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**b e t w e e n t e x t a n d a u d i e n c e :**

**a p a t h t o t h e f u t u r e**

**by allan greenberg**

visible language xx13/4 454 - 418

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**a**lthough it is hardly an impossible task, coming to grips with the audience for a text, a painting, or any other created work is in some ways akin to capturing the snark, or the smile of the Cheshire Cat. There is no doubt about the importance of the audience, whether for the author or artist, on the one hand, or as an intermediary between text and "outside world," on the other. At the same time, focusing on the audience itself, we must look for firm ground to stand on. Were we to focus on the creator, his/her text,

22. André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, by André Breton, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor, 1972), p. 26.
23. See the documentation of the background to the composition of *Howl* in Allen Ginsberg, *Howl*, ed. Barry Miles (New York, 1986), pp. xi-xii, 149-188.
24. Roy F. Allen, *Literary Life in German Expressionism and the Berlin Circles* (Ann Arbor, 1983), pp. 229-250; Timothy O. Benson, "The Functional and the Conventional in the Dada Philosophy of Raoul Hausmann," *Dada/Dimensions*, ed. Stephen C. Foster (Ann Arbor, 1985), pp. 131-163; Stephen C. Foster, "Johannes Baader: The Complete Dada," *Dada/Dimensions* 249-271; Hans J. Kleinschmidt, "Berlin Dada," *Dada Spectrum: The Dialectics of Revolt*, ed. Stephen C. Foster and Rudolf E. Kuenzli (Madison, 1979), pp. 145-174; Karl Riha, *Da Dada da war ist Dada da* (Munich, 1980), pp. 37-64.
25. Filippo Marinetti, "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature," *Selected Writings*, p. 84.
26. Frank O'Hara, "Personism: A Manifesto," *Claims for Poetry*, ed. Donald Hall (Ann Arbor, 1982), p. 306.
27. Jack Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," *Evergreen Review* 2 (1958), pp. 72-73; Jack Kerouac, "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose," *Evergreen Review* 2 (1959), p. 57.
28. Roy F. Allen, *German Expressionist Poetry* (Boston, 1979), pp. 82-85.
29. This "inclusiveness" is the chief characteristic of Post-modernism according to George F. Butterick and Donald Allen. See their preface, *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*, ed. Donald Allen and George F. Butterick (New York, 1982), p. 12.
30. Howard N. Fox, *Avant-Garde in the Eighties* (Los Angeles, 1987), pp. 9-25.

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*Literary Life in German Expressionism and the Berlin Circles* (1983), "Zurich Dada, 1916-1919: The Proto-Phase of the Movement" (1985), and "From Energy to Idea: The origins of Movement in the Event" (1988).

8. Guillaume Apollinaire, "Zone," trans. Louis Simpson, *The Poetry of Surrealism: An Anthology*, ed. Michael Benedikt (Boston, 1974), p. 15.
9. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (San Francisco, 1982), pp. 457-458.
10. William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* (New York, 1963), p. [i].
11. William Butler Yeats, *Autobiographies* (London, 1975), pp. 348-349.
12. Passage cited in Roger Shattuck, *The Banquet Years* (London, 1968), p. 254.
13. Hugo Ball, *Tenderenda der Phantast* (Zurich, 1967), p. 11.
14. Cited in Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Garden City, 1961), p. xix.
15. Tristan Tzara, *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries*, trans. Barbara Wright (London, 1977).
16. Marcel Janco, "Creative Dada," *Dadas on Art*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, 1971), pp. 35-38.
17. Filippo Martinetti, "The New Religion-Morality of Speed," *Selected Writings*, by Marinetti, ed. R.W. Flint, trans. R.W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli (New York, 1972), p. 94.
18. Filippo Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," *Selected Writings*, p. 41.
19. Marinetti, p. 94.
20. Kurt Hiller, "Über Kultur," *Die Weisheit der Langenweile: Eine Zeit- und Streitschrift* (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 49-72.
21. See, e.g., his articles published in 1913 in *Die Aktion*: "Zur Überwindung der kulturellen Krise" (384-387), "Ludwig Rubiners Psychoanalyse" (506-507), "Die Psychoanalyse oder wir Kliniker" (632-634), "Die Einwirkung der Allgemeinheit auf das Individuum" (1091-1095), "Anmerkungen zu einer neuen Ethik" (1141-1143), "Notiz über Beziehungen" (1180-1182).



Sitting on the gas tank of an airplane, my stomach warmed by the pilot's head, I sensed the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A pressing need to liberate words, to drag them out of their prison in the Latin period!<sup>25</sup>

The American poet Frank O'Hara, on the other hand, describes what must have been the experience of many others. As he tells it in his "Personism Manifesto" (1959), his new poetics emerged automatically with the removal of the control held on language by the old faith:

I don't believe in god, so I don't have to make elaborately sounded structures.  
I hate Vachel Lindsay, always have, I don't even like rhythm, assonance, all that stuff. You just go on your nerve.<sup>26</sup>

Whatever the initial impulse, experimentation with non-traditional means of expression, one of the most conspicuous features of the twentieth century avant-garde, has given rise to a whole new canon of techniques and styles.

The real essence of the avant-garde is not to be found in any one approach to reality or artistic expression, but rather in its openness to, or inclusiveness of, all possible approaches. The avant-garde has been consistent in its effort to avoid restrictions of any sort on living, thinking, feeling, writing, painting, composing: in other words, it has insisted on the total freedom to create without laws or rules. In the course of its development the avant-garde has, of course, developed a tradition, a repertoire, of its own as it has cast off older ones. The new avant-garde tradition, however, is not a fixed one; it has become in increasing measure a fluid complex of almost limitless possibilities available to the free choice of the individual artist for in-

unique; more typical is identification with socialism or communism. German Expressionism included in its ranks some of the most dedicated followers of Marxist and socialist ideas, particularly in the circle around Franz Pfemfert and his journal *Die Aktion*. Also, large numbers of Expressionists played key roles in left-wing forces during the 1918/1919 revolution in Germany. Even Dada, whose dominant negativism and stress on alogical forms of artistic expression made it scarcely compatible with any organized political program, was induced to align itself with the communists when it moved to Berlin just as the November Revolution was being organized.<sup>24</sup> While avant-garde artists have not always shown clear sympathy with organized political movements (and perhaps more typically are inclined almost by nature to the kind of anarchism that underlies the exuberant hedonism of Kerouac's 1957 novel *On the Road*), they have with rare exceptions, managed to make clear their antipathy to capitalism and its role in industry and commerce throughout the world. Again, however, such criticism is generally expressed so playfully (as it is very often in the poetry of the Beats and always in the verse of E.E. Cummings, where it is scattered amongst his celebrations of love and joy) as to render its potential for reform innocuous.

Olson wrote in his projectivist manifesto that the stance described in these pages gave rise to a new poetics. For artists like Marinetti they purportedly came from a conscious effort to find a means of artistic expression more consonant with a new world. He reports in his "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (May 11, 1912):

ner — actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.<sup>22</sup>

He follows this stylistic application of Freudian theory with an explanation of Surrealism as philosophy. Breton's contention is that by substituting the expression of the "superior reality" of the inner workings of the human psyche, for all other approaches to life (and the knowledge gained thereby), he would solve all of life's problems. This concept is, in simplest terms, the one which forms the basis of therapy in Freudian psychiatry. By expressing his innermost psychic states, in particular those revealed so ingeniously in dreams (such as represented in the canvases of Giorgio di Chirico and René Magritte or in the poetry of Breton and Paul Eluard) the individual will be better reconciled with the conflicting forces within himself and thereby with his external environment. Similar applications of Freudian theory, most of them directly influenced by Surrealism, permeate the avant-garde in subsequent years. Most conspicuous and recent of these successors is the literature of the Beat movement, in which the related theory of "spontaneity" in composition is developed and experimented with in a similar attempt to extract, from the mind, the most profound truths about life.<sup>23</sup>

The more practical approach, the reform of contemporary life through participation in political movements, has also been a long-standing tradition for the avant-garde, even though such participation has most often been less than fully committed. The endorsement of fascism by Futurism and Pound is

ance to deeper insight into the inner workings of human character. This was soon provided by a young Austrian free spirit and ex-student of Freud by the name of Otto Gross. Gross, who was developing a program for the reharmonization of life through total sexual liberation, joined the Expressionist camp just before the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>21</sup> He published these ideas in the movement's journals and explained them at length at its social gatherings. Although quickly attracting a large following, Gross' interpretation of Freudian theory was clearly very narrow. Furthermore, the appearance of his ideas in publications with very limited circulation and life, restricted his impact on the avant-garde.

No strain of the avant-garde has yet surpassed James Joyce's broad analysis of the psyche of one individual, encompassing not only its basic intrinsic facets, but also its decisive extrinsic conditioning. Executed in *Ulysses* (1914-1921), Joyce's work was a model in practice, but a forbidding one in length; it was also very slow in reaching an international audience as it was only gradually published in increasingly larger editions and in translation. Surrealism, on the other hand, made Freudian theory the basis for its central program, circulated it widely in easily digested form, and quickly gave it artistic expression. The movement's leader, André Breton, defined the concept of Surrealism — dictionary style — in his 1924 manifesto:

surrealism, n. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express — verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other man-

that he adopt fully the new "style" of life which they represent. According to Hiller, this feat is only possible if the individual (especially the thinking, educated individual — i.e., the intellectual or *litteratus*) temper with emotion the dictates of reason, which urge him to attempt to understand everything rationally, and thus integrate himself into the new environment instinctually rather than consciously. Hiller's point is simply that because the new world is too complicated and diverse to be grasped by one mind we must give up hope of understanding it all and adjust to it unconsciously, as we would more easily have done had this world evolved more slowly.

Art in periods of heightened sensitivity to the human condition (e.g., Elizabethan England, German Storm and Stress, Romanticism) has always been able to delve deeply into the inner workings of the human psyche. Publications of studies, early in this century, relating to the discovery of the subconscious, seemed to offer hope of a source of a new, more essentially humane set of guiding principles for some strains of the avant-garde. The later Freudian tendency to look inside human character was already inherent to vitalism as was license to fuller appreciation of sensate, including sexual, experience. Thus, the influences of Nietzsche and Freud complement each other so fully that it is difficult to separate them.

In its earliest stage (1910-1914), German Expressionism concentrated on interior states, largely by suggesting them indirectly through the use of startling, allogical imagery and the depiction of irrational actions. But such techniques remained superficial. At this stage, the movement clearly lacked guid-

The Futurists' break with classical canons of aesthetics had to be a simultaneous break with its stance on reality. Thus, in a subsequent manifesto (May 11, 1916), Marinetti wrote the necrology of Christian morality as he again elaborated on the new:

Following dynamic art, the new religion-morality of speed is born this Futurist year from our great liberating war. Christian morality served to develop man's inner life. Today it has lost its reason for existing, because it has been emptied of all divinity.<sup>19</sup>

Several German Expressionist groups — such as the circles around the journal *Der Sturm* (cat. #s 11-13), Alfred Richard Meyer's publishing ventures, the journals *Pan and Die Dichtung* — supported an interpretation of vitalism developed by Kurt Hiller and other members of "Der Neue Club" in Berlin. In the same year in which Marinetti's first manifesto of Futurism appeared, Hiller wrote an essay "On Culture" (1909) in which he also proposes a solution to modern existential alienation. In Hiller's mind, the problem is experienced most acutely by the contemporary urbanite who has to come to terms with the new metropolises. Because this experience is so differentiated and refined, the urbanite finds that tradition can no longer help him to either cope with what this new life requires of him or to take advantage of its opportunities.<sup>20</sup> Much like Marinetti's embrace of the beauty of speed as the new essence of the modern world, what Hiller advocates is that the individual not attempt the impossible task of participating in the full range of experiences available, but rather

tiques of most all human endeavors by Tristan Tzara's "Monsieur AA Antiphilosopher," is well-known.<sup>15</sup> Marcel Janco, who attempted to mitigate this repu-

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the thesis of the old and the antithesis of the new into more constructive alternative approaches to life; attempts that, more often than not, are reformulations of Nietzschean vitalism. Thus, the Futurists expressed a desire to embrace, and infuse their art with, what their leader, Marinetti, called "the beauty of speed." For much of the middle class of his time, the older conception of art was best manifested in the post-classical Greek sculpture, "Victory of Samothrace," standing — not coincidentally, of course — in the Louvre Museum in the very same city in which this first Futurist manifesto (cat. # 1) appeared on February 20, 1909:

We say that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty; the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath — a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot — is more beautiful than the *Victory of Samothrace*.<sup>18</sup>

one vapid daily affair to another; in *The Waste Land* it is suggested by the desolation and sterility of the land it depicts and the impotency of the king who rules it.

The “theater of the absurd” reinterpreted “Jarry-style” nihilism for post-World War II Western audiences. Ionesco defined the concept of the absurd as used by his movement in an essay on Franz Kafka (1957):

Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless.<sup>14</sup>

Samuel Beckett gave the concept its classical expression in dramatic form in *Waiting for Godot* (1952), a work whose image of the world’s spiritual abandonment approaches Eliot’s in *The Waste Land* in its starkness. The absurdity of existence is the very substance of the action here: as the play’s title suggests, the characters simply wait; they wait for salvation by some higher power or being; it becomes clear, however, that it will never arrive. Waiting postpones; here it indefinitely postpones life itself and the final definition of its purpose. Hope thus becomes a concept maintained by fools. Even sexuality, the last desperate alternative for many adherents of the avant-garde, has no attraction. Life is utter boredom. Having been confronted with the emptiness of the dialog, the senselessness of the action, the barrenness of the stage throughout, we think in the end of the gaunt stick figures, who stand in isolation on a desolate plane in some of the sculptures of the Swiss Surrealist Alberto Giacometti.

The negativism of Dada in Zurich and Paris, epitomized in the cynical cri-

mind such as Yeats', with very deep roots in the older world, it was a very disturbing realization:

Feeling bound to support the most spirited party, we have shouted for the play, but that night at the Hotel Corneille I am very sad, for comedy, objectivity, has displayed its growing power once more. I say, after S. Mallarmé, after Verlaine, after G. Moreau, after Puvis de Chavannes, after our own verse, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the Savage God.<sup>11</sup>

As the new century dawned, the future spokesman of the Cubists, Apollinaire, put a similar appraisal of contemporary mankind in the mouth of Dr. Cornelius Hans Peter in his novel *Que Faire?* (1900).<sup>12</sup> The Zurich Dadaist, Hugo Ball, implied the death of the old God of Christianity in heralding the impending arrival of a "new god" at the very beginning of his prose fantasy *Tenderenda der Phantast* (1914-1920).<sup>13</sup> The Russian Suprematist, Kazimir Malevich, makes the equivalent statement more subtly by simply hanging his scandalous "Black Square" abstract (1915) in the upper corner of one of the rooms at the "0-10" exhibition in Petrograd in 1915, i.e., in the very spot normally reserved in Russian homes of the time for the family icon. Both poems by Eliot referred to earlier in the context of fragmentation of perspective not only represent the phenomenon structurally and thematically, but also point to its source, namely, the loss of clear direction or meaning in life once provided by an abiding faith. In "Prufrock," this idea is implied in the titular figure's appeals to his readers for guidance which punctuate the poem as he drifts from

gested his approach (its radical mutability) had already, in the course of only one decade, made his work anachronous:

[since completing *Paterson, Four* I have come to understand not only that many changes have occurred in me and the world, but I have been forced to recognize that there can be no end to such a story I have envisioned with the terms which I had laid down for myself. I had to take the world of *Paterson* into a new dimension if I wanted to give it imaginative validity. Yet I wanted to keep it whole, as it is to me. As I mulled the thing over in my mind the composition began to assume a form which you see in the present poem, keeping, I fondly hope, a unity directly continuous with the *Paterson* of *Pat. 1* to *4*. Let's hope I have succeeded in doing so.<sup>10</sup>

All avant-garde artists in our century have followed Nietzsche's lead in adopting a nihilistic assessment of the status quo, focusing, as he did, on the failures of hypernationalism and hypermaterialism to provide mankind with a meaningful existence. One of the earliest of such critics is the French dramatist and novelist Alfred Jarry, often considered to be a forerunner of the Surrealists. His play *Ubu roi* (1896) is a mercilessly derisive satire of the ruling class' cupidity, hypocrisy, pompous vanity, and flagrant misuses of authority under the license of reason. Both the severity of its criticism and the hopelessness of the human portrait it presents prompted the realization in William Butler Yeats, who was present at the premiere of the revival of the play at the Théâtre de L'Oeuvre in Paris in 1908, that the work had been created by a mind rooted in the godless world of Nietzsche. As he suggests in his report of the night, for a

*Cantos* (1917-1972), set his readers completely adrift in their search for meanings beyond those enclosed separately within each canto. Pound himself knew in the end that he had failed. He admitted to friends in a conversation in Venice, Italy, during his last years, that his attempt to write the great epic poem of our times had been defeated by its own basic structural principle:

...Cory brought up the subject of the cantos and the conflicting opinions they had aroused. Pound intervened firmly, describing the work as 'a botch.' And when Cory persisted, 'You mean it didn't come off?' the poet replied: 'Of course it didn't.' He then went on to describe a shop window full of various objects: 'I picked out this and that thing that interested me, and then jumbled them into a bag. But that's not the way,' he said, 'to make' — and here he paused— 'a *work of art*.'<sup>9</sup>

Olson in the three volumes of his *Maximus Poems* (1960-1975) and William Carlos Williams in the five books of his *Paterson* (1946-1958) managed to attenuate the effect of incohesion by concentrating on one place — Olson on Gloucester, Massachusetts, and Williams on Paterson, New Jersey — and by in-  
jecting their works with bits of autobiography at carefully spaced intervals. Their purported attempt was to render the totality of human experience through the record of one human settlement with a substantial past and a fully contemporary present. Still there were problems; the most insurmountable one was the essential endlessness or open-endedness of the story they had set out to tell. Williams described this problem in a letter to his publisher regarding the final book of his epic, confessing that the very nature of the world that had sug-

Georges Braque or the portraits of models by Pablo Picasso, Cubist canvases reveal a much more encompassing perception of reality than do those of the Realists or Impressionists. The same principle informs Guillaume Apollinaire's classically Cubist poem "Zone" (1912), in which the poet, surveying his contemporary Paris from the personified perspective of the Eiffel Tower, boldly counterposes the remnants of the old world in the city (e.g., Christianity, neo-classical architecture) with the noisy and gaudy ingredients of the new (e.g., poster advertisements, business managers and typists, automobiles and airplanes). In his final lines, instead of the strained reconciliation that more conventional verse might have offered, the poet leaves the reader with a brief glimpse of the great diversity of the world, as he superimposes our image of Christ on that of the "fetish-gods of Oceana Guinea."<sup>8</sup>

Some artists seemed so overwhelmed by the loss of traditional center that they could only register the fragmentation of experience that resulted. This was the case with the early T.S. Eliot, most notably in his poems "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) and *The Waste Land* (1922). In both works, the disjointedness of the images ("Prufrock") and the parts (*The Waste Land*) corresponds to the fragmentation of modern urban existence. Eliot tried to provide some artistic cohesion to the latter work by using certain unifying mythological symbols, poetic juxtapositions, simultaneity, and literary quotation or parody. These devices worked reasonably well in a short poem. However, Ezra Pound's refusal to introduce order into his groupings of discrete shards of human history, which he chronicled and with which he composed his voluminous

him responsible self-determination by reintegrating his emotional life, of which rationalized Christianity had robbed him, into his intellectual life. An emotional life is no longer condemned, as it had been by the old morality, as purely destructive; the intellect is no longer glorified, as it had been by the old philosophy, as exclusively constructive; both the structuring force of reason and the gratifying force of emotion assume roles of equal validity and importance now.<sup>7</sup>

For the avant-garde movements that began appearing shortly after Nietzsche's death in 1900, his alternative approach to modern reality was, if not always the final answer, at least a model of courageous defiance. One of the problems addressed earliest by these movements was that of the sheer,

overwhelming complexity of the new environment which had been created by advanced industry and technology and which the old rationalism could no longer satisfactorily structure for the individual. The Cubists in France sought to gain control over the new reality by making its complexity the compositional principle of their art. They

rejected the harmonious portraits of their predecessors and conventional contemporaries as the products of a vision which, by specious excerpting, cheats the audience of a sense of the unintegrated totality. They chose instead to represent reality more faithfully by juxtaposing or superimposing all of its disparate facets on one single plane or in one single text. Whether in the reproduction of cityscapes by Robert Delaunay, in the still lifes by

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the environment, it soon became clear that the old approaches no longer worked, i.e., they no longer helped the individual either to understand or to cope efficiently with what had become an almost totally transformed world. The result was an acute sense of alienation. William Barrett writes in his study of existentialism, which itself became one of the proposed alternative approaches to this new world:

By the middle of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, the problem of man had begun to dawn on certain minds in a new and more radical form: Man, it was seen, is a stranger to himself and must discover, or rediscover, who he is and what his meaning is.<sup>5</sup>

Sören Kierkegaard advocated at the onset of these developments a revitalization of the religious center of the self. But Kierkegaard's approach required a return to a form of Christianity that antedated even the Middle Ages; its lack of contemporaneity with an inexorable present meant it could be no lasting solution. The crisis intensified as the century progressed, until Friedrich Nietzsche, repelled by the moral vacuity and narrow interests fostered by the hypermaterialism and hypernationalism of his epoch, issued his devastating, yet inevitable, declaration of the death of God.<sup>6</sup> His was a stance that seemed to most who read him much more congruent with the new reality than simple revisions of the old order. Moreover, while his view was nihilistic in opposition to the old, it was not a dead-end: he offered a way out through a vitalistic approach to existence. Nietzsche's vitalism frees the individual from all external authorities and grants

objects of nature. All of these objects, when compared with one another by the Objectist, are judged to be of equal value; human beings, furthermore, are found to be endowed with no lesser, but also no greater, qualities (e.g., a soul) than are any other of the objects which cohabit the Earth.

As Olson himself is very much aware<sup>4</sup>, his Objectism program rides in the wake of many equivalent statements which were issued under other rubrics at the beginning of our era and have since initiated a whole series of artistic movements; we are used to designating them all as "avant-garde"; Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, Suprematism, Constructivism, Surrealism, et al. Most broadly put, such statements represent a break with the rationalized version of Judeo-Christian theology which had developed in the early part of the 18th century and had provided the middle class with the basis for its positivist-materialist view of reality that was eventually to make it the dominant class in Western society. As this new posture in the dialectical process of history was imposed on reality, it naturally altered the human environment that had been created by its ideological predecessor. It thereby paved the way for its own crises and a break with its own tradition as it produced the need for yet another new approach to reality. The changes which led to the crises have been well-documented by historians. They developed in the course of the 19th century, reaching their height around the turn into the next: the industrial revolution, the movements for greater political freedoms and labor benefits which it engendered, the appearance of the metropolises, imperialism, increasingly sophisticated technological advances, etc. In the face of these dramatic alterations of

state of things in their respective eras. But because their times were less turbulent, and the changes the times wrought in art, therefore, less dramatic, their interpreters have felt less need to acknowledge in their work what is really, as Miller suggests, the accomplishment of all artists.

As social beings, our approach to our endeavors is necessarily determined by our orientation to reality. We acquire this orientation from our surroundings; it is the most decisive conditioning of our times. In our century, the radical changes in art begin with corresponding changes in attitudes toward the world. The American post modernist Charles Olson explains these changes in typical avant-garde fashion in his 1950 manifesto "Projective Verse."<sup>2</sup> He proposes here a series of theoretical dicta for a new poetics of open verse; he stresses, however, that they did not develop in a cultural vacuum, but derived from a "new stance toward reality":

I want to do two things: first, to try to show what projective or OPEN verse is, what it involves, in its act of composition, how, in distinction from the non-projective, it is accomplished; and second, suggest a few ideas about what stance toward reality brings such verse into being, what that stance does, both to the poet and to his reader.<sup>3</sup>

This new stance involves reconsidering the individual's position relative to other elements which constitute his surroundings. Olson calls the reevaluation "Objectism" because it removes the individual from the center of focus in our world, from the position of priority and preference which he has enjoyed for centuries, and repositions him as merely one among many other