

Editing *O.ARS*

1981-1993

**AMONG THE NEIGHBORS**

**Donald Wellman**

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## **AMONG THE NEIGHBORS 8**

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**AMONG THE NEIGHBORS** a pamphlet  
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The Poetry Collection of the University Libraries,  
University at Buffalo

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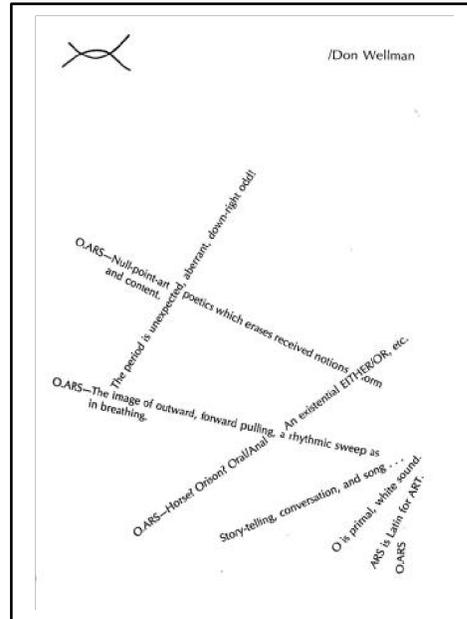
*Coherence*, the first number of O.ARS, was a self-described “gathering of experiments in writing: toward a new poetics.” Two precursor roots are embedded in this description, honorific ancestor projects: “gathering” was chosen in homage to the anthologizing projects of Jerome Rothenberg, especially *America a Prophecy*, coedited with George Quasha; the other, Donald Allen’s *The New American Poetics*. As the editor and publisher of O.ARS (initially with the assistance of Cola Franzen, Richard Waring, and Irene Turner), I undertook to create an anthology in the Dada vein, unworried by contradictions, embracing the new with revolutionary fervor and finding glimmers of spiritual transcendence under rubrics like

“performance,” “perception,” and “method.” In the introduction to O.ARS 1, *Coherence*, I wrote: “Allowed to run at seeming random, the imagination returns to us the most convincing coherences.” That was my summation of David Antin’s “Radical Coherency,” a talk given over Radio Pacifica at my invitation to participate in the launching of O.ARS, and later the title of his book from the University of Chicago Press, *Radical Coherency* (2011).

Of Ron Silliman’s projects—specifically *Rhizome* (also included in *Coherence*), at the time described by Ron as a series of combinations generated from a single set of 169 sentences, the pleasure being in locating sentences that “Chomsky would see as not possible”—I wrote that I had found meanings that didn’t require explanation, then continued: “A puzzle allows both surprise and understanding. A riddle penetrates the inevitability of suffering.” My medievalist and transcendentalist roots are evident. In 1981, I found “affect” to be palpably present in the work of some figures associated with language poetry although

“affect,” “voice,” and “expressivity” represent a highly suspicious set of emotions for some of those poets. For some, minimalism was in vogue.

“Strip off the protective gauze of justification” was the watchword of O.ARS in its beginning. The virgule as well as the “running horse” or “gimlet eye” were symbols of the poetic process: to cut or slash and to assemble into a vortex of sustained energy. What is O.ARS, what does it mean?—it is a going forward with the eyes on the past. It is an ironic cry, primal white sound with a pun on “ars” and “arse.”



*Coherence* gathered a variety of “other stream” practices: our heart lay with the continuing vitality of the Black Mountain College tradition as torqued by Dada. It was as a poet that I undertook O.ARS, not a scholar. I had ceased to care about venues that had once been receptive to my poetry. Soliciting contributions to *Coherence*, I contacted a constellation of authors

by whom I set my course: from Antler and Armantrout to Sorrentino and J. Rutherford Willems (where is he?). Paul Zelevansky emerged as an important visual poet for me. An O.ARS archive is now stored in the Mason Library, Keene State College, in Keene, New Hampshire.

Starting with the modernists for whom the page had specific visual properties—Pound, Williams, Olson—it was logical that the agenda for O.ARS would include concrete or typewriter poetry (Karl Kempton) or visual poetry, *poesia visiva*, as Klaus Peter Dencker, Luciano Ori, and others would have it. I was able to locate and publish works by Bern Porter with the help of Mark Melnicove, who was then studying photography in Bar Harbor.



*Bern Porter*

*Carlfriedrich Claus*

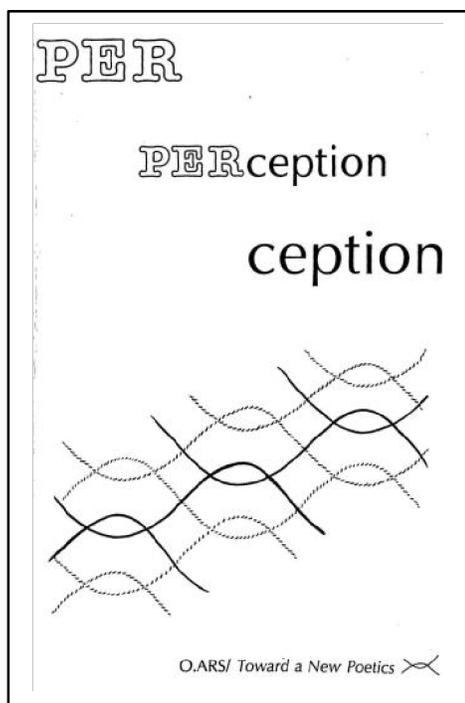
Richard Kostelanetz pointed us toward a variety of contemporary works of visual poetry. That's an eternal debt! An introduction from Richard to the work of Klaus Peter Dencker

and through Dencker to Carlfriedrich Claus was transformational. Claus's work is made of writing on postcard-sized transparencies. The works present text on each side of the transparency creating a different text when viewed through the recto or the verso. The source text is a meditation on the works of Karl Marx. The result is ethereal and transcendental. I was also familiar with what was then called sur-fiction. The later was a gift from Raymond Federman, who guided me through a thicket of short prose works, especially those of Michel Deguy. From these works it was not a far leap in my mind to the nonfiction prose of Paul Metcalf, another early contributor.

Multiple vectors commingle in each number of O.ARS. I was the leader, not really a pilot. My voice was loudest. My correspondence and preparation were extensive in comparison with the resources of my immediate collaborators. I brought the predominance of new material to our table for culling. Awed by this wealth, each continued to work the turf best suited to their poetic instinct. Irene continued to write madly beautiful lyrics addressed to some of our guiding spirits. Basil Bunting comes to mind. Richard wrote sensitive poems addressed to questions of identity. He had been a student of Allen Ginsberg. Their works appeared in early numbers of O.ARS, even as O.ARS became involved in dialogs and collaborations on an international scale. Cola and I were prepared to move in this direction.

Michael Andre and Erika Rothenberg's well-known *Poets' Encyclopedia*, published by *Unmuzzled Ox* (1979), was on my mind when I began to design the second number of O.ARS, *Perception*. A glossary of philosophical terms related to "perception," the number was compiled in the spirit of a cabinet of curiosities.

The images used throughout the volume also convey embodied perceptions: artefacts and images from archaic treatises on seeing and visualization, some from the Renaissance or even earlier, were interleaved with works by contemporary visual poets. Images from Descartes’ *Tractatus* were combined with diagrams derived from the contemporary psychology of perception, all under the eyes of a Kwakiutl bear. Each element—to cite a phrase from Roland Barthes description of Diderot’s encyclopedia—was intended “to vibrate well beyond its demonstrative intent.” Through design, juxtaposition, and content inflected by degrees of astonishment, the project took on a surrealistic patina.



These elements were being juggled as I began an intensive correspondence with Charles Bernstein on the poetics of perception, a topic that involved his interest in language and meaning and mine in Olson’s perception-driven, open field poetics. O.ARS had popped up unannounced on his radar; we became friends. The preface to O.ARS 1: *Coherence* had declared that perception and coherence are mirrors.

Charles offered a different point of view in his brief “Perception and Coherence,” situating language as the membrane through which consciousness is filtered (O.ARS 2: *Perception*, 137). On the same page, Douglas Messerli argues for the inseparable

union of perception and writing. The seeds for each volume were planted in the pages of the previous volume. In O.ARS 7: *Voicing*, a renewed engagement with performance sought to inscribe perception upon the body.

O.ARS purposefully situated itself in the vein of a grand synthesis, a wedding of American pragmatism, we may call it (as Don Byrd does), with avant-garde abstraction. O.ARS sought a synthesis, instead of a partisan journal in support of a particular poetic stance, as may have been the editorial stances of *Jimmy and Lucy's House of K* or *Vanishing Cab*. My sympathy with language-centered writing was pronounced, even though there were elements of parrying and counterthrust. Many poets identified with language writing were included in the different volumes of O.ARS. (My) Bruce Andrews and (my) Bob

Perlman and (my) Barrett Watten are stunning poets.

Poem/Theodore Enslin      Music/William Goldberg

A - LITTLE - NIGHTMUSIC

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a tempo marking of 'slow, free' and a dynamic of 'mf'. The lyrics are: 'war-ath to come here at a night to come to war-ath rise hands come near to ge-ther 2 teach-ing and bea-ling 5 joined to 2 night to come 3 have to'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'mp' and 'f'.

1981, the first year of O.ARS, was also the last year of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, the magazine. I treasure everything I have shared with Charles and learned from him, as if with a brother. He is the most brilliant reader I have encountered. Soon after 1981, he became instrumental in helping to shape O.ARS (as did Robert Creeley, Raymond Federman, and Fanny Howe, who were also contributing

editors). Like many poets at the time, I had just begun to read Benjamin and Derrida and Cavell. These readings are evident in my attempts to create editorial material for O.ARS.

Beyond the avant-garde and beyond philosophy, there remained the matter of a poetic address to desire. In many senses, I am a one-eyed son of New England with haptic gifts; one-eyed like Creeley. What distinguished O.ARS from similar projects at the time was a desire to identify some form of coherence at work in the production of poetry, a transcendence not necessarily existing outside or beyond the poem but nonetheless satisfying in its apprehension. A similar but not identical goal had already been expressed in Charles Olson's statement borrowed from Robert Creeley: "form is only an extension of content." You might—in the case of Creeley's phrase—read "form" as the coefficient of an imminent transcendence. From henceforth, coherence would reside in method, but in 1980 such coherence was also expected to produce a glimmer of an uplifting change of consciousness.

Our mentors, as well as many of us who came to poetry in the 80s, had experimented with the mushroom. In the years after Vietnam, I lived in the forests of Oregon. Addressing the material of language with as much analytical scrutiny as I could muster from that perspective, I sought the visionary moment. That glimmer or flash was the reward implicit in undertaking unstinting and uncompromising hard work. So puritanical and so unoriginal in the final analysis, but a register of desire in O.ARS that is palpable. *The Doors of Perception* by Aldous Huxley was widely read.

In contradistinction to the irreducible necessity of language for analysis or conceptualization, I argued for a form of "direct

perception,” as Pound would have phrased it. I prized the light within the light that Hildegard von Bingen associated with joy and child-like affection. The O.ARS formula included assembling documents from the historical literature related to each of its themes. In considering different orders of “perceptions,” direct or mystical (and I love the fact that it can be both), I found myself becoming a phenomenologist. Nonetheless, necessarily, I also shared the realization that text takes shape by attending to the membrane of language, to what passes through its permeable surface or barrier—as Charles would soon have it in his poem “The Artifice of Absorption.”

In each volume of O.ARS (there were nine), there is a strong commitment to perception as a form of cognition rooted in feelings and shaping a world. I think especially of a score by my close friend the composer William Goldberg, a setting of a poem by Theodore Enslin, “A Little Night Music”—not an avant-garde score but surely a visual rendering of feeling and perception that is more graphically immediate than language raw and linear.

*Perception* initiated a phenomenological poetics of perception in which visualization was a crucial element. An example is “Lair” by Saúl Yurkievich, translated by my co-editor Cola Franzen. Her attention to the Latin American avant-garde was fundamental to the vision and success of O.ARS from its inception. This text takes scored speech to the extreme, working through principles of visual language that are common to both Olson and Mallarmé and unique unto themselves

O.ARS also committed itself almost sacramentally to translation—translations understood in material fact as experiments in reading. This was the subject matter of a three-

volume series that followed *Perception*. The purpose of the project was to challenge boundaries or limits of language while acknowledging how language inflected thought. Language is coterminous in manner or method with both expression (“parole”) and text (“langue”). This was my reduction at the time, in the form of an editorial formula of the Saussurian paradox. For instance, in calling for “a speaking within hearing” in 1989 (*O.ARS 6/7: Voicing*), I was arguing against “a speaking without hearing.” Peter Quartermain cites this phrase in his “Sound Reading” (Bernstein, *Poetry and the Performed Word*, 1998: 224). I was seeking a complicated weave of voice and vision. My reading of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* supported this quest. My interest was political and far from subtle, but it also took the form of an interest in prosody, as Peter Quartermain has noted.

I sought circumspect measures in *O.ARS 6/7: Voicing*, “voicing, to emphasize process (growth, use) rather than terminal nodes or buds, is a double articulation between heterogeneous planes (different people, values, in fact *voices*).” I repeated myself monomaniacally (son of Olson that I am): polis is eyes, yes, and voices (ayes), and the articulation of polis is a matter of prosody. Through studies in translation that I still pursue, as well as investigations of the prosody that marks the lyric or serial poem in English, I have sought and still seek words able to articulate a value for duration—for the desire that can be perceived to shape utterance.

To continue this narrative, I am obliged to return to the beginning. *O.ARS* was often homeless. It began on an island in Maine, Cranberry Island, an area that provided unique cultural resources. Ted Enslin was a dear personal friend who lived nearby. Bern Porter created his visual poetry in Belfast, Maine.

Once, Porter, Mark Melnicove, and myself performed on Cranberry (extemporizing shamefully on memorial plaques to the chagrin of those whose family members had been lost in times of war). We performed in Boston and New York City. William B. Goldberg used my voice to transform my recitation of Old English lyrics like the “Seafarer” into squawking guillemots and gulls. (As mentioned, Goldberg also set the poetry of Ted to music.) Though the journal was collected widely, O.ARS failed to become a cultural resource of the sort that the people of Boston or Cranberry Island would adopt. We received grants from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts. The printing office of Boston University was helpful, but institutional affiliation failed to materialize, a result of intervention by the president’s office. After O.ARS had embarked on the Translations project, O.ARS 3, 4, 5: *Translations Experiments in Reading* (Fascicles A, B, C), I was appointed Professor of Humanities at Daniel Webster College in Nashua, New Hampshire. A two-year hiatus affected our ability to complete publication plans.

From the first O.ARS also sought to publish visually striking materials for reasons of both engagement and estrangement. At the level of aesthetics this represents a commitment to perception as a primary epistemological process. This principle sometimes bumped up against various tenets of languagecentered writing with which O.ARS is partially identified. Attention to visualization embraced both single pages like those of Carlfriedrich Claus in O.ARS 1: *Coherence* and in subsequent issues, as well as the design elements used throughout the series, embellishments that were themselves visual poems. Some of these graphics were displayed in Rome and São Paulo.

The embrace of perception is a form of mental massage and excitation, understood today (2019) as dangerous because of the visual powers of commercial advertising—but 1982 was also the Age of McLuhan. Helpfully, a Brechtian alienation mitigated potentially poisonous media effects. Or so I believed. I articulated this belief in O.ARS 7: *Voicing*. The range of visualizations included both single pages and novelistic displays by Alain Arias-Misson, Jaime Gordon, and Paul Zelevansky, among others. O.ARS 9: *Frames, Fields, Meanings* featured Ray DiPalma’s visual essay *Apostrophe* (multiple elements in superposition). The spark that led to the inclusion of such visual elements was uncalculated and instinctual. As O.ARS 2: *Perception* was taking shape, I was finding compelling visual energy in manuscripts from the Middle Ages. (Lindisfarne, thank you Basil Bunting, indeed.) Consider the stone fish from the Abbey Church of Lessay on the back cover of O.ARS 1: *Coherence*, the prototype of the O.ARS logo, a running wavelet or eddy, as well as an amalgam of fish and horse—the Indo-European animal-style art evident in jewelry and icons, totem poles too, as well as the abbey floor. In a nearby chapel, thousands of fish bones had been pressed into the mud where they dried, creating a textured wallcovering.

My scholarly specialization first lay in Old and Middle English literature before I turned to write on Pound and Olson. My then wife Irene (Turner) Wellman was the daughter of the renowned cultural anthropologist Victor Turner. Edith Turner, her mother, taught us to understand ritual and performance. Edith contributed an article on shamanistic healing in Zambia to O.ARS 8: *Censorship and the Situation of Poetry*, in which she argued for the experiential veracity of a healing experience that involved withdrawing an infected tooth from the body of the patient. The Turner library was replete with artefacts from

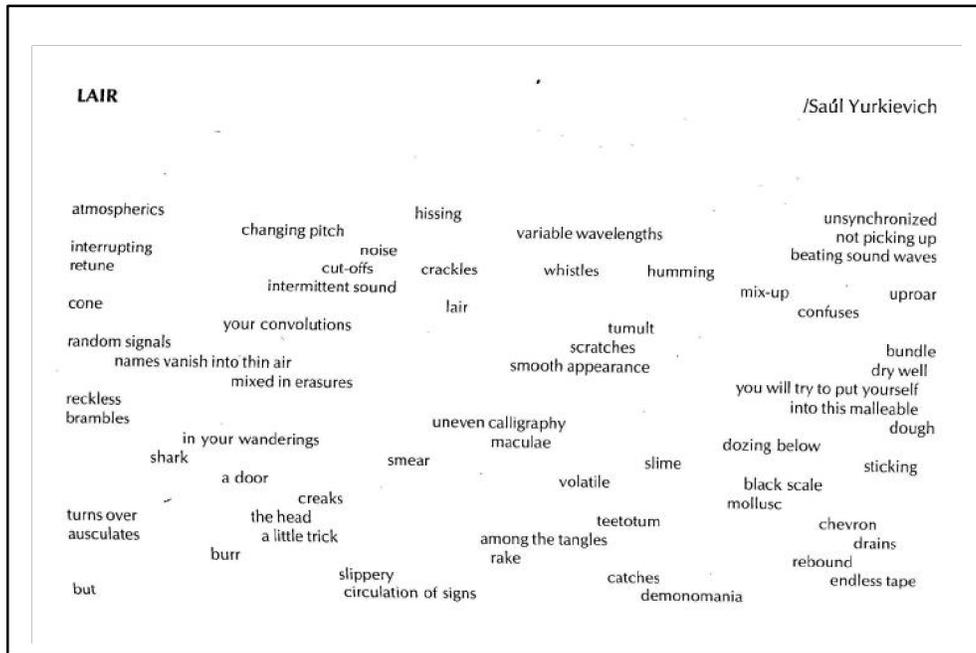
Brazil, Mexico, and New Guinea. The cultural mélange of tribal, medieval, Dada, and contemporary visual poetry continued to influence the anthological design of different volumes of O.ARS. Each volume constitutes several interleaved demonstrations or displays, each identifiable but conjoined as brother and sister, twins or quintuplets, adjacent but separable.

Klaus Peter Dencker argued forcefully for the concept of “*poesia visiva*,” a practice that puts words and images in motion as opposed to the static architectonic pages of concrete poetry, like Eugene Gomringer’s with its pictographic elements. I chose to include visual elements as different as a spear-slinger carved from bone and resembling a horse from the collection of Marshall Sahlins and a score by Dick Higgins composed by firing a shotgun at the page. Carlfriedrich Claus’s work shimmers in the overlay of small transparencies with microinscriptions on each surface, front and back, meant to be superimposed.

My instinct, in the role of designer and curator of visual materials, was to take each facet of each O.ARS collection to an untried or untested level in which synchronicities might be found among different laminae. Dada and Neo-Dada influenced the philosophical address to perception and knowledge, laying out a vector superposed, blended, or surpassing the influence of visualization in its various modes.

Visualization or envisagement: Ron Silliman follows the anthropologist Charles Fillmore as he explains how the mind always seeks coherences, even when the text offers few or no clues. This editorial principle is closely aligned with serial poetics, chains of allusion, image, and textual fact, threading themselves into new series of allusions—rhizomatics becoming

recursive. Linear series that intersected with horizontal shifts, slices, or jabs were prized. One key was superposition, depth and verticality, instead of flatness (always flatness). Coherence among disparate elements now lay in how the text enabled envisagement. Ron likely would disagree with my assessment of the situation, because for him coherence is an effect of language, not perception (“Migratory Meaning,” *The New Sentence*, 1987: 121). In *O.ARS 2: Perception*, Ron argued that language offered “a model of reproduction of the world rather than a ‘window’ on it” (132). Ron offered arguments opening new access to language. Nonetheless, I became a phenomenologist when I read Michel DeGuy’s lines, “fingernail barque chastity lunule / unicorn sickle huntress stable dune anagram of annul” (“ETC.” 103). I see among the words themselves, moments of astonishment, multiple phenomenological reductions so very immediate in their voicing. These tesserae are the model for a serial poetry.



Translation is the area in which language and perception most usefully overlay one another. Three fascicles devoted to this topic constitute *O.ARS: Translations: Experiments in Reading* (A, B, C). My most active co-editor Cola Franzen had already developed an interest in the Latin American avant-garde. Her translation of Saúl Yurkievich’s “Lair” in *O.ARS 2: Perception* captured a labyrinth of words with crossed and superposed meanings, a scattering with a highly coherent subtext. “Lair” is one the most distinctive Spanish-language avant-garde texts yet produced in print. The typesetting genius of Richard Waring enabled this presentation, as earlier his genius had allowed the first presentation in print media of David Antin’s “Radical Coherency,” which Antin delivered over Radio Pacifica. The vector that can be identified as performance art begins with Antin. It continues in *O.ARS 7: Voicing* where it is thematic and finds precious embodiment in the alliterative madness of

Bernstein's "Besotted Desquamations" and Yurkievich's "The Blue Train Car," an enactment of how the world became "Merz." Yurkievich, a close friend of Julio Cortázar, provided work for each volume of O.ARS. It was Raymond Federman who surprised us with the gift of Yurkievich and Cortázar's "Saying and Singing," an interview with Pierre Lartigue, translated by Cola Franzen in O.ARS 6/7: *Voicing*. This became our most frequently cited piece.

The pursuit of the topos of translation became dominant. A poetics of perception and language remained central. To our understanding, multiple modes of translation overlay perception, language, and performance: Jean Paul Curtay's "body language," Henry Hill's "Radio Adios," and work by Sally Silvers and Bruce Andrews. Bruce's "Unit Costs" includes lines of odd complementary glyphs composing their own sentences. Thanks to various contributors, works from the Egyptian, Japanese, Mayan, Tamil, Chukchi, and Iroquois were represented. The variety of works included defies classification. Our purposes were anthological, not analytical. O.ARS is a series of demonstrations or *muestras*—that is, shows or displays.

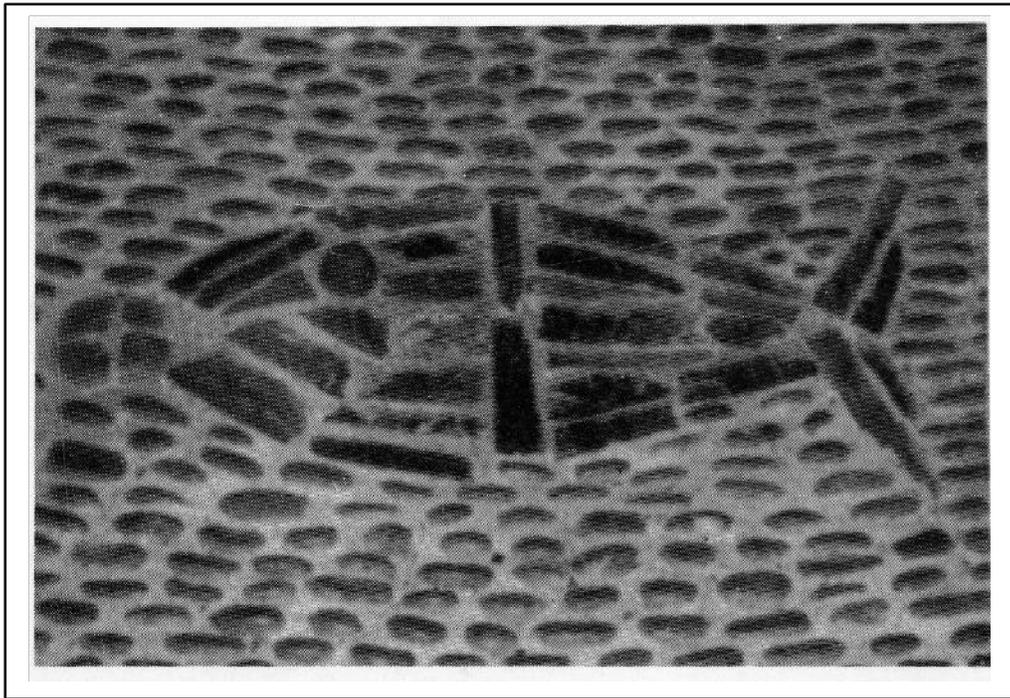
The issue now was not languages but translation, a process that embraced differences. I wrote, "Translation is a reading that writes the text again" (O.ARS 3: *Translations*, Fascicle A, 3). A few pages later, Stephen Fredman wrote: "Not understanding is a distinct pleasure. One of the great pleasures of writing and reading," from his meditation of Walter Benjamin. Charles Simic wrote: "To translate is to awake and find oneself in a universal house of mirrors" (33). In O.ARS 4: *Translations*, Fascicle B, Aimé Césaire addresses "speechless deliriums, impelled by the tom-toms of the Kalahari and Zululand" ("ExVoto for a Shipwreck," translated by Clayton Eshleman,

145). Friederich Hölderlin writes, in Richard Sieburth's translation, "But speech / God speaks / in thunderstorms" (92).

Not compelled by the universals of language, translation instead served as a verb, a performance of meanings across languages: "He lives in the night / of a folded sentence" (Joseph Guglielmi, *The Awakening*, translated by Christopher Duncan, *Translations*, Fascicle C, 164). In the preface to *The Awakening*, Guglielmi had written: "The book twofold in its broken lines doesn't conceal anything but the rising into view of that difference from the language of everyday, that difference where perhaps poetry disports herself." A romantic heart sometimes beats beneath the waves. Guglielmi was a participant in the development in France of *écriture*. Thanks to Rosmarie Waldrop, O.ARS had discovered these poets.

O.ARS almost failed to survive the interim between Fascicle B and Fascicle C. O.ARS 7: *Translations: Experiments in Reading* (Fascicle C) represents an abstract engagement with language. Performance becomes phenomenology. Among other contributors to this volume, Earl Jackson, writing on Sanskrit poetics, refers to the work of Bhartrhari, "who believed that language was the origin and shaper of cognition, which remained as a seed, *bija*, in consciousness until activated" (265). This belief squares with the propositions on language offered by Bernstein and Silliman. In poetry, opposing the above doctrine, it would seem that the expressor and the expressed can also be read as one unitary object. The word "expresses itself in the same form that it uses to express its object" (267). In poetry, referentiality becomes immediacy. This naïve phenomenology was the guiding principle of O.ARS 6/7: *Voicing*.

David Bromige insisted, as he had before, that “voice poetry is a reactionary, defensive measure (O.ARS 6/7: *Voicing*, 27). Most readers of O.ARS would agree without flinching, though voicepoetry like identity poetry is the dominate mode of poetry written for university workshops. I chose *Voicing* as the title for O.ARS 6/7 because of my interest in performance. Also as a bit of a slap in the face to compatriot poet peers. In the interview with Saúl Yurkievich, Julio Cortázar claimed that “the rhythm and whatever is being said are the same. They are totally fused, and that is what gives them the character of being a fated thing” (8). Cortázar identifies the starting point for what I have called a phenomenology of perception—found expression for the feeling of astonishment. With fate as a mantra, *Voicing* sought a large stage for exposition.



In my essay on voicing, I equated voice with gesture in the Brechtian sense. I argued that “The voice will not conform to the writing that seeks to describe—or to emulate scientific

inquiry or objectivity.” That assertion is simplified Sausurrean linguistics. I continued: “In *voicing*, the self (the body, not the eye) becomes an instrument, measuring the flow without separating itself from it (180). And I do mean what Olson called the proprioceptive as differentiated from the flow of perception addressed in “Projective Verse.” Gil Ott, in his “Levels of Address,” helpfully asserted: “What current language is available to us all, a gloss and pitch, more than its freight determines commonality” (61). Gil had considered different speech registers and the role of the body regarding intonation or indeed “voicing.”

Several authors in O.ARS 6/7: *Voicing* wrote about jazz, including Jed Rasula and John Taggart. These essays, as was my editorial intention, reclaimed “voicing” from the reactionary shibboleth of “voice poetry.” O.ARS had become an empowered person (“a philosophical person,” in Deleuze’s phrase), standing on the divide between different poetry wars. My ego was not diminished, but abstracted beyond lyrical display of conditional insecurities. For this reason, I was attracted to Don Byrd’s discussion of “autopoiesis”:

The “dance and creativity of the body [proclaimed by both Duncan and Olson] is what Maturana and Varela call ‘autopoiesis.’ The intuition of these uninterrupted acts of making is fundamental to poetry: a continuous and unending ordered series of nonrepeating acts is both its form and its content” (79).

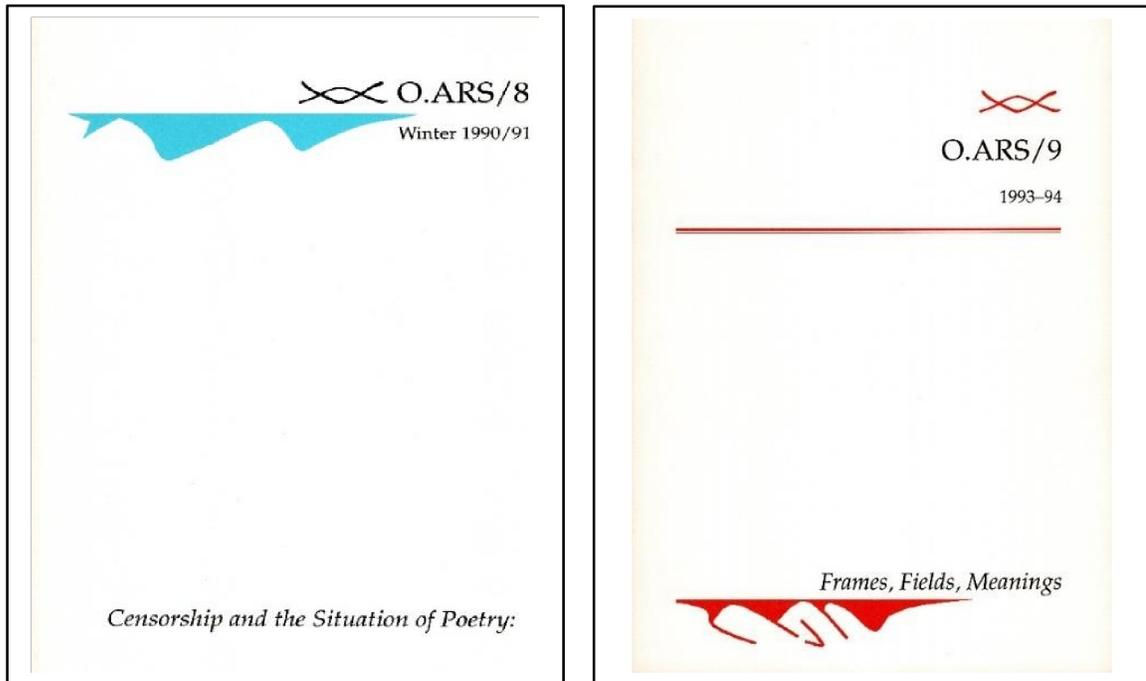
Again, the philosophical *epoché* strikes its amalgamated cord. At about this time, Don was trying to articulate some differences between the Olsonic heritage and language-centered theory. I rejoiced to be able to publish his efforts while also publishing

work by Steve McCaffrey and Larry Price, who chose to make noise for political purposes. “A single spadefoot at the top of his lungs, truth means environmental rape, forced entropy, heigh-ho, heigh-ho, it’s off to work we go,” wrote Bruce Andrews (83). My phenomenological *epoché* had become Disneyfied, as worker-dwarfs march to the mine. How prescient this text!

O.ARS from the first glimmer of its conception saw itself as a series. Each element of each anthology related to others by means of serial logic and rhizomatic processes. Series have their moments of astonishment and of redoubled continuity. Necessarily a series will seek coherence but fail to achieve its goal. A series is often merciless in its open-ended drive towards an invisible goal. Goals wander like stars. But really, the best metaphor is molecules in Brownian flux. O.ARS 8: *Censorship and the Situation of Poetry* takes its root (in the musical sense) from observations like those I felt in Bruce’s work, Ulli Freer’s, and Charley Shively’s—poets who are politically motivated anarchists. Charley was editor of *Fag Rag* along with John Mitzel. His poetry appears in *Voicing*.

Let me not equivocate. “Root” is a grammatical and linguistic concept. It is distinguished from a “rhizome” by Deleuze and Guattari. It is the vertical and I do not exclude it for that reason. Daniel Davidson’s untitled poem displays an uncensored vigor: “doll is you as pretending” (71). James Sherry’s essay “Muslims in Soho” is a monumental exercise in logical exposition. He begins with an examination of the different biases evident in almost all poetries that stake a claim to universal truth. He examines the boundaries of poetry, citing different forms of intrusion. His purpose is, as is often the case in languagecentered writing, “to destroy the cult of the individual.”

I have taught students that individuality at any cost is the rotten corpse of American exceptionalism.



On the cover of O.ARS 8: *Censorship* the gimlet eye runs over the waves like a horse. The image is reversed and driven below the horizon on the cover of O.ARS 9: *Frames, Forms, Meanings*. Mountains and preconscious rivers are visible. O.ARS sought discoveries, sought to consolidate gains. O.ARS wanted new voices able to sweep old voices into the corner; those of Eric Wirth and Andrew Levy were promising. (Eric disappeared. I still correspond with Andrew.) I felt oppressed by some contributors. A distinction between what might be called a lyrical Latin energy, repeating Lorca and Neruda, mercilessly, had emerged to my reading. Cola found a wry humor in the work of Vicente Huidobro and Juan Cameron, whom we featured in O.ARS 8: *Censorship*. Yurkievich's "About this

Painted Dream” and related texts in O.ARS 9: *Frames, Fields Meanings* united for me both avant-garde energies and historicist reconfiguration of tradition. I undertook to review some recent publications related to Dada and photomontage. In the title essay, I reprised my understanding of proprioceptive poetics, examining the relation between frames and the energies that leak from their margins or are fed by nutrient streams originating in the surrounding environment. I have been relentless on the subject of voicing: “poetry, construed as the interplay of forms in space, as fields of words, framing and disrupting tendencies toward meaning, advanced beyond voiced sentiment (whether the tremulous voice, imitating the restraints of handwriting or the turbulent cry of agonized release).” My serial sentences, unable to reach a conclusion, were unprepared for silence. I wrote:

“The voice instead comes to reside in a new sense of interval, a registration of intonation, duration and stress” (92). Add to this Gil Ott’s embedded observations in his “Levels of Address” in *Voicing* and a full reprise of the confluent energies that were O.ARS approaches embodiment. The series had exhausted itself.



## **AMONG THE NEIGHBORS SERIES**

- 1 Poetry in the Making: A Bibliography of Publications by Graduate Students in the Poetics Program, University at Buffalo, 1991-2016  
by James Maynard
- 2 In Search of Blew: An Eventual Index of *Blewointment* Magazine, 1963-1977  
by Gregory Betts
- 3 *TISH*— Another “Sense of Things” by Derek Beaulieu
- 4 *Skanky Possum* Press: A (Personal) Genealogy by Dale Smith
- 5 A Commentary on *El Corno Emplumado/The Plumed Horn*  
by Sergio Mondragón  
translated with an additional commentary  
by Margaret Randall
- 6 A Bibliography of John Bennett’s Vagabond Press,  
1966-2005 by  
Christopher Harter

- 7 Migrating Ears: Kris Hemensley's *The Merri Creek, Or, Nero* and *H/EAR*, with some brief comments on the earlier publications *Our Glass*, *Earth Ship*, and *The Ear in a Wheatfield* by Tim Wright
- 8 Editing *O.ARS*, 1981-1993 by Donald Wellman

*This consciousness within her  
uncurled itself upon the rollers of objective experience  
printing impressions  
vaguely and variedly upon  
Ova  
in place of the more formulate education coming  
naturally  
to the units of a national instigation*

—Mina Loy from "Ova, Among  
the Neighbors"

This new pamphlet series seeks non-academic and academic contributions of 10-30 pages on the subject of little magazines, generally or on specific magazines, published from 1940 onward.

We invite subjects along the lines of:

- case studies of a single little magazine;
- publishing networks in and among little magazines;
- studies of the materiality of small press publications;
  - contexts of association and sociability upon the pages of magazines; and,
- bibliographies, including bibliographies of poets or groups of poets or “schools” among little magazines.

**Please send proposals to the series editor at  
[esmesmer@buffalo.edu](mailto:esmesmer@buffalo.edu)**