translation' of Adams's cowboy tale included a similar geographical path, to be historically accurate, and emulated names of people, towns, rivers, fording points; however, my cowboy story is told by me, a woman, my father's daughter and therein, a very distinct voice and focus.

While the typical cowboy of the screen is laconic, reticent to an extreme, my cowboy, although largely silent on the trail, displays his verbosity of thought in verse, through an interior monologue of poetry. It is the language, scene description and imagery within this internal monologue that constitutes the similarity in the imitation. It is the form, long-lined lyric verse, as opposed to Adams's diary form, that contributes, in one small way, to the 'differentia'.

Headed Toward Montana

I ride from the Mexican border cloaked in silence, thinking mostly of you, Caroline.
And I'm far in front of these strangers herding a thousand beeves cross-country
<div align="right">to slaughter</div>

when a curtain of rain ahead blurs any thought of the river bluffs and Padre Island,
one sure fording point, beyond. The drops they fall plumb to the ground and ricochet

off stubborn earth part-way back up toward the lowering sky. And the storm, its flash
and rumble, its border of wet and dry, hauls us north, and west. I think of Jim Flood's
<div align="right">words,</div>

The secret to driving cattle is to never let them know they're under restraint.
I shove my hat down tight to my head and give the sign, charging into the weather

like there's no tomorrow. And as sure as I'm my father's son, I know that this mile of
trailing steer follows, faithful and dumb.
<div align="right">And so we race forward, well off the planned path.</div>

'Headed toward Montana' responds to or re-makes Adams's *The Log of a Cowboy* in a number of ways: vernacular, with 'beeves' for authenticity and tone; a borrowed name, 'Jim Flood' for its metaphorical layers, the details of the journey itself for historical accuracy, dramatic and imagistic effect, with 'fording' and, again, symbolic weight with 'Padre Island', echoing the importance of the father-figure in the sequence. Perhaps the most sizable 'imitation' is with this paraphrasing, the largest of its type in my collection, of Jim Flood's words from Adams's narrative: 'Boys, the secret of trailing cattle is never to let your herd know that they are under restraint'.[203] [204]

This, together with the sequence's other cowboy poems, represents a type of collaboration *in absentia.* The sequence, now published in full, as a pamphlet, credits Adams's diary in the acknowledgements, stating '[t]he poems herein are written after and in response to Andy Adams's 1903 *The Log of a Cowboy'*; as such, the text is collaborative rather than merely 'influenced by'. It is situated within a particular tradition, that of cowboy literature, certainly not causing anything significant to happen 'simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it', as Eliot writes; however, arguably altering the field 'permanently', if even in a small way, as a female voice joins the previously male-driven genre. As my cowboy joins the narrative of cowboys in other literature, including Adams's, these translations, in a sense, represent Mallarme's 'plurality', contributing to the 'diversity of idioms', solidly refuting both Bernard Matthew's argument that collaboration must involve 'the closest of contemporaries' and responding to Gross's comment regarding collaboration 'with the dead'. It is not lost on this researcher/poet that the myth of the lone cowboy parallels this exegesis's initial question regarding 'solitary genius'. The cowboy of my sequence travels west, often alone in his thoughts, but in the company of others on the trail; this is the reality of

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[203] Andy Adams, *The Log of a Cowboy: A Narrative of the Old Trail Days* (Seaside, OR: Watchmaker Publishing, 2009), p. 23.
[204] A full list of extracts of a collaborative nature between Adams's work and my own is provided in Appendix B.

community that somehow destroys the romance, the shroud of mystery and allure that we almost universally prefer for its contribution to our own fantasies, for its support of traditions that can seem to prop up our culture. Similarly, while many accounts of 'inspiration' declare a divine connection for the individual poet alone, broadening the parameters of collaboration as we have in these essays demonstrates a fundamental complexity in the creative process that is hard to label, contain, assess and credit. Perhaps this submission will encourage new ways of thinking about the author and how we read and write, together.

Conclusion

What epistemological implications does collaborative authorship hold for traditional notions of creativity and originality?

Ede and Lunsfeld's question informs this thesis and, importantly, its aftermath. While this study began as a meditation, of sorts, a documentation of the journey of my own practice and consequent understanding of collaboration, it has ended with surprises concerning my own attitudes 'de sa nécessité, de ses avantages et de ses inconvénients' of the act of writing together.

Toward the completion of this PhD, I embarked on a commissioned collaboration with another poet in which we were expected to contribute individual lines to a single poem. Following the agency and freedom that I had experienced in previous 'shared vision' collaborative projects, as outlined in the body of this exegesis, I found it almost impossible to write something *together* in the traditional sense of collaboration. My peer's suggestions for revision felt intrusive and undermining, her edits on lines that I had penned seemed fundamentally unconstructive and presumptuous. Journal entries written during this time chronicle a 'fraught' 'confrontational' process; our joint writing sessions degenerated into 'things we don't want to talk about'. With the pressure of a strict deadline and patchy technology in the form of Skype hindering our progress, our own excuses for lack of productivity seemed to strike the nerves of our collaborative partners and, in fact, make their way into the poetry we wrote together: my childcare consistently fell through, and my collaborator wrote about her grief at not being able to have a family; she won a prestigious poetry prize while I received a few rejection letters, making me assume, and write about, the inadequate position I felt I held in the collaborative partnership. My diary speaks of 'ownership' and 'control' and 'bold reminders of what

the central guiding force is here: both creatively and critically'. My own sense of creativity and originality was tested and bruised by a type of authorship that I had myself sought out, that I had made time and concessions for, that I thought would enhance my creative output. This, naturally, made me question my relationship to my co-collaborator, my own methods and my writing. I was accustomed to sharing process, but not product; ultimately, the impulse that initially generated my own research and practice became evident. The practical inclination toward collaboration of shared process, of a more independent nature revealed my dual, apparently conflicting needs for preserving my individual voice while wanting to write with others. In the end, the urge toward individuality was the more insistent of the two.

This study clearly points to an unexpected tension between individual creative ambition and the inherent forces within collaboration: personal intention versus group ideology. It also exposes further complexities regarding the author within the collaborative writing event. From this poet's experience, the act of writing with others can elicit counter-intuitively narcissistic attitudes toward what is meant and thought to be an otherwise harmonious project. The attraction of collaboration, the surprise, the play of association and interaction, can succumb to the compromise of shared product, resulting in unexpectedly unwelcome homogenized verse.

Upon reflection of the exegetical component of this submission, which calls for a new taxonomy for the many acts that comprise *collaboration,* I have come to the following conclusions: that factors of *absentia* are decidedly and unequivocally relevant to the production of a text and that others can contribute involuntarily to the *process* of collaboration in meaningful, albeit often invisible, hence immeasurable ways.

Here, this researcher might suggest a temporary, experimental taxonomy, predominantly shaped by this practitioner's personal collaborative experiences and the collaborative publications referenced herein. While limited and marginal in its scope, it

presents a starting point from which other, more comprehensive representations might stem.

Co-ownership: One step further than this candidate's collaborative relationship described in this conclusion, this represents a project where both process and product are integrally shared, where neither participant can determine their individual voice with certainty; as such, overall credit is given to both participants. This is most common where two or more people are contributing in the same art form. *Saints of Hysteria* contains several instances of this type of joint endeavor; Renga and New York School collaborative projects were at times co-owned.

Co-contributor: This describes a collaborative project that is co-conceived at the start, with varying degrees of separation or integration in process, with a product that comprises a combination of the writers' individual, sole-signature work into a common whole, easily identified by contributor yet un-publishable if taken apart. My work with Cath Drake, described in this conclusion, fits into this category. One might surmise that many cross-discipline projects are co-contributions, although they may differ in terms of process integration. Each participant can claim ownership of their portion, and joint-ownership of the whole.

Co-dependent: A conceivable variation might be one in which artists create in conjunction with each other, such as a photographer and a poet, each in their own medium, and the final product *needs* the two components in order to explain or make the whole. If this poet's volley with Sharon Imamdin-Willson were published in such as way as to emphasize and chronicle the progression of the collaboration, this would represent a co-dependent project.

Complimentary: Another variance might be similar in process to co-dependency wherein the artists' products *work well* exhibited together, but can still operate on their own. Alice Oswald, Ted Hughes, and Paul Muldoon all describe their projects, mentioned in this introduction, as belonging to this category. *7 poets* is another example of this type of work. It might be said that the importance of the collaborative relationship to both process and product necessitates credit to all parties in a complimentary project. Although not always practical or feasible, occasional poetry and translation, including my cowboy poems, would fit into this category.

Co-generative: This type of collaboration shares the generative aspect of process and the products are distinct responses, often to the same prompt, not unlike my 30/30 project. It could be argued that they might make an interesting publication together, but only as a study of generative possibility. There is individual ownership, and credit is unlikely to be afforded to the product, but perhaps to the process, overall.

Ghosted: There might be a passive, passing generative presence, with no mention of the collaborative relationship in publication. Poems written with others in workshops might be categorized as such.

It should be noted that placing collaborative projects within this rubric has helped to sharpen categorical differences. Utilizing other collaborative relationships may expose the formula's weaknesses. In the future, there may be methods of classification that more accurately describe and differentiate these acts that in some way support the collaborative process, and they may come from outside philology, instead generated by research in music, art or other disciplines. This dissertation then lays a foundation and directs attention toward the validity of the collaborative act *in absentia.* In its chronicle of the journey of a practice-based poet and researcher, this exegesis, as well as some of its

creative content, reexamines the heretofore discarded, debunked myth of solitary genius, and its parallel, the lone cowboy. Through the gesture of translation as a redefinition, a deconstruction of the *intentions* of collaboration, we might explore the *process* for its productive tensions of individual agency and joint process.

Appendices

Appendix A

The following is a selection of excerpts from relevant email exchanges between Jocelyn Page and Sharon Willson-Imamdin during the initial period of their collaboration in 2010. Please note that all presentation is as the original, with no grammatical or presentational corrections applied. As some communications were via Skype, this is incomplete as a transcript and only meant to represent the most salient points as a measure of the whole relationship.

Feburary 2, 2010

sharon,

[…] if you're game, i have an idea. i was just reading a journal article […] written by Philip Gross, the winner of the TS Eliot this year, and he was describing how he and an artist friend collaborated in a way that he found so satisfying, he swears he'll never go back to any other type of artistic collaboration!

he said that he and this artist (Peter Reddick, engraver) (i'll quote here) 'moved inside one another's process, in a way that was neither illustration of a writer's poems by an artist or vice versa.' 'Peter and I began to respond not each other's finished pieces but to drafts and sketches, so the next drafts and next sketches were affected in turn by what the other person had seen and done. By the second or third exchange, we were producing work that neither had projected in advance.'

think it over and see how you feel and if you think it is feasible electronically!

j

February 15, 2010

sharon -

stunning. really stunning!

did you paint these recently?
do you think they're finished? or still in progress?

i absolutely love them.
would like to write from them...

j

February 17, 2010

sharon -

holy cow! the lighter of the two of these has blown me away!
can you give me an idea of your 'process'?
are you reading the poem, then painting?

how are you working? does it feel a lot different to normal?
is this whole thing working for you?

j

February 17, 2010

Hi [to Jocelyn],

yes i am reading then painting, it does feel different because it gives me a new perspective when i see words,
now i am thinking about 'here and there', its not just seascapes now its about being split in two, (something you know about)
it has given me a theme, a story if you like, for a series of paintings and works. I want to create two boxes now with paintings inside,
one of 'here' and one of 'there', this may take a little time but i will send you pics asap, the boxes are 8"x 8" and each will contain 3 paintings.
How is it for you, can you do a series of poems? Do you want to do something unrelated to this now while i do the boxes? is it working for you?

s

March 6, 2010

Hi Jocelyn,

yes it's still working for me, i am painting much more than i would have. Its not quite how i first expected, i thought we would be doing much more incomplete works, rather than complete paintings and poems. My work has sometimes been totally spontaneous as a direct result of reading your words and at other times your words have made me hunt around for an image that might best capture the way your words make me feel, these pieces may seem like a huge jump for example when i read 'lines unbroken' i wanted to capture the simplicity of childhood and the 'skip' image seemed to capture that for me, whereas 'ola' the latest painting is a totally made up image in response to 'skip', so i am working in two ways really. Does that make sense?

I have yet to respond to 'white', but i am captivated by 'don't look at the sun' which i adore and i think i will respond to that next, however i have run out of canvas and the art shop doesn't open until monday so i may not get anything done over the weekend!

I have counted up and i have done 15 paintings so far, i think you have a few repeats, the one on your blog i sent many time and in fact doesn't exist now as i painted over it and you wrote lines unbroken.

How do you want to proceed? i am happy with the way it has gone so far, shall we let it roll on or shall we intervene a bit and direct it in a different way,(not sure how!!!!!) what did your tutor have to say? sharon

March 6, 2010

hi there [to Sharon],

yes, i agree - it isn't going how i expected it either, but i think that's ok. two people start out somewhere with their creative stuff, on their own, and together in collaboration, and wherever it goes is fine - that's just the nature of creativity, i guess.

and i think the few by-products that i've really enjoyed about this process have been:

1. largely, we haven't talked about process! just the attaching and sending of work. i've been pleased not to know the narrative of what you've painted as it has freed me up to create my own and has, often, got me thinking about things i've never written before - how painting works, color, etc. - unexpected areas i've never got into before.
2. the communicative part of it. don't know about you, but i feel this is a more meaningful way of sharing then me telling you about the shitty weather here, finley's temper tantrums, etc. don't you think?

so let's carry on and promise that we'll speak up if it has run its course or if one of us feels it needs changing? and you've produced more work than i have, so don't worry for a second about keeping up a pace! i still have work of yours to look at if you have a lull.

and i love that i've written different poems from different versions of the same painting - that is exciting to me! and i love the variation of you working off words, and off your own paintings ... for me, it is the spontaneity of it all and the pace.

j

March 7, 2010

[to Sharon] i forgot to say that my supervisor was taken by the collaboration - he thought the way we were doing it was great and he thought it was interesting that my poems and your paintings could certainly stand on their own, in other words neither one needed the other for clarification.

one suggestion that he had, which i'd like to think about, was to set up one little segment where we deliberately, out of curiosity and to note the process, responded to each other's responses. […] so, let's say:

you paint
i respond
you paint based on my response above (as tangental or obliquely as you wish, but off my response)
i respond to your response above (again, as tangental or obliquely as i want...)
etc
etc

maybe 6 times is killing it, i don't know. maybe just 4 would do.

what do you think?   xxx

Appendix B

Andy Adams's *The Log of a Cowboy* informed my sequence of poems in several general, overarching ways: the language of the time, names of towns and rivers, the atmosphere and pace of a westward journey, the given and surnames of the men and the relationship between them, descriptions of the practicalities and dangers of fording rivers, and the natural resources of the western United States.

In addition, below please find a complete list of specific quotes as references to *The Log of a Cowboy*, as located in my sequence.

Poem title and quote in *You've Got to Wait Till the Man You Trust Says Go*	Quote and location of reference in *The Log of a Cowboy*
Headed to Montana	
'The secret to driving cattle is to never let them know they're under restraint'	'Boys, the secret of trailing cattle is never to let your herd know that they are under restraint', p. 23.
One Night, Drunk in the Fire's Glow	
'[…]still talking […] about the dogs, *the dogs'*	'During the early portion of the evening, dog stories occupied the boards.', p. 128.
English Was No Good, and Spanish Started Out Promising	
'but ended up with a shuffle | from the chief to a couple of young bucks. || […] He wanted beeves for the slaughter of his buffalo'	'The chief could not speak a word of English, but made signs with his hands; when I turned loose on him in Spanish, however, he instantly turned his horse and signed back to his band. Two young bucks rode forward and greeted Flood and myself in good Spanish. […] When he had fully stated his position, he offered to allow us to pass through his country in consideration of ten beeves.' pp. 78 – 79.
It Was the Sort of Thing Pa Would Delight In	
'Don't crowd 'em, give 'em the time they need.'	'Don't crowd the cattle,' he shouted. 'Give them all the time they want', p. 121.

'*Go to hell now, will you?*'	'Will you please go to hell?', p. 103.
'Then two yoke of oxen drive across and back for a test, and it stands.'	'The oxen were put in the lead, as with ours, and all four of the oxen took the bridge', p. 122.
'[…] the cattle plumb refuse to cross'	'but when the cattle reached the bridge, they made a decided balk and refused to follow the oxen. Not a hoof of the herd would even set foot on the bridge.', p. 122.

Wishing I Had Better News Today, Dear Caroline

'Last night I danced with a freckle-faced girl in Ogalalla.'	'I was dancing with a red-headed, freckle-faced girl', p. 112.
'Six mules pulled one steer, | but the river had him, kept his leg from the knee down.'	'the steer had left one hind leg in the river, neatly disjointed at the knee', p. 94.
'The only thing that weakened him was Floyd McCann | dashing a handful of flour in his eyes'	'McCann reached down, and securing a handful of flour, dashed it into his eyes', p. 98.
'we saw antelope as tall as giraffe'	'an antelope standing half a mile distant looked as tall as a giraffe.', p. 127.
'Ash Borrowstone | said that next time he'll be the Indian, let the other guy | drive the cattle to him.'	'I'd rather be the Indian and let the other fellow drive the cows to me.', p. 201.

To the Finest Horse That Ever Walked the Western Trail

'I've seen boys unable to hide their grief when the need of bread | compelled the sale to a passing drover'	'Mexican children unable to hide their grief when need of bread had compelled the sale of some favorite horse to a passing drover', p. 205.
'with thoughts of drink | under my belt, a rim-fire cigar in my mouth'	'with a few drink under my belt and a rim-fire cigar in my mouth', p. 204.

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