CLAYTON ESHELEMAN:
The Gospel According to Norton

"When you write mystery stories, you have to know something: to be a poet, you don’t have to know anything."

—Richard Hugo (NAMF, p. 1121)

Once upon a time, there was a great, great poet named Yeats (65). Yeats was so great, in fact, that he “dominates this century’s verse as Wordsworth dominated that of the last.” Indeed, a year before this century even began, with The Wind among the Reeds, Yeats “set the method for the modern movement.” Drawing upon the discoveries of Reminiscence—"the lost youth of the self," “the key to the imagination”—as well as upon French Symbolism—“truth in mental operations rather than in the outside world”—Yeats became the poetic overlord of the twentieth century. Furthermore, he inserted his own symbolically, as well as in his more body, into his second, or mixture, phase, and dwelling “boldly upon lust and rage, mere and fury, he envisaged more passionately the state of completeness to which incompleteness may attain.”

In the shadow of what might be called French-Symbolism—become Yeatsian-Symbology, several other great but clearly (and unexplainably) lesser poets were picking around the ruins, trying to make sense out of the new (though from a Yeatsian viewpoint, finished) century. Both Pound [31] and Eliot [28] “write about the modern world as a group of fragments.” Pound believed it “direct treatment of the thing,” in this way he was an ally of Williams [54] and his “no ideas but in things.”

Since “the general framework within which modern poets have written is one in which the reality of the objective world is fundamentally called into question,” the reader is to understand that Pound, Eliot, and Williams were unable to achieve the completeness achieved by Yeats. Eliot’s “sitting and fusing in a surprisingly orthodox religious view.” Pound cease to be of much interest after being found mentally incompetent to stand trial for treason after WW II, and in spite of his attempts to find a path to the total impression the reader may rather be of shifting, intersecting forms, coming into being and then retreating on the page. Williams, who “agreed with the poets Verlaine and Rimbaud in opposing literature as a phenomenon created by the individual” but that the poets should be “allowed to take their shape.” He sees most writing as having taken a wrong turn and regards his own efforts, even if stumbling, as at least in the right direction. The few British poets “who followed the lead of Eliot and Pound made relatively little impact on their readers.” Exceptions are Sitwell [4], MacDiarmid [4], Jones [10], and Bunting [6]—but they are all of minor importance and worth only a handful of pages. "For in England as in America, the influence of strongly programmatic poetry” (Pound, Eliot, Williams, or anyone with a new poetry) “was balanced by much more traditional modes of verse.”

Thus not only was 1922 "the year of The Waste Land and of Joyce’s [8] Ulises" but it was also the year when a group of teachers and students at Vanderbilt University brought out a literary magazine called The Fugitive. Up to this point, all the poets were introduced under the Yeatsian canopy called "Symbology." We are now in a period described as "Elegant and Ingenious Variations," presumably on Yeats and his lesser. While Lawrence [22] centered his own verse in the passions of tortoises and elephants, and Frost [24] converted his self-dissatisfaction and loneliness into verses of Horatian dignity, such Georgians as de la Mare [5], Graves [10], Sassoon [5], and Edward Thomas [5] wished to preserve rural England in traditional process. In this regard, they were compatible with The Fugitives (Ianson [11], Tate [11], and Warren [11]), who hoped to keep for the South some of its traditional values. Fugitive ramifications are Emerson’s [5] Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930), Ransom: The New Criticism (1941), and Warren and Brooks’s Understanding Poetry (1938), the latter which “had a vast influence on the teaching of verse at American colleges in the forties, fifties, and early sixties; the influence was even greater on the many imitative textbooks it spawned."

"In England during the late twenties and early thirties, the most important young poets were W.H. Auden [22], Stephen Spender [7], Louis MacNeice [11], and C. Day Lewis [7], who eate to express radical political attitudes, preferred to do so through older verse techniques."

The sun continues to set. We are now in that period called "Poetry from 1922 to 1935," which is introduced by "s". During the years after the Second World War, most poets living in the United States came to write in a way that poets of the twenties and critics of the thirties had prepared for them. "I believe we are to understand here that the breakup the Auden group was an overwhelming influence on the post WW II American poetry. In reaction to Dylan Thomas’s [9] "apocalyptic mode," "a loose association of university poets who called them-
YTON ESHLEMAN

PERSONAL SWING: SELECTED PROSE

Introduction by Paul Cristensen

Critical reviews and interviews describing the full range of Eshleman's work, poems from Vantage and Blake through Crane, Auden, Olson, etc. In addition, there were discussions of the career elements in the presence of Snyder, Blackburn, Brook and the pandemic Lewo Gehril and the nature of the model.

This is a collection of the voices of the poet's imagination, a CDing to a reissue of this book, to show these two authors, and the first in a series. "Eshleman's thought is directed toward that door; the dark comes leading down to an all manner of a fearful memory and song, he has a slight of his own intentions but also the dissonant generation of poets working with him." — from the Introduction

NOTES: 1) 268, 64$7.00, Appendix. Edited by Gary Eshleman. 2) Special edition, blue and yellow jacket (passing by the poet).

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new is continually set up as a reaction to the traditional (with token page allotments to innovative figures who are used to promote a false "diversity"). There is no glint of awareness that such poets as Olson and Duncan were not reacting to Hardy or Tate, but were building on, adapting to, and expanding in their own ways, the work of such mcnational figures as Whitman. William and Pound. A sense of "making it new" is never allowed a foothold as an ongoing transformational force in poetry, and because of this the NAMP emits black light. I have forced myself to read it twice over the past year and a half; never before have I had such difficulty in continuing to read a book. The message is that from Yeats onward, the energy in modern poetry is static; while there are occasional disturbances (The Waste Land, The Cantos, etc.), the calm we should depend on is the one that the writer of Wilbur's "a moment's consistence" offers. The rest of the event is from the past. If there is any essential change, it is that flat, conversational workshop poetry has replaced rhythm in verse.

* * *

Omissions: all of the Objectivists (in the introduction to the six-page Bunting section). Zukofsky is mentioned as one of Bunting's "associates." All of the figures who kept avant-garde possibilities open between 1914 and 1945, e.g., A.C. Brown, Duchamp, Frank, Loringhoven, Hartley, Low, Croce, Feingold, Geppie, Hyslop, Jack's, Janets, Cage, Mac Low, Patchen, and Riding. While Poet- Jolas, Lowenthal, Cage, Mac Low, Patchen, and Riding. While Poet-Jolas, Lowenthal, Cage, Mac Low, Patchen, and Riding. When Post-Modernism is mentioned, it is not discussed, and there is no indication that such poets as Olson, Ginsberg, Snyder, and Rothenberg represent a turning away from the Anglo-American tradition toward Third- and Fourth-world cultures, primitives, and the East that goes beyond the Modernist preoccupation with the Other. Deep Image, Ethnopoetics, Concrete and Visual Poetry, Performance Poetry, and Language Poetry are not mentioned (meaning that none of their practitioners are included in this list). The NAMP's distortion of twentieth-century American poetic action, and while I dislike making lists of omissions, important poets. I have to do so here to illustrate not just how the Objectivists and the Language Poets have been eroded, but how many other innovative directions have had been eroded, but how many other innovative directions have had been eroded, but how many other innovative directions have had been.
Anyone aware of post WW II poetry knows that certain avant-garde poets, based on international research, are more ideological than academic mainstream writing (writing found in The New Yorker, APR, Poetry (Chicago), the Knopf series, the last 200 pages of NAMP, etc.). From all this I conclude that the contemporary equivalent of The Waste Land or "Canto VII" would not stand a chance of getting into the NAMP (or virtually any other teaching-oriented anthology) I take Hugo's remark that I have used as an epigram to this essay very seriously, if one expects to be anthologized (and taught, etc.), one's poetry should look very little—it should not be emotionally confrontational, seriously critical of society: and, or imaginatively dense. While one may find mid-career Ira Winter's too logical and dry, it is, in comparison to the last several hundred pages of the NAMP, extraordinarily thoughtful, and "difficult." In 1960, it would have been considered "academic." Today, textbook-antiquity-wise, while it would not be thought of as raw or experimental, it would be dismissed, and not be thought of as raw or experimental, it would be dismissed, and not be thought of as raw or experimental, it would be dismissed, and not be thought of as raw or experimental, it would be dismissed, and neither its intensity to be performed without regular rhythms, stanza, and rhymes, it would be judged "old-fashioned," and MacDiarmid's gives no indication whatsoever that he is the author of "On a Raised Beach," and "In Memoriam James Joyce."

Keeping in mind that Olson's more traditional contemporaries (Auden and Lowell) are presented with their major works, it seems grossly unfair that the small Olson section omits "The Kingfishers" (the Post-Modernist equivalent to The Waste Land), "In Cold Hell." "The chain of memory is resurrection," and selections from the last three-quarters of The Maximus Poems.

In the table of contents, Ginsberg's Howl is listed as "Howl." One presumes this means the complete Howl. Turning to the Ginsberg section, we find that Howl Parts I and II are not there. Part II is arguably the finest two pages in all of Ginsberg. One wonders if the phrase "The Cockucker in Moloch!" kept it out of the NAMP.

The Duncan section is a disaster. Its seven pages include several early lyrics, a 10-line poem from Bending the Bow, and three of the slightest pieces from Groundwork I. Missing: "Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar," "My Mother would be a Falconress," "Uprising" (the greatest of the anti-Vietnam War poems), and everything from "The Tribunals" and "The Regulators." the two major sequences in Groundwork. Looking at the NAMP from the viewpoint of page allotment, one encounters one bizarre juxtaposition after another. Is it possible that Rita Dove is more than twice as significant as Hugh MacDiarmid? Do Hopkins [16] and Richard Howard [16] really deserve the same number of pages? Is it possible that Gary Soto is more significant than Emily Dickinson? Lorca's Poemas de Cervantes [8], the author of a single book (1981) is offered the same amount of pages as Bunin. Gavin Ewart [7], an English author of sexiest doggerel, receives more than twice the pages allotted to Samuel Beckett [9].

One might inquire of John Benedict, the Senior Norton Editor whose presence is often felt in the NAMP (he appears in footnotes as the recipient of author query responses, why the late Fillmann and O'Clair were conicted to edit such a book. The superficial answer seems to be that both men co-edited the 1973 Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry and the 1976 Norton Modern Poems: An Introduction to Poetry. O'Clair appears to have been a Victorian scholar who never published a single book or article of his own (according to Contemporary Authors, Vol. 77-80). The only clue in the NAMP as to why O'Clair was involved in such projects is the following sentence in the Preface: "In making

The seemingly clear distinction between the omitted and the included has several subtexts. The NAMP is able to perpetuate old ways of reading new poetry not only by setting up the new as an unsatisfactory reaction against the old, but also by leaving out key new texts, that were they to be present, would make it much more difficult for the new to be misread. To this we must add the number of pages allotted to each author which, more often than not, is used to imply that unmonogrammed authors of the new are worth less attention than more traditional and teachable poets. To examine this in detail would extend this essay beyond what seems appropriate here. What follows are some examples, which could be multiplied fourfold in terms of the book at large. Whitman's [23] "Song of Myself," which understands the book, lacks stanzas 15 through 46, or over half of a masterpiece that would have taken up all of 24 pages had the entire 1855 version been printed. The Dickinson [8] section, includes several trivial poems, but omits a number of major works, including my candidate for the single finest nineteen-century lyric, "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun." The four pages of Stein makes her look like a nobody instead of a writer whose language and composition still test the limits of poetry. The Stevens [23] section has all the early "teachable" poems we have seen in anthologies for years. It includes 21 lines from Transport to

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the work has been taken away from the reader; he can say, oh, that is what that mysterious phrase means—and glide on. Such a “translation” erases the difficulty, and releases the reader from the crucial activity of recomposing the metaphor on his own terms (or finding it opaque, or silly, or whatever). On the other hand, it is appropriate to footnote “Bickford’s” “Howl,” and to offer some information on words that are not in International Dictionaries. NAMP’s procedure varies in these respects: at times, fairly common words are footnoted—at other times, very esoteric words receive no annotation. I counted over two dozen typographical errors, and some errors in verifiable information, such as Hart Crane’s death year, and the misidentification of the Martinian poet Aimé Cesaire as “a Congolese writer.”

Beckett’s three pages in the NAMP are filled with his early poetry, of some interest, but only tangential to the vision by which he is recognized. Joyce is also in the book; his eight pages are split between early verse, and the “Anna Livia Plurabelle” passage from Finnegans Wake, with footnotes rising like water in a sinking ship. The presence of Beckett and Joyce cause me to question: should two even be in a book that purports to cover “modern poetry,” and if so, shouldn’t they be represented by their pathbreaking writing? An insight of Hugh Kenner’s is useful to bring in here. In his essay, “The Making of the Modernist Canon,” he cites F.R. Leavis’s New Bearings in English Poetry (1913) as Canon, and cites F.R. Leavis’s New Bearings in English Poetry (1913) as the English language, by 1931, had split four ways, leaving English countries—Irland, America, England—were conducting substantial national literatures and that by mid-century there was a fourth center. NAMP’s “Irland” books but on no map: International Modernism.” For Kenner, the four masterpieces of Modernism are Ulysses, The Waste Land, the first 80 Cantos, and Waiting for Godot (two Assistant two Irishmen—no Englishmen). Kenner’s “split” illuminates the extent to which the energy of the new had left geographical England. Like Leavis, the NAMP appears to be ignorant of this development (1986). In my view, if one adds Post-Modernism, there is a fifth split-off, as of 1949, the year of “The Kingfisher.” Or we could say that International...
Modernism turns out to have a much wider thrust in time and space than Kenner calculates. Whether one sees Post-Modernism as a distinct "new wave" of Modernism, or the two as facets of International Modernism, one thing is clear: the movement is not confined to the English language alone. If we agree with Kenner regarding the interdependence of prose and verse, then sections of Ulysses and Waiting for Godot are prime candidates for a text that addresses the "split" English language. If we acknowledge that the domain of International Modernism is a "floating world" of the imagination, then we may salute 1922 not only as the year of Eliot's and Joyce's masterpieces, but also of Vallejo's Tristes and Rilke's Duino Elegies. And with these two new additions, we may also agree that the field of Latin American Modernism would also have to represent the likes of Brehm, Cesaire, Artaud, Mayakovsky, Mandelstam, Cendrars, Neruda, Paz, Celan, Radnoti, Holan, Lorca, Borges, and so on, even though it would be to shrink the English-language list only by those writers whose contributions to international innovative contributions to International Modernism. What a grand book — or two books — it could be. All of the above have been by now, at least in part, excellently translated or issued by Carefully innovative publishers in Latin American Modernism. However, it is true that the book would be in a NAMP-sized book, and were they to spend a year with it, students might well emerge with a revolutionarily complete sense of the diversity and range of twentieth-century writing.

While I believe that such a book might be possible by the end of the century, it still does not seem just around the corner, and until we get to such a time, there are a couple of lesser but quite meaningful American anthologies projects I am not going to argue here against anthologies per se; while I don't currently use them myself, I know that thousands of professors do, and will continue to: I propose instead that they be offered something more dynamic than the anthologies that are available right now.

An expanded and updated version of Allen's The New American Poetry (1960)'s a book that covered 1950 to 1990. Besides poets whose work began to appear in this period, it might resourcefully contain some of its applications to the English-language world, only guesses is that the phenomenon would be displayed in a NAMP-sized book, and were they to spend a year with it, students might well emerge with a revolutionarily complete sense of the diversity and range of twentieth-century writing.

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