

The Poetics of Click and Drag: Screening the New Poetries

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--Art is a series of perpetual differences.

Tristan Tzara, "note on poetry"¹

It is fundamentally problematic," writes Peter Bürger in his *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, "to assign a fixed meaning to a procedure."² Bürger's reference is to montage/collage: he argues that just because a Picasso collage and a Raoul Hausmann photocollage use similar techniques of paste-up and similar collocations of unlike material, doesn't mean that these two artists produce similar works. On the contrary, Bürger observes, German Dadaists like Hausmann took what was, for Picasso, essentially an aesthetic form and adapted it for political purposes.

The same principle, I would suggest, applies to the new electronic poetries. As in the case of any medium in its early stages, electronic poetry in its nascent state fetishizes digital presentation as something in itself remarkable, as if to say, "Look what the computer can do!" But no medium or technique of production can in itself give the poet (or other kind of artist) the inspiration or imagination to produce works of art. And poetry is an especially vexed case because, however we choose to define it, poetry is the *language art*—it is, by all accounts, language that is somehow extraordinary, that can be processed only on re-reading. Consequently the "new" techniques whereby letters and words can move around the screen, break up, and reassemble, or whereby the reader/viewer can decide by a mere click to reformat the electronic text or which part of it to access, become

merely tedious unless the poetry in question is, in Ezra Pound's words, "charged with meaning."

The claim is frequently made, for the liberating interactivity of electronic text, but, when it comes to the making of poetry, I take this promise to be as illusory as the notion that when a child plays the *Simms Family* game, he or she "decides" what sort of house the family will live in, what their furniture will be like, and what their "personalities" are. For, of course, the personality and wallpaper choices are limited to a fixed set of options, produced by the makers of the game in the interest of mass appeal. As children quickly learn—and this is why they soon tire of *Simms Family 1* and turn to *Simms Family on Vacation* or whatever other computer game—permission is granted, but only within the most narrow and confining of parameters. Adorno would have had a field day with this perfect cipher of the Culture Industries.

The Internet offers the poet exciting new possibilities, provided one remembers that the medium can never substitute for *poiesis* itself. As an information tool, the Internet is incomparable in its ability to disseminate poetries: *Ubuweb* is a case in point. Who would have dreamed, as little as ten years ago, that there would be a website where one could hear Kurt Schwitters declaim the *Ursonate* or Marinetti intone *Zang Tu'um Tumb*, or see on the screen the great Concrete poems of Haroldo de Campos. Again, who would have dreamed that we would have journals like John Tranter's *Jacket*, which features not only excellent new poetries, interviews, reviews, and essays but documentary dossiers on various poets and excellent accompanying artwork.

Given the new electronic archives (and I urge you to consult the British Futurism website [www.futurism.org.uk], which has much better materials on individual art projects, manifestos, and terminology than the available books on Futurism), the possibilities for teaching and learning

about the various arts have thus been revolutionized. But the poetry currently being written for electronic consumption is still largely in the infancy stage. Some of the *ezone* poems available—as in such journals as *The Drunken Boat*-- are simply standard linear and lineated poems, written for normal print format and then transferred to the screen. Others are more ambitious about the medium itself and its procedures, but not always successfully so. Take, for example, David Knoebel's click series called "Words" (on the EPC website, example 1), the first of which is called "Thoughts Go." The poem is contained in a square. As the words, divided into thirteen lines, appear on the screen, the voiceover, read by Knoebel has a different text. [play] We hear Knoebel read:

Where do thoughts go?
not the ones that nest in the mind
but the long wind thoughts
the far travelers
that touch down briefly
time and again.

And while we hear these lines, we see the following:

At a rest stop
off the
Interstate
loud honking
honking
A wedge of geese
veers low
across the parking lot
and
disappears
beyond the
sycamore grove

There is no neat linear match-up: the spoken line "Where do thoughts go?" accompanies "At a rest stop," but after line 1, the equivalence breaks down so that "Not the ones that nest in the mind" takes us down to the second "honking," and so on.

What is the point? I take it Knoebel wants to give us a verbal-visual example of those "long wind thoughts," those "far travelers" that flood our consciousness now and again. So the "wedge of geese" that "veers low / across the / parking lot" becomes the ideogram for the mind's activity. It's an interesting idea but I don't think it works. We can't really *hear* the spoken text while we are reading the *visual* one without losing the resonances of both. And the fact is that, either way, the texts abound in standard Romantic lingo: take the metaphor of thoughts as "far travelers" that "touch down briefly / time and again," or the "wedge of geese" disappearing "beyond the/ sycamore grove." Would it matter if it were a birch grove? Or if the "parking lot" were a truck stop?

"Our words," said Yeats famously, "must seem to be inevitable. The digital poem, no matter how "clever" the gimmick, can't have much staying power if the language is arbitrary. Here is a second example, this time from another online text on the EPC, Jonathan Minton's DIGILOGUE [example 2]. This digital text is transformational: it automatically refreshes every 90 seconds with a new poem. [play] According to the accompanying "Notes After a Process of Weather" [click on], the impetus for Minton's poems was William James's account of a particular state of mind in which "the will to assert ourselves and hold our own has been displaced by a willingness to close our mouths and be as nothing in the floods and waterspouts of God."" Minton explains his procedure as follows:

Language is like the weather, an ongoing process, a rising or receding flood. . . . The following sample poems were loosely "translated" from texts generated by a C++ computer program written in April 2001. The program takes what was then given-- André Breton's "What is Surrealism?", "John Cage's "Music and Mushrooms," and

Charles Tomlinson's "A Process" and "The Marl Pit" [the first a prose poem, the second in free verse]--then processes the texts by chance determinations coded within the C++ algorithm. The C++ code was rewritten for Java in October, 2001. I call the program Digilogue after digital + dialogue, a correspondence not unlike the weather. I can participate in such a process (poem), but once it is underway, I am no longer the authority (author). Words are a matter (materialization) of process, as the rain is a matter of weather. Language is as given as the weather, yet the given is always subject to chance: the permutations of cloud and wind in which clouds open to wind, a dispersion and return: I'm watching the script unfold, a dialogue among equals. In process, words correspond freely with line and page so that words and water are of a similar source: chance happenings, primitive materials. By writing in this manner I hope (after Cage) to do without the more argumentative and sentimental impositions of the authorial ego: vanity, logic, rhetoric, habit, desires, likes, and dislikes. The water corresponds freely with ground and cloud. Choose an umbrella or a boat to suit your pleasure. I have nothing to argue.

I am very partial to John Cage's link between language and weather (as in his great "Lecture on Weather"), but Minton's "Digilogue" runs into two problems. First, it is hardly the case, any more than it is in Cage, that the "authorial ego" has been removed: after all, it is Minton who has selected the source texts and hence limited the possibility for the free flow, so to speak, of the water. Second—and more important—the individual poems are not exactly compelling. Here, for example, is "Poem #618: to and wink":

always without
Three-Penny Opera? Now mushrooms: to
dictionaries. Where did mushrooms:
proceeding, as in the unending its that has them
found my speech. The of rain the gloom

What's the relationship of rain and gloom to mushrooms and the Brecht-Weill *Three Penny Opera*? And what does the asyntactical "The of" contribute to this little lyric? Perhaps it is just as well that before we can think too hard about these things, Poem #618 has disappeared from the

screen in a “to and wink,” and the next cut-up, “Poem #540: procession, and accompaniment,” is upon us:

fall, given

words next to
water came are aim less it
its own letter,
below the grass at dense, to mark
lakes that wink that water to an end,

Ironically, the algorithmic coding, as used here, contradicts precisely the natural “dispersion and return” of cloud, wind, and water that the poet wants his language to represent. Moreover, the 90-second cut-off means that the reader *has no choice* but to go on to the next poem, unable to ruminate on the possible meanings of #540 itself. *Digilogue* has admirable intentions--its montage of Breton, Cage, and Tomlinson is promising—but in letting code overwhelm structure and semantic possibility, Minton has unwittingly given the computer program itself too much power.

Ironically, in some of the best digital poetry produced so far, procedure and coding are relatively simple. Consider two texts by the British poet and performance artist Caroline Bergvall. One is *Ambient Fish* (1999), again available from the Electronic Poetry Center. [play] Here the viewer is presented with two green buttons. Click on these and they turn red and become breasts. Click on the “nipples” and four rows of four of the same buttons appear. Almost every button quickly gives way to a word or phrase, while the voiceover (Bergvall’s very elegant, cool, and evenly pitched voice) pronounces “Ambient fish fuckflowers bloom in your mouth,” the text then permutating these words and phrases by means of rhyme and consonance so that “ambient fish” becomes “alien fish” and alien poche,” “loose in your mouth,” becomes “goose in your mouth,” becomes “goose in your ouch” and “fuckfodder” becomes fuckfad,” becomes “fish fat,” while “

alien poche" ("pocket") becomes "alien poach," becomes "a lined peach patch." The refrain "will shock (or choke) your troubles away" or "stow ["throw"] your troubles away" thus becomes quite literal. After the buttons disappear, the voice says evenly "fuck fish goose in your bouche suck your oubli away." It is a riveting performance.

Ambient Fish evidently started out as a text-sound installation commissioned by a festival of mixed media in England.³ The refrain was used as a drone in the piece. On screen, the interrupted recordings of the voice make the absurd lines even more menacing as do the curious rhymes and repetitions in which French words like *oubli* ("forgotten") and *bouche* ("mouth), here pronounced *baush*, give the piece a faux-pornographic air. *Sucking your oubli*—it sounds pretty sinister! But what is especially unsettling is that when the buttons and words disappear within a minute or so, they leave only three words—*fish*, *face*, and *your* as well as a single breast-shape. Then "fish" and "your" disappear, the word "face" circles drunkenly about, and finally disappears too, leaving us with an isolated glowing red-green button.

What, one wants to know, are the relationships here between fish and *your*, between *tirer des eaux* and its rhyme partner in "stow" or "throw your troubles away"? The "loveliness" of the language is wholly deceptive—*fuckflowers* in the context sound pretty, rather like hollyhocks or gillyflowers. As for the buttons, their role is complicated by their technological function. The standard TV remote control has, at the center of the number pad, usually next to the "5" a button with raised little dot within it that looks exactly like the button in *Ambient Fish*. Press the button and a new channel opens up its picture. But in *Ambient Fish*, no such thing happens: press the button and you get, not a pleasing image but only broken words and disappearing breasts. The anonymous, impersonal voice,

with its proffer of sexual pleasures that will “throw your troubles away” or “suck your oubli away” becomes increasingly threatening.

Another intriguing Bergvall digital text is *Flèsh* [example 4] which can be found in a recent issue of *How 2*. *Flèsh*, first called *Flèsh A Coeur*, illustrates Lev Manovich’s point that if one can make radically different versions of the art object—as is the case with electronic poetics—“the traditional strong link between the identity of an art object and its medium becomes broken.”⁴ The project, Bergvall tells us, was first developed to be one of twenty “Volumes of Vulnerability” artists’ books project produced by Gefn Press (London 2000) to celebrate the Millennium:

It is a tribute to four writers who, for all their cultural differences, share a trance-like understanding of the connections between text and physicality, between violence and verbal illumination, between the intimate and the public facets of sexual desire as also a desire for writing. In each their way, and these were frequently at odds with the declared values of their time, they explored and pushed such connections both in their work and in their body.⁵

The four writers in question are St. Teresa of Avila, the German Surrealist painter Unica Zürn (whose torso tied up with string her artist husband Hans Bellmer transformed into an icon), the visionary language poet Hannah Wiener, and the erotic postmodern novelist Kathy Acker. In its artist’s book version, *Flèsh A Coeur* was designed as “a set of 4 folded folios, very low-tech, which demands of the readers that they have to use French cuts with a knife or letter-opener to open each level of text.” Hence the “incorrect” French accent over the English word, reminding us that in French *flèche* means “arrow”; *Flèsh A Coeur* is thus the arrow to one’s heart—the arrow of Romantic love as well as spiritual revelation, piercing the flesh. Indeed, in Bernini’s famous sculpture, *St. Teresa in Ecstasy*, the saint’s breast is just about to be penetrated by an arrow.

Cutting--the reader's need to cut the small yellow pages with a letter opener or knife as well as the cutting up of text we find in Bergvall's text--insures that the reading experience is intentionally slowed. But onscreen, redesigned with the help of Anya Lewin, *Flesh* appears as an impenetrable pink wall, the single word *Flèsh* suggesting, not only the cliché that it is the French who are best at celebrating the flesh, but that the click on the mere letters of the monosyllabic word will penetrate the flesh. And so, as one clicks on the four instance of *Flèsh*, first the four names appear, then, with a further click, four extracts from their respective writings, and then, when these texts are opened up by a third click, we have the opposite: *underneath* the flesh, female desire, it turns out, has a common language.

Here is the St. Teresa section:

Things had been going rather well. Sex loot. Caravans of PushpUsh. Needy machines Easy To Please. Pissabout reFillable. Rubbed a Fff in It long enough to Suck Off thereafter. The stakes we'd lie in about. Everything pruned happy as shaved. Now-caught In The Grip of. JUMP's the Surf with a StartOff the ace. Oards dig holes in Every SinglePie own I had ed absent mindedly. Row and Row. Torn in the bell heat kicks up spare-Heads. Something's knocking against the SKin. large persistent bulks In the Air. Brutally pulled innards. Gut seizure GONGs concave.⁶

The language here, as we recognize from *Ambient Fish*, is Bergvall's own complex poetic word play--her astonishing, aggressive mix of the intellectual and the erotic, the hard and the soft, the "Needy machines" that are "easy to please." The harsh phonemic play and eye rhyme give Bergvall's text a kind of electric charge. Nothing is quite what we think it is: "spare-heads" replace "spare parts"; and "stakes" are not something "we'd lie about" but--oddly-- "lie in about." Half way through the passage, the speaker's language breaks down so that "I had owned" in line 6 becomes "own I had ed." Internal capitalization and the running together of words as in

PushpUsh" creates curious paragrams and the jamming of sounds and syllables introduces a note of artifice that befits Unica Zürn or Kathy Acker, as well as St. Teresa. In *Brutally pulled innards*," for example, double *lls* and *ns* twist the *u's and a's* in their midst. But the violent erotic scene also contains religious possibilities in those "Gut seizure GONGS concave" — possibilities appropriate for St. Teresa, as, in a different way, for Hannah Weiner.

What does the electronic screen do for *Flèsh* that couldn't be done in an artist's book? A great deal, it turns out. In reading the book, the four names are endowed with their meanings as we turn the pages and we can obviously look ahead. On the screen, flesh is always an impenetrable exterior, a blank pink wall that the viewer/auditor must elect to "enter." The relation of text to audience thus shifts remarkably.

And this brings me to my next example, in which computer technology has been generative rather than processive. In 1997, Kenneth Goldsmith decided to record every word he spoke in a single week. For seven days—a unit which gives *Soliloquy*, as the resulting work is called, its seven-act structure—Goldsmith went about his daily routine, wearing a wire and "collected" what became almost 500 pages of his own speech. The piece was first presented as a text installation, but since it needs to be read rather than seen, its more adequate realization is in the austere looking volume published by Granary Books in 2001. A single long print block, *Soliloquy* is certainly a monster, if not a loose or baggy one. Indeed, the text is highly structured, the ground rule—that every word Kenny speaks but not one word by his interlocutors or addressees will be recorded and that periods of non-talking are not designated as such so that the whole text is a seamless unit, creates a curiously dense language network, a kind of post-Jamesian novel, where we know only what the narrator knows and say. The "characters" in this novel--Goldsmith's friends, colleagues, associates, relatives, and

assorted service people to whom he is speaking, as well as those others referred to in the third person—are given no voice; they can be known only through Kenny’s interpretations.

Is he a reliable narrator? Of course not, but what can “reliable” mean in these cyberdays? To read *Soliloquy* is to infer what prompted question A or disclaimer B or irritated response C? How does the author adjust his speech habits to the different people in his life? And what is the significance of the constant self-interruption, self-cancellation and deprecation that fills this fast, funny, irreverent, and terrifying volume? Terrifying, because, as Goldsmith himself has remarked, it is “humiliating and humbling to see how little of ‘value’ I actually speak over the course of a typical week. How unprofound my life and my mind is; how petty, greedy and nasty I am in my normal speech. It's absolutely horrifying.” “But,” he adds, “I dare any reader to try the same exercise and see how much more value they come up with in their life. I fear that they might discover, too, that their lives are filled with trivial linguistic exchanges with waiters and taxi drivers. Even those relationships we feel are so vital to our lives – our family and friends – in linguistic terms are really up for grabs.”⁷

The genesis of a text like *Soliloquy* clearly depends on computer technology as well as on advanced recording systems. Goldsmith’s relatives, friends, and lunch companions (myself included) evidently had no idea he was wearing a wire and thus spoke quite freely. Yet their words had to be eliminated so as to keep to the rules of the chosen frame—one man’s talk for seven days of the week. We think of talk as communal—an experience we share with others—but here the elimination of all those others creates a startling verbal scene. For unlike a real soliloquy or even dramatic monologue, the speech presented here is curiously decontextualized. We often have no idea whom the narrator is addressing and that address may change within a split second as Kenny hangs up the phone and picks up

another call with a "Hi, how're you doin'?" Furthermore, although his talking claims to be random, it is in fact carefully planned, the author setting up the questions and raising the issues that will resound throughout the day. Thus, although the text of *Soliloquy* does not exploit visual devices, computer graphics, animation, or anything else but stone cold sober print, and although there are no icons to click or dots to connect, *Soliloquy* is, in fact, the ultimate digitally driven text, programmed as it is to eliminate "noise.'

Consider the following passage in Act 4 (Thursday), in which Kenny and his wife Cheryl (the video artist Cheryl Donegan) are having dinner in a local Indian restaurant:

Oh I didn't like that guy Alex that we met. The guy with the beard. He was an asshole. Did, you know, he never heard of Alfred Jarry. He goes Ubu? What's that. Yeah, you know, he never heard of any of that any connection with anything like that. Yeah. They did. Thank you. This food is so good. The crap they were serving up at that place for 20 bucks a plate. That was idiotic. The people in there, you know, it was a really stupid scene. I really gotta pee. OK. Ah, that's better. Is your chicken good? Tasty? No no no, it's alright. You like this red chicken? Hey, you know, you can't say we're not trying right. I know as if as if if being successful artists and writers isn't enough. Isn't it just amazing like all the work that we do to do our work and then all the work that we do to like try to do our work? It's insane, Cheryl, we're working two jobs. Yeah, no, I mean work is OK, but, you know, it's it's just, you know, you do what you do. No wonder why were are so fucking exhausted every night and every day. Well, I mean, it's insane. I don't know how long we'll keep it up for. It's like a lot of artists, you know, well they kind of like paint like they get like Debra they get into their studios once a week or something like that, do think about it much. The fact I, we're doing both things. See this is the cheese. This is paneer. This is what you eat in India all the fucking time. You had paneer? You've had it, right? Paneer this is what you eat. You like eat saag paneer like constantly. You constantly eating like on a plane you get saag paneer. Somebody's milk. I'm tired. I just need some down time I think, you know, like quiet time. When I, when did he say that Cheryl? Oh that's so long ago? Halil? Liz Kotz was so nice last night. We have so much in

common, it's insane. She's doing her dissertation. It's funny, when you scratch the surface of people, man, everybody's got something to say. I think everybody's nice. You got to get past the surface. I mean whoever would have thought Liz Kotz was anything, you know, other than what she appears to be? Hardcore man-hater. She's so nice. No, I didn't get apprehensive.

This passage allows the reader to be about as close to actually being there as is humanly possible in a retrospective situation. The conversation, or at least Kenny's side of it, is at once inane and meaningful—meaningful in the context of the rest of the book where Jarry's *Ubu Roi* and Kenny's own *Ubuweb* play a big part, where Cheryl's recent art show is discussed again and again, and where Liz Kotz, a critic of avant-garde art/music/poetry, now teaching at Minnesota, then still a graduate student, first appears at a lecture of my own that Kenny attended the night before at Columbia University .

Goldsmith's "natural" language is nothing if not artificial. The text provides us with all the normal tics of conversation—the prevalence of "like," "you know," and "yeah yeah," as well as the incompleteness of sentences, sloppy phraseology, and repetitive exclamations. But it is also artificial in that it splices together all instances of speech, omitting the silences and interruptions. Thus "I really gotta pee" is immediately followed by "Ok that's better," there having been nothing said in the minutes that elapse between going to the bathroom and returning to the table. The absence of breaks here and when Kenny is addressing the waiter as in "they did [take our order?]. Thank you," creates a seamless web as absurd as Leopold Bloom's stream of consciousness in the "Lotus Eaters" chapter of *Ulysses*. For the continuity stands in odd relationship to the constant shift in subject matter—the digression from the talk of the red chicken to the serious and somewhat maudlin reflection on Our Lives and how we Overwork and are Underappreciated. Not that Kenny doesn't mean it. But next thing you

know, he's telling Cheryl all about Paneer cheese and how it's served in India. Then Liz Kotz's personality is put to the test, Kenny liking her despite her being a hard-core man-hater. Life, this text suggests, is like that: we grumble about our fates until the cheese course comes and we try to decide which to sample.

The artifice of *Soliloquy's* "random" and "casual" writing becomes clearer if we bear in mind that we have no access to his unspoken thoughts, his physical movements, his reading, his looking at art, his day-dreaming. Here, the book suggests, is what life would be like if human beings could do nothing but *talk!* The electronic version, on the other hand, calls that talk into question. It contains the entire book in seven sections, but when one accesses a given page or section, only bits of sentences appear on an otherwise empty screen. We soon discover that any line the mouse lights on becomes readable but, given the properties of the mouse, one must take it one line or phrase at a time, not knowing what comes next. Accordingly, the cybertext becomes a kind of Cagean writhing-through, a form of play. Sentences and phrases are now fragmented and hidden, creating a conscious discontinuity in the interface. Thus the "cinema verité" quality of the text version is called into question: if the "talk" in the book version looks "natural," in the electronic text, the emphasis is on loss and disruption—on a curious kind of secrecy, as if the author doesn't quite want to be read. Goldsmith's is not, we should note, the non-sequentiality of Ron Silliman's "New Sentence," but rather a dialectic of appearance and disappearance, absence and presence.

What makes a generative text like *Soliloquy* poetic? Isn't producing such a monster just a matter of following certain rules and using certain computer operations to eliminate the language of others, the pauses and silences? Couldn't anyone do it?

There are two answers to this last question. The first is Cage's "Of course they could. But they don't"—the willingness to *engage* in such a project and putting oneself on the line being half the battle. But—and this is true of Cage as well—the fact is that when one studies Goldsmith's text, one quickly finds that it *has* been much more prestructured than one would think. For it builds up, metonymically and synecdochically, a network of references that gives us a very particular portrait of the artist as young hustler. A New York artist, dependent on New York, running around the city, talking on his cell phone, making contacts, networking, eating out, trying different foods, meeting people for coffee, running into old acquaintances at all sorts of art galleries and events. How to make it through the day: this is half the battle but the narrator remains for the most part cheerful and purposive in his demeanor. The "Kenny" of this book is not necessarily a nice man—he's a user and he knows it and he also loves to gossip and lampoon people. But he is remarkably candid and honest with himself. And that draws the reader—even a suspicious reader like myself who did not originally enjoy my "portrait" in this book—into the linguistic web.

Are Goldsmith and Bergvall electronic poets? Yes and no. Certainly, in the examples given, both artists make the most of digital possibilities. But both shift medium easily: Goldsmith has collaborated with Joan La Barbara in producing verbal/musical texts and has made many installations, whereas Bergvall has fused poetic material with theoretical analysis (in ordinary print format), made installations, worked with musicians, and so on. Her *Goan Atom* is, first and foremost, a book of "poems."

In evaluating electronic poetries, therefore, we should not subordinate the second term to the first. "I don't like the label 'video artist'," the great video artist Bill Viola, once remarked. "I consider myself to be an artist. I happen to use video because I live in the last part of the twentieth century, and the medium of video (or television) is clearly the most relevant visual

art form in contemporary life.”⁸ That was in 1985 and a decade or so later, video has been supplanted by the much greater fluidity and temporal-spatial freedom of electronic space. But Viola’s principle holds: the artist or poet uses a particular medium, not because it is “better” than others, but because it seems most relevant at his or her moment—currently, of course, the computer screen and Internet. Does that make the artist in question an E-artist? Or, conversely, is the purveyor of the electronic word ipso factor an artist? “Chopsticks,” Viola quipped, “can either be a simple eating utensil or a deadly weapon, depending on who uses them.”⁹

Footnotes

¹Tristan Tzara, "Notes on Poetry," *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries* (New York: riverrun, 1981), p. 76.

²Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 78.

³ See Marjorie Perloff, "ex/Crème/ental/eaT/ing," An Interview with Caroline Bergvall, *Sources: Revue d'études Anglophones*, 12 (Spring, 2002): 123-35; see p. 130.

⁴ Lev Manovich, "The Aesthetic of New Media," Lev Manovich website, www.manovich.net cf. *The Language of new Media* (Cambridge: MIT, 2001), *passim*.

⁵ Caroline Bergvall, Notes to *Flèsh, How 2, Vol 1.5 (March 2001)*. Bergvall also provided helpful comments in an email to me, 9 September 2002.

⁶ In book form, *Flèsh* has only small portions of this text; but the whole thing (though with variations) is found in *Foil: Defining Poetry 1985-2000*, ed. Nicholas Johnson (London: Etruscan, 2001).

⁷ Marjorie Perloff, "A Conversation with Kenneth Goldsmith," forthcoming *Jacket* 21 (February 2002).

⁸Bill Viola, "Statements 1985," *Reasons for Knocking at an empty House: Writings 1973-1984*, ed. Robert Violette (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), p. 152.

⁹Viola, "The Porcupine and the Car" (1981), *Writings*, p. 71.