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ARTICLE

Poetry as Political Response: The War Machine in William Rowe's *Nation*

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In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism & Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari pose the question: 'Problem II: Is there a way to extricate thought from the State model?' in relation to war machine of Nomadology that they propose (that which exists outside of the State as mechanisms of resistance). This is also a question that William Rowe's poetry of resistance in his collection, *Nation*, raises and attempts to address. This article examines ways in which Rowe's innovative poetry, in the context of revolution and resistance, provides a nexus for thinking through the space of the language of change. In this book, Rowe seeks to expose, undermine, reposition and remake the language formulations of imposed, orchestrated and co-opted oppositional stances that the State, and the organs of the State (military, police, finance, justice, politics, religion), foster and reformulate into its own managed space. It proposes a poetic war machine of 'response'. I examine the strategies of resistance that this text brings into being and offers to the reader, both in relation to its own poetic action and to that of other innovative poetries. In so doing, I demonstrate the poetic war machine and its shifting, variable intermezzo spaces as a mode of resisting not just languages and strategies of control, but also the very processes of co-optation that these employ in stealing and negating the spaces of resistance and revolution from the language of the populace and of poetry.

Keywords: William Rowe; Deleuze and Guattari; revolution; resistance; intermezzo; war machine; Sean Bonney; social antagonism; Valentin Voloshinov; Ernesto Laclau; Walter Benjamin; Edmund Husserl

Poetry in the context of revolution and resistance provides a nexus for thinking through the language of change and the spaces in which this remains viable. The post-2010 work of younger poets involved in the student movement, ecological protest and other activist positions can be said to signal a re-politicisation of the innovative tradition in Britain. However, there is competition for this language and

the spaces within which it operates. Recent (and current) political and financial pacts' efforts to annex the language and spaces of opposition, such as that evident in the actions of the Troika (European Commission, International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank) in relation to the 'austerity' agenda in Greece, Ireland, Spain and Portugal ongoing from 2010 is a specifically relevant example, as Žižek,¹ Khan² and Fazi³ point out. The hugely contested Brexit scenario is another. These annexing mechanisms now compete with contemporary poets for the sites (language and spaces) of resistance. William Rowe's *Nation*⁴ challenges this attempted annexation by exposing and repositioning the ways organs of State impose language formulations on these sites of resistance. *Nation* does so by proposing a poetic war machine of 'response'.

For decades, Rowe has been a pivotal figure in UK innovative poetry. Based initially in King's College London and having taught in various universities in Latin America he was associated with the Mottram wing of the British Poetry Revival (Eric Mottram, Jeff Nuttall, Allen Fisher, Bill Griffiths, Barry McSweeney and others). In 2001, he founded the Contemporary Poetics Research Centre (CPRC), a major hub for UK and international innovative poetries, at Birkbeck College, where he remains Emeritus Professor of Poetics. He set up the Rockdrill CD recording series and co-founded Veer Books in 2003, as well as the new Veer2 imprint in 2020. He has been, and remains, a driving force in facilitating radical and unconforming work in poetry, especially that of younger writers. His work with activist groups continues to connect his poetics to the newest generation of radical innovative writers. His work as a scholar and expert in Latin American literature and culture and as translator is world-renowned. His acclaimed translations of the work of numerous Latin American poets include Raúl Zurita's *INRI*⁵ and the extraordinary translation of Cesar Vallejo's *Trilce*, soon to be published by Crater Press. He wrote a study of Lee Harwood, Chris Torraine, and Barry MacSweeney, *Three Lyric Poets*,⁶ and edited *The Salt Companion to Bill Griffiths*.⁷ His own poetry collections include *Working the Signs*,⁸ *The Earth Has Been Destroyed*,⁹ *Nation* and *Incisions*.¹⁰ Critical attention for Rowe's work is long overdue, and is especially welcome given the recent publication of his *Collected Poems*.¹¹

Rowe has been instrumental in organising a series of events connecting poetry to political resistance in recent years, such as the Poetry and Revolution Conference (2012) and the Militant Politics and Poetry Symposium (2013), both at Birkbeck College. He currently mainly lives in Athens, Greece where he is connected with anarchist and other activist groups fighting narratives of austerity and political disenfranchisement. His recent poetry, including *Nation*, comes from this context of engagement with politics and revolution.

'by entering the event': languages of resistance and co-optation

The poems in *Nation*, arising in times of multiple crises, are particularly relevant now, given the proliferation of violences and injustices that contravene human rights and individual liberties. Among the concerns of these poems is how to respond to the language of not just the State intent on individual and social capitulation, but also that of the poetic space of resistance to this. How can poetry manage the (re) use of oppositional languages of violence without running the risk of reinforcing the State's assimilation of this language? Rowe's 'found event' reflects on just how interwoven these two languages are:

by entering the event
you give your express consent
for your actual or simulated likeness
to be included in any and all media
for any purpose at any time
this includes filming by the police¹²

The poem's central theme concerns this very absorption and reuse of poetic responses of resistance into the languages of control, each slipping so obliquely into the other that the boundaries are constantly shifting. For example, the rhyming of 'event' and 'consent', which jars on me, attempts to draw the poem into the space of conditioned language – the event as 'reported' – but the (re)use of the legally formulated

language that follows unexpectedly undoes this. The poem thus subtly shifts the ground under the language of both control and resistance. The last line brings us to the point of ineffective standoff that the State produces in response to the dialectics of protest and the protested; a way through this needs to be found. The poem asks how protest can be reimaged when it is reduced to pre-fabricated, State-approved (policed) responses that act as a social pressure valve regulating unrest rather than as a mode of effectuating social change. Rowe's poetry, holding the pistons of this machinery stationary, asks us starkly: how do we recuperate or co-opt the co-optation by the State of our own resistances? In other words, to what extent can poetry serve as a mode of resistance to social control, as a war machine that challenges the annexation of the space and language of change by the organs of State?

The work of Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze has been an important influence on many of the 1970s generation of poets that Rowe is associated with, as Ian Davidson¹³ and others have identified. Allen Fisher and Pierre Joris, for example, have both engaged with the concepts of nomadism and multiplicity, which I'll return to later in this essay. A remarkable characteristic of Rowe's poetry is its combination of a vital immediacy of language with highly articulate philosophical and critical thinking. It is significant that, alongside that of Marx, he notes the work of Deleuze and Guattari as amongst the philosophical-political influences on his work. On language, he says that 'their anti-structuralist insistence on how language is articulated from the outside, and that the idea of an autonomous inherent code is wrong'¹⁴ is of particular importance. He also describes his sense of rhythm in poetry as coming 'from Deleuze's book of readings from Bergson, i.e. that what comes first is intensive, non-codified rhythm, which is not just internal to the poem but also receives impulses from the outside'.¹⁵ This sense of an articulation from the outside that engages the operations of the poems is particularly relevant to the war machine of poetic resistance that *Nation* proposes. This war machine engages with and creates constantly or frequently shifting, multi-routed intermezzo spaces that effectuate resistance in different ways at different times. I will show how he uses multiple approaches to critique the interactions of languages of control and resistance in bringing about just this shifting intermezzo character that is so crucial to his poetry's resistive action.

Other critics, scholars, and thinkers in the UK innovative poetry tradition have also returned to Deleuze and Guattari in recent years, such as Davidson, Shamsad Mortuza, Elizabeth-Jane Burnett, Juha Virtanen and most noticeably, Jon Clay. In his book *Sensation, Contemporary Poetry and Deleuze: Transformative Intensities*,¹⁶ for example, Clay presents a direct focus on innovative poetics through the lens of Deleuzian philosophy. His discussion of a range of innovative poetics makes the case for the (largely positive) deterritorialising¹⁷ action connected to the disruptive and defamiliarising function of this work in relation to the production of sensation.¹⁸ He does not directly address the war machine of resistance in innovative poetry that I am concerned with here, although his discussion of resistance to reterritorialisation does have some connection, albeit with a different emphasis. While he refers to ways in which aspects of innovative poetic technique can 'prevent a reader from settling on a reterritorialization',¹⁹ he examines this primarily in the context of sensation versus meaning in poetry.²⁰ Similarly, he identifies ways in which innovative poetics' deterritorialisations can resist assimilation into normative political and cultural spaces,²¹ but does not extend his focus to the ways in which innovative poetics resist the assimilative action itself (in response to attempts to co-optate these very resistance strategies that Clay's study identifies).

'dawn in dawn light': poetry as war machine

In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari ask if there is a way 'to extricate thought from the State model' in their 'Treatise on Nomadology – The War Machine'.²² They broadly define the war machine as that which exists outside of the State as mechanisms of resistance, i.e. the assemblage of nomads, or indeed nomadic strategies, that serve as a mode of resistance to social control. Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc, in *State and Politics: Deleuze and Guattari on Marx* says of war machine that:

the term, or at least the concept [...] was introduced as early as 1973 to express the 'direct political problem' of the day: the invention of modes of organization of revolutionary forces that would not model their 'party'

on the form of a state organ, which would not imitate the 'self-supposing' organization of an apparatus of capture.²³

Within this context, 'an "ideological," scientific, or artistic movement can be a potential war machine, to the extent to which it draws, in relation to a phylum, a plane of consistency, a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement'.²⁴ This is exactly what Rowe's poetry offers us – a creative line of flight, a smooth space of displacement, that effectively provides a poetic resistance to the assimilation of its uses of language into strategies of control. It does so by exposing and repositioning the language formulations of imposed and orchestrated oppositional stances that the State, and the organs of the State (military, police, finance, justice, politics, religion), foster and reintegrate into its own managed space.

American poet and theorist Erica Hunt offers an insightful analysis of this process of co-optation, showing how the dominant modes of discourse – 'the language of ordinary life or of rationality, of moral management, of the science of the state, the hectoring threats of the press and media' – create conventions and labels that bind and organise us. She identifies complex, often invisible and contradictory effects: 'these languages contain us, and we are simultaneously bearers of the codes of containment'.²⁵ She defines co-optation as 'the re-inscription by dominant discourse on conceptual advances made by oppositional groups into the terms, values and structures of dominant ideology',²⁶ and goes on to define this in terms of literary production:

Literary co-optation generally doesn't require a police, the economics of literary production usually effect sufficient control. [...] Moreover, literature in this culture appears a fragmented professional speciality; oppositional writing tends to be the object of the practices it protests, its social demands illegible in print.²⁷

In unpacking the 'seemingly paradoxical concept of language at work' that he identifies to the British reader of Language poetics in the 1970s and '80s with regard to communities, Peter Middleton proposes approaching this work as:

advocating a poetics of resistance to instrumental uses of the medium of language, which will produce poems that outflank the market and help create new communities of readers and writers, capable of then moving into the political sphere. Poems can recover lost ethical potentials in language itself.²⁸

With control of language, and indeed poetic language, thus realised as a weaponised form of engagement between the State and the individual, resisting this co-optative action remains an imperative of contemporary poetics of resistance.

In June 2015, I attended the Paros Translation Symposium in Athens where the discussions around the violence and economic oppression underlying the austerity agenda in Greece at the time proved instructive. The poet and translator Siarita Kouka suggested that poetry's best response to this was one of disengagement with the political. The assaults on the individual, the family and community that this agenda facilitates, she argued, required poetry's retreat into protectivity, into hiding, devolving instead a recording or safeguarding role for itself, and for community. It is certainly a strategy, but not one that Rowe, also present at the symposium, agreed with. The present political, social and economic climate is not that of 2015 Greece, but Rowe's poetry gives us a way to think about the inadequacies of this idea, and its possibilities. *Nation* attempts to undo the bleak reality of literary co-optation that Hunt identifies in its use of, and response to, political space and language, concerning itself with precisely the resistance to instrumental uses of language and the out-flanking of the market that Middleton suggests. In so doing, Rowe's poetry serves as an effective illustration of how the contemporary poetic war machine opens avenues to us for reclaiming the spaces and language of change today. Crucial to this is the collection's engagement with ideology.

The political as methodology and as subject matter is certainly central amongst the concerns of *Nation*. Uwe Klawitter and Claus-Ulrich Viol, in their *Contemporary Political Poetry in Britain and Ireland*, refer to the 'concerted use of poetic means ... [by which political poetry] foregrounds textual, thematic and purposive aspects, acknowledging the importance of the relationship between text and context'.²⁹ Rowe's version of this is characteristically complex in that *Nation* seeks to expose the operation

of ideology in utterance (and reference itself) because the very place from which any statement is uttered is inflected by social division; there is no neutral language. Valentin Voloshinov's idea of 'accent' in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* is of particular relevance here, where he proposes that the accent of social position permeates all discourse. He thus argues that all discourse is ideological, stating that:

only that which has acquired social value can enter the world of ideology, take shape, and establish itself there [...] An ideological theme is always socially accentuated. Of course, all the social accents of ideological themes make their way also into the individual consciousness (which, as we know, is ideological through and through) and there take on the semblance of individual accents, since the individual consciousness assimilated them as its own. However, the source of these accents is not the individual consciousness. Accent, as such, is inter-individual (my emphasis).³⁰

By accent, Voloshinov means tone or intonation and refers to the way the voice valorises what is said by speakers in terms of social position and power. It is through accent that the real meaning comes through; that what is said is positioned in relation to the (social) outside. Antagonistic social accents permeate and excavate the ideologies underpinning political and social language in *Nation*, from the language of corporations and consumerism to that of the public sector and of government, and indeed that of discourses of resistance themselves.

The struggle of antagonistic languages in *Nation* recalls Ernesto Laclau's concept of social antagonism. He says that:

The ideological would consist of those discursive forms through which a society tries to institute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning, of the non-recognition of the infinite play of differences. The ideological would be the will to 'totality' of any totalizing discourse. And insofar as the social is impossible without some fixation of meaning, without the discourse of closure, the ideological must be seen as constitutive of the social.³¹

Laclau's view is that the very ground of the social is antagonism, and there are no positive terms, or positive ('full') identities, a notion of ideology that departs from Voloshinov's. For Laclau, ideology consists of the denial of social antagonism, thereby creating the illusion that 'we' all share the same meanings. Ideology, then, does not consist of a distortion by political interests of what is really there, but rather of the supposition that the social consists of a set of relations between identities. He thus argues that:

Antagonism, far from being an objective relation, is a relation wherein the limits of every objectivity are shown – in the sense in which Wittgenstein used to say that 'what cannot be said can be shown'. But if [...] the social only exists as a partial effort for constructing society – that is, an objective and closed system of differences – antagonism, as a witness of the impossibility of a final suture, is the 'experience' of the limit of the social. Strictly speaking, antagonisms are not internal but external to society; or rather, they constitute the limits of society, the latter's impossibility of fully constituting itself.³²

Rowe's titling of the collection 'Nation' (rather than 'State') suggests an engagement not just with power structures of social organisation, but also with the way we reify these and imbue them with a (pre)fabricated identity that reflects both the desire for exclusion and for collectivity. The nation that these poems respond to is both a specific fantasy of identity, rooted in twenty-first century revivals of ethno-nationalism, the invented territory of capital, and also the place where most people feel they live. *Nation* defies the notion of shared meanings as a mode of critically engaging with opposition and resistance, invoking precisely the social antagonisms that define and challenge the limits of the social as a discourse within which to contain poetics. It does so by proposing not a middle way between violence as political response and poetic abstention, but rather, just as there is a constant shifting, co-opting and consuming of narratives in capitalism's incorporations of its oppositions, so poetry too 'as response' needs to shift its ground, its approaches, its activity. Rowe's *Nation* suggests how this can be accomplished.

'punching holes in the name of things': poetic intermezzo

When discussing the conditions of the war machine, Deleuze and Guattari make the case that 'the nomad has a territory'. More specifically, they argue that:

every point [for the nomad] is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the Nomad is the intermezzo.³³

It is in this conception of the intermezzo that I see the core proposition of Rowe's poetry where the nomadic intermezzo serves as a metaphor for a war machine of poetic resistance. It offers a way to resist appropriation and re-appropriation by the systems of control it seeks to address.

Pierre Joris has already convincingly conceptualised a nomadic poetics in relation to innovative poetry, and his writings on this are useful when looking at the application of the Deleuze and Guattarian notions of nomadism and intermezzo spaces to Rowe's poetry. Joris suggests that 'both poet and poetry inhabit & share a condition one could call 'betweenness', an active – not to say activist – process of rhizomatic writing'³⁴ that clearly connects to the notion of the intermezzo. This Jorisean nomadic poetics, however, is a somewhat different proposition than the one I'm suggesting here for Rowe's realisation of these ideas in his work. Rowe sometime moves his poetic language into the very registers or 'range of traditional constraints'³⁵ from which Joris' conception of nomad poetics seeks to liberate the text. In these poems he is sometimes reflecting them back onto, or into, their own discourses, sometimes masquerading, sometimes undercutting, sometimes dislocating. Allen Fisher identifies a *multiplicity* in the nomadic that Joris describes that is, I think, of specific significance to this analysis:

The nomadic poetic thus is not a matter of taking a route through, but a number of routes, not necessarily in the horizontal direction [...] There is a constant or frequent shifting here, out on a limb to check an unknown route as well as back into his own space of word sound association.³⁶

The 'constant or frequent shifting' outward and inward in relation to not one route but many is a useful analogy (although my emphasis is not that of Fisher's focus on boundary in his examination). Rowe's poetry engages with and creates intermezzo spaces of resistance that are constantly or frequently shifting, multi-routed things. He uses multiple approaches (routes) to critique the interactions of languages of control and resistance, and thus to engender precisely the shifting character of the intermezzo that is so crucial to his poetry's resistive action. A poem that embodies the notion of multiple shifting routes of resistance is the title poem of the book, 'nation':

the stars grim on their black stalks
all of them polar opposites is
corporate synthesis

impunity
layer upon layer

is our alphabet
dead radio voices
in the sun

I am seeing something else.
irrefutable insect survival
secret endless food

it's empty mate

the body is
being dead
had fallen out of words

[...]

sterile zone
peripheral buffer

it's the year
of the Olympics³⁷

In this opening poem, the propaganda of the Olympics has emptied out the nostalgia of the 'event' and filled it with weaponry. The cover of *Nation* depicts one of these 'defence systems' squatting threateningly on Blackheath, in the centre of London – sterile weaponry monitoring both the skies above residential apartment blocks and undesirables who won't join in meaningfully, who don't triple-jump with the spirit of the times, so to speak. The 'falling out of words' connects ominously with the removal from language that David Herd identifies in relation to detention and extra-judicial space in his collection *Through*³⁸ and critical writings such as his piece, 'The View from Dover'.³⁹

It represents here also, though, the 'falling out' of the language of resistance the very language that is used to suppress that resistance. It is not that it becomes unusable – it doesn't – but its 'corporate synthesis' implies the 'sterile zone|peripheral buffer' that languages of resistance must negotiate if they are to produce something other than replication. The use of 'sterile' as a term by the Olympic management organisations to talk about the Olympic zone, the 'security fence sterile zone'⁴⁰ as a form of official or authoritative language is instructive in that context. Official language thus equated suggests the use of it as unassailable, pure, in some way that discourages contradictory narrative or non-narrative usage, while also signifying a place in which growth (of language and of resistance) is not available.

The poem also raises the question of the space of the 'I' in this narratively unassailable space: 'I am seeing something else.|irrefutable insect survival|secret endless food'. Here is a vulnerable 'I', scratching about in 'irrefutable insect survival', that has 'fallen out of words' yet, at the same time, resists the language nullification it identifies. The poem is thus simultaneously pulling into itself the official language of nullification while pitching that against itself:

sterile zone
peripheral buffer

it's the year
of the Olympics

The slogan-esque final two lines do operate as slogan here, closing the poem as they do in that important space the poet and reader fills with significance. They also serve as anti-slogan, though, in that they re-present a declaration of social culpability in a way that suggests resistance to that; it is no longer the buying into the 'Wheee! It's the Olympics!' that the slogan might suggest. Rather, it is an ironic inversion that changes the function of this declaration at the periphery the language of inclusion (actually, 'exclusion' in its action) pushes the 'I' to. The preceding two lines, 'sterile zone|peripheral buffer', simultaneously under-cut and reinforce this aspect of social culpability. We can say that the poem actually ends with these two lines, with the final slogan-esque additions simply erased as 'peripheral buffer'. Buffer here has two distinct meanings: the buffer that separates and the buffer that erases. The first separates us and the poem from the final two lines' action. The second sense is that explored in Ulli Freer's brilliant examination of the erasive in *Burner on the Buff*,⁴¹ which uses the graffiti terms 'burner' as a very good piece of graffiti, and 'buff' as the going over or removal of graffiti from any surface.⁴² Juha Virtanen describes Freer utilising graffiti 'as a tool for investigating notions of damage in contemporary capitalist cities',⁴³ and this connects to Rowe's use of the term here. Buffer in this context means to cover up or erase through covering up. What has been said in the poem here is erased or covered up by what follows, what is written on top – the slogan-esque 'it's the year|of the Olympics'.

'Peripheral' has pushed our engagement with this space outwards from the 'important' to the radical or the niche, the outside of the mainstream, a form of nullification frequently used to devalue narratives of resistance such as those found, for example, in discourses on gender or racial equality, economic disparity and ecological protest. As Hunt puts it:

the dominant culture will transfer its own partiality onto the opposition it tries to suppress. It will always maintain that it holds the complete world

view, despite the fissures. Opposition is alternately demonized or accommodated through partial concessions without a meaningful alteration of dominant culture's own terms. The opposition is characterized as destructive to the entire social body and to itself. State power in dominant culture depends upon its reducing social and political problems into pathologies requiring the police.⁴⁴

Here, this potentially unseen separation and erasure at the periphery supports the central narrative of inclusivity (and therefore culpability) that the poem identifies as a strategy of control through language: dissent removed to, and then from, the edges of social relevance. It is precisely, though, at this periphery of separation and erasure that the vulnerable 'I', and the shifting methodology of resistance to this strategy, locate and, paradoxically, become effective. The poem demonstrates that this is the operation to undo, and undoes it. That which is written underneath the buffer (or separated by the buffer) becomes visible and heard.

'and what this has to do with riot': what is really there

Rowe's disruptive tampering with languages of authority and control is another strategy in the multiple, and shifting, techniques of resistance evident throughout the collection. His poem, 'index', is a good example of this:

Charles Dance Jewellers

No 1 Pizza

House of Fraser

JD Sports

Liver Laundrette

Belal's Newsagent

ASDA

ASDA

Bloc Inc

Jessops

something strictly unnamable
happens to the image of suffering
and what this has to do with riot
by previously existing criminals
political and final stone⁴⁵

The poem begins with a list of premises looted or damaged during the 2011 riots in London. The politicising of this material, making it fixed and dense ('political and final stone'), is a process of marking the boundaries of safe revolution, beyond which the State will not tolerate opposition. Against this, Rowe's poetry refuses to have its 'responses', its war machine, solidified and codified. As noted by Steve Willey in his insightful reading of 'index':

[t]he poem enters us through our eyes which brings our reading body into direct relation with its viral shifting strains, the bodies it struggles to name and provoke: dead bodies; institutional bodies; police bodies; animal bodies; falling bodies; armed bodies; dreaming bodies. This poetry is a construction of new collective forms in the midst of a hostile, nostalgic alphabet, which is Rowe's definition of 'nation'.⁴⁶

The collating of 'riot' is one of the ways the 'dead radio voices' (from the collection's title poem) of this reporting nostalgic alphabet language and its constituents are resisted. It names the sites of action and then shifts them away from this 'reporting' function. The collating of these sites is not about narrative continuity, of the sequence of one location after another, or their situating within a controlled notion or narration of 'riot' that would become a rhetorical weapon of the State-who-must-defend-the-populace-from-violence-and-sedition. Donatella della Porta and Lorenzo Zamponi refer to this in relation to the way anti-globalisation protests were used as a way to legitimise police brutality and the criminalisation of the violent dissent provoked by it as 'suspension of democracy'.⁴⁷ Rowe's 'something strictly unnameable|happens to the image of suffering|and what this has to do with riot' seeks to identify and

dismantle the authoritarian sleight of hand that generates this connection and that seeks to preserve its effects ('previously existing criminals|political and final stone'). His collating, then, takes the listing technique and mutates it in the face of those final politicised lines of the poem.

Regarding space, the attitude of *Nation* is similar, again, to that of Laclau. Real space (contingent space) is not in discourse. Politics eliminates what does not fit its space; '[o]nly if the antagonistic elements are presented as anti-space, as anti-community, do they manage to obtain a form of discursive presence'.⁴⁸ The Real, in which, as Rowe puts it, 'nothing is missing',⁴⁹ relates to radical contingency. 'If antagonism *threatens* my existence, it shows [...] my radical contingency' (my emphasis),⁵⁰ where radical refers to 'an unbridgeable gap between two levels which cannot be mediated or dialecticized via the logic of either level',⁵¹ not just an exteriority of antagonistic discourses but a radical exteriority. In the relationship of the individual with social space, this means that on the one hand there are the discourses that claim that one belongs to an overall coherent space where differences can be reconciled through language, through shared meanings, and on the other hand there is real space where what doesn't fit these discourses actually exists. Contingency means that there are no necessary physical entities, no necessary laws of nature. *Nation* doesn't go as far as this, but it does suggest that what is really there does not conform to what language says is there. 'Index', for example, proposes and enacts the bringing about of this other, this surplus or excess, into visibility in its restaging of the rhetorical space of riot and protest in the Tottenham riots of 2011. Across these poems, Rowe is interested in political implications of language use, rather than philosophical ones, especially in the things that the dominant language says aren't there.

'I am accompanied': redelivery of contested space

The 'what is really there' of language resistance strategies is something that underpins not just the action of the poems in *Nation*, but also their connection to other poetries of resistance. One of the collection's key poems in this regard is 'I am instructed':

I am instructed in space and affect

to curse the event

the intense common light

dawn in dawn light

bad eye movement

incarceration⁵²

This poem, to me, suggests something of the contemporary declarative mode of poets like Sean Bonney: a potentially reassimilable space where the language of resistance can become subject to the erasure of what cannot, or should not, be said, and therefore, in the ideology of assimilations, does not exist. Sean Bonney's invocation to cut Tory throats is a crucial and extreme example of the declarative possibilities that this poem engages with:

When you meet a Tory on the street, cut his throat

It will bring out the best in you.

It is as simple as music or drunken speech.

There will be flashes of obsolete light.

You will notice the weather only when it starts to die.⁵³

What Kathy-Ann Tan identifies in her analysis of Bonney's declarative practice as a deliberately transgressive stance relates to the conception of identity and social antagonism examined above. Quoting Jeff Hilson, who describes Bonney's work as 'a poetry of social refusal',⁵⁴ Tan argues that:

[a]cknowledging the notion that the poetic speaker is constituted within the realm of public discourse and ultimately the product of sociohistorical and political structures, Bonney's poetic I speaks from a position of refusal and confrontation, seeking to disrupt the status quo, irreverently unhinging and exploding the capitalist logic of efficiency. As the speaker declares in *Document: Poems, Diagrams, Manifestos*, 'It is high time to be crude' (my emphasis).⁵⁵

Bonney's rhetorical calls to resistance, here and throughout his work, act as a disruptive, non-cooperative response to a stifling and neutralising consensus on political

language use. Rowe refers directly to this in his response to Robin Purves' review of Bonney's *Happiness: Poems After Rimbaud* in *Hi Zero*, in which Purves proposes that Bonney's poems 'brandish their inevitable failure as a violent reproach to the wider culture'.⁵⁶ Rowe says that:

What Bonney takes from Rimbaud (and Dante) is, above all, Hell, and the imperative to rebel against it, where Hell is the eradication of the very possibility of rebellion ('no-one can even think revolt'). [...] Its claim is 'insurrection is value' [...] insurrection, is not imaged save in brief moments of violent release such as 'if you see a Tory on the street, cut his throat. It will bring out the best in you', an accurate statement in that revolt brings out both the generosity you are capable of and the capacity to rupture the language of the oppressor: 'meanings excoriate the enemy language'.⁵⁷

Rowe's 'I am instructed' takes this notion of insurrection as value, of refusal, and asks us about mode and action. It does not propose disengagement or inaction – quite the opposite; it asks about the action of co-optation and how poetry can engage with it. It invokes the declarative poetic techniques that incorporate violence and aggression which many innovative poetries propose and generate as a necessary response to systems of control. The poems of Bonney, Keston Sutherland, Frances Kruk, Danny Hayward, Verity Spott, Justin Katko, Lisa Jeschke and Lucy Beynon, and, of course, going back to the political crises of the 1980s, Barry MacSweeney, Bill Griffiths and Anna Mendelssohn, amongst many others, are prime examples. Rowe's poem is actively engaging with this work, critiquing it and expanding its scope as critical thinking and response. This is both a validating and splaying out, reconstitutively, of the (re)productive effect of resistance that these works create. This is the context of the poem's active question. In the 'intense common light|dawn in dawn light' the poem invokes – which the instruction critiqued here seeks to equate with 'bad eye movement|incarceration' – it demonstrates a context which allows this 'violent' writing to effectuate a non-co-optated action. The reconstituted 'moment' of poetic realisation not only exposes the fallacy of the instruction ('curse the event'), it also

refuses to assimilate the equation of these terms ('the intense common light|dawn in dawn light' with 'bad eye movement|incarceration'). It redelivers the contested space in a language frame that avoids the burning up of resistant language (as effectless) that assimilation and co-optation seeks to bring about. Its action is part of the poetic equation or formula that vitalises that sense in-the-air that these poetries generate.

In 'death speaks ordinary language', Rowe expands this notion:

I am accompanied by someone else
 it needs to be
 how to kill
 written on the air⁵⁸

His language here engages a state of war, as with Bonney's invocation to cut Tory throats, but in a different way. It is this *delivering of the challenge* of the violence of poetic response into the air that Rowe marks as the language's value as effective poetic resistance. It is the call to unrest that such poetry writes 'on the air', the putting of it out there (as Bonney's and others' poetry does) – and the space that this essential writing calls into question – that Rowe marks here, not the violence itself; 'it needs to be|how to kill|written on the air'. Of course, these poetries don't necessarily directly invoke violence itself, and if they do, it is not necessarily delivered in assimilable language. In fact, much of this writing deliberately seeks to engage into action this assimilation process that seeks to invalidate it as protest. These other poetries are of great importance to Rowe's; the mechanism of the poetic equation or formula that, through its associations and equivalencies, allows his poems to ask what to do with this sense that these (and his) poetries write on the air rather than act as call for specific action as poetic response.

Rowe's engagement with the political in these poems doesn't succumb to the violence of its own representation. It takes those symbols ('political and final stone', the 'filming by the police', the missile battery on the front cover of *Nation*) – representing the exercise of power, the militaristic, surveillance, and holds them stationary – cocked, and threatening, but unmoving – for us to scrutinise. The poems invoke

the spaces in which the languages-of-violence-as-resistance engage the mechanisms of co-optation ('I am accompanied by someone else' – Bonney, McSweeney, and others) and freezes them in front of our linguistic sensibilities. As a strategy that itself shifts its own ground of action, the poetry avoids that momentising and monumentalising – that solidity – that would allow the strategies of control underlying public policy and political language to co-optate and assimilate Rowe's, and importantly in this context, others', language of resistance into themselves. The poems repeatedly freeze the frame of the action of the co-optative retaking of the space of resistance. It is part of an unfixed but also unfixing series of response strategies; a shifting immobilisation.

'revolution anyway': coming into time

Of course, Rowe's text is itself engaged in reimagining the space of response alongside its relations to other poetic texts and their oppositional techniques. The text envisages the composition process as itself a site of resistance. The poem 'rough work' is instructive in this regard:

to grasp an opportunity in the
current abyss instead of
submitting to the wreck of our
common life by clinging to the
old meanings / what's to be done with

[...]

there is an absolute moment of
composition which grasps the
void of this situation

revolution

revolution anyway⁵⁹

The poem here connects the opportunity of response (resistance) to the 'wreck of our common life', our social reality, to the notion of an 'absolute moment of composition' – of poetry, poetics and of response itself – that gathers everything into it and recomposes reality – political and social and poetic; a recomposition that stands outside of assimilated narratives and language. It names the time 'revolution', but then it does more. This absolute moment becomes a non-absolute concept of engagement with composition, in that time is remade, becoming an open time. As an unconditioned absolute, free from the influence of State control, we might see this as a moment of intention in the Husserlean sense, or the living present's 'double intentionality',⁶⁰ the constitution of consciousness in time, aware of itself as a single, ongoing flow. It represents a compositional reaching out from the subject, a directionality outside of the mechanisms of co-optation towards revolution. The subject, for Husserl, is untemporalised in its 'absolute timeless consciousness',⁶¹ but it temporalises the ideation of revolution here through the 'intention' that reaches out to it. The 'revolution anyway' brings that naming, that recomposition, into time, a living-through-ness. This final line ('revolution anyway'), though, also undoes a different sense of absoluteness that the poem implies in grasping 'the void of the situation' with an 'absolute moment' of composition. This absoluteness is a compositional stasis or paralysis brought about by the process of co-optation inherent in presenting no other reality than the abyss of 'old meanings' and the 'wreck of our common life'. The effect here is to render individuals and populations absolutely bound and absolutely frozen in our ability to respond. The 'with' of 'what's to be done with' grammatically represents this abyss – there is a semantic as well as a visual gap on the page – it hangs over the time(s) of crisis, as it hangs at the end of the stanza, unfinished and unfinished. The finality and absoluteness of the narrative (and action) of disenfranchisement that co-optation seeks to effectuate here constitutes an attack on the reader's agency; 'this has to be done' versus 'go ahead, do your demonstrating', so to speak. On one hand, the poem suggests that we are given an abyss of non-responses – ineffective resistance standpoints – to choose from. On the other, the poem is itself an opening up

to revolution 'anyway', despite that. In both senses the 'revolution anyway' restarts a sense of time and momentum in the poem. This dual action is important, as it is connected to the poem's shifting of resistance strategy. It does different, opposing things with the notion of absolute here; it shifts it outside of State control, but also unfixes it from within.

This bringing into being the time in which we are able to act – a heightened state of temporal engagement as the 'now' time of these poems – raises a question: can this also be co-opted? Herd, in examining how extra-judicial spaces such as these relate to the voices of the detained and their removal from jurisdiction, from recording and from language, identifies 'non-places' that are, in effect, in-between spaces – intermezzo spaces – that the State enshrines in order to impose the threat of, and exercise the actuality of, removal (of its own populations as well as those from outside its borders that it incarcerates).⁶² These intermezzo spaces of legal detention could be equated, conceptually, to the State and its control systems' attempt to render (through the apparatus of co-optation), the subject's intentionality – that constitution of consciousness in time – as a sort of 'non-place', or indeed, non-time. Deleuze and Guattari anticipate this appropriation of the very notion of resistive intermezzo spaces: 'how will the State *appropriate* the war machine, that is, constitute one for itself' (my emphasis).⁶³ *Nation's* intermezzo spaces, though, as a strategic war machine of resistance, counter precisely this removal from time. Rowe, in his engagement of, and with, this idea, contrarily brings about a coming *into* time of the composition of response and revolution, as I have explored above in relation to the notion of the absolute. The intermezzo is the disruptive 'now' time of response in Rowe's poems, that in its shifting dualisms, contradictions and multiplicities resists its own re-appropriation as a controlled absolute consciousness shifted out of time.

'a gel of history': the messy uncertain time of the intermezzo

In these poems, time as a construct is a much more messy affair than revolutionary time or the time of Hegelian historicity allows, since both the latter give us a task to be accomplished in relation to a sense of history. Lived time itself is an untidier business for these poems, and is much closer in conception to Benjamin's angel of

history who, regarding the piling of wreckage upon wreckage at his feet by the single catastrophe of history, is pushed inexorably backwards into the future by the storm of progress.⁶⁴ Benjamin's critique of the chronological perception of historical events and of the concept of progress as this relates to these is echoed in Rowe's re-encompassing and probing of the time of revolution in *Nation*. His 'a gel of time' is a clear allusion to Benjamin's messy conception of time and history:

a gel of time
outer edge: saline

that man was in
the idea of myself
inside my bones

[...]

the years are stolen
there can be no negation
so that an old man may be born
silence become silence
the words closer⁶⁵

The poem's viscous and congealing time – the sticking, the stuck, the spreading of time, and its outer saline edge that this implies – is embedded in the bones of ourselves and the language of our telling of ourselves: 'that man was in|the idea of myself|inside my bones'. It also lies outside of our control in producing the non-linear, indeed, the impossible: 'the years are stolen|there can be no negation|so that an old man may be born'. The contradiction inherent in both being born an old man and the prohibition on this that the same lines imply is one of the pieces of wreckage that Benjamin's paradoxical history fosters. Likewise, the construction 'an old man may be born|silence become silence' where being born-silence-become-silence represents a form of transcendence or overcoming of historical causation. As 'the words

[become/are] closer', we see a different conception of language and language use, in this old-man-born-silence as a coming into time of consciousness (a non-chronological, non-historicised, non-grammatical time-consciousness that Rowe's poetry engages in the absolute moment of composition he invokes). Happening outside of the process of co-optation, this is a similar notion to the non-easily assimilable idea (into historical narratives) of the angel of history that Benjamin explores.

In 'now/awaken', we see an expansion of this idea:

your frontal bone
 make a curvature of
 time against the
 regime of
 progress is oven
 a social revolt
 against the wind of time is blowing
 murders
 what your needs
 actually are
 brothers and sisters⁶⁶

The syntax here is non-normative and uncertain, with 'revolt', 'murders' and 'oven' all serving key, and contradictory, purposes in the poem. The subject of 'murders' can be taken to be 'the wind of time' (object) or 'the wind of time is blowing' (sentence). The word 'revolt' can be read as 'against' the whole of what follows ('the wind of time is blowing|murders ...'), but also as the subject of 'murders', as can 'what your needs actually are'. The word 'oven' sits non-grammatically at a crux point here, and for me is one of the key devices in the poem. This reads simultaneously 'progress is oven', 'the regime of progress is oven', 'make a curvature of time against the regime of progress is oven', 'oven a social revolt', 'progress is oven a social revolt', 'progress is oven a social revolt against the wind of time is blowing', and so on, as it dovetails into the ambiguity of both 'revolt' and 'murders' – it is all these meanings at once. The poem

thus produces a complex and confusing construction of time, resistance, co-optation and revolt. It seems to say that 'the wind of time is blowing' and is at the same time murdering our needs, while also seeming to say that social revolt against the wind of time (connected to progress blowing the angel of time backwards into the future) works against what our needs really are as resistors. Simultaneously, though, the poem qualifies this, suggesting that social revolt conceived in terms of the narratives of power (the 'regime of progress', with all that this invokes in Benjamin) is produced as ineffective and ultimately self-defeating. It is here that the construction 'regime of | progress is oven | a social revolt' comes in; 'oven' here seems to suggest that progress (regime, etc.) cooks or produces a form of revolt that is already co-opted. The allusion to the Nazi crematoria is also clear. As this connects to Adorno and Horkheimer's critique of enlightenment and the myth of progress in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the poem's critique of our own complicity in co-optative response in this formulation is all the more chilling:

In reflecting on its own guilt, therefore, thought finds itself deprived [...] of the conceptual language of opposition. No terms are available which do not tend toward complicity with the prevailing intellectual trends, and what threadbare language cannot achieve on its own is precisely made good by the social machinery.⁶⁷

In shifting out of chronological, narrative revolutionary or historical time, into a non-narrative, non-linear, messy and ambiguous coming into time, these poems seek to draw the reader inside a different sense of language – the uncertainty of the grammar is very much like the opposite of legal, corporate and political language. It pulls the reader in to something like a collision of languages (that of law, for example, and poetry, the latter as counter-force or freedom from legal binding). This struggle of antagonistic languages throughout *Nation* is tied up with the non-chronological, non-historicised and, indeed, uncertain grammatical time of emergence into composition and resistance through the revolutionary absolute moment of composition that the poems invoke.

'poetry is a virus': poetry of poetic contingency

The generation of uncertainty itself is a powerful resistance strategy of this writing, whose status even as poetry is necessarily unclear at times. In its shifting constitution of reportings, recyclings, refusals, freezings, reversals, unfixings, of the intermezzo itself, it is always uncertain of its action and reflects an openness analogous to Deleuze and Guattari's nomadic trajectory: 'it *distributes people (or animals) in an open space*, one that is indefinite and noncommunicating' (my emphasis).⁶⁸ Such an 'indefinite and noncommunicating' open space, in Rowe's poetic terms, does not cooperatively participate in the regulated communication of the co-optation processes by which systems of control assimilate and re-assimilate response. *Nation's* revealing and recreating of the open spaces and times of resistance is precisely the manifestation of the war machine that Deleuze and Guattari envisage:

And each time there is an operation against the State—insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act—it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared, accompanied by the reconstitution of a smooth space or a manner of being in space as though it were smooth (Virilio discusses the importance of the riot or revolutionary theme of 'holding the street').⁶⁹

Thinking about this poetic war machine in relation to both the generative potential and mutability of the intermezzo, and its co-optation as fixed, striated, extra-judicial spaces within the State, it is clear that in seeking to 'hold the street' of an open space in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, this war machine must be conceived as multiple and varied in itself. It needs to be a war machine that continually shifts its own remaking of the open space and time of resistance, and indeed, its own engagement with its operation. This requires a shift away from thinking of the intermezzo as defined by the boundaries of control and co-optation on the one hand and resistances on the other. If Rowe's poetic intermezzo of response is itself able to change its characteristics and interface with the notion of boundary as a mode of constitution it sidesteps the *action of the action* of co-optation. The messy space in between response and assimilation is conceived here as itself the process of continual shifting away from

thinking of these strategies as one or the other. Rowe's poetry produces not just responses and strategies of resistance, but also non-responses and counteractions of resistance strategies that simultaneously manifest and undo the co-optation process.

Sibertin-Blanc, in proposing an 'exo-violence' in relation to an extrinsic war machine and the State, also identifies the danger to the State that the 'apparatus of capture' itself can pose, mutating and subordinating it (the State) to an only partially assimilable war machine.⁷⁰ Rowe's poetic war machine can be seen, in its mutabilities and resistances, as a threat to the State equivalent in language; on the one hand it resists, on the other it mutates the language of control in its heteronomic interactions, proposing in such a subordination not fascism, but 'a war machine whose aim is neither the war of extermination nor the peace of generalized terror, but revolutionary movement'.⁷¹ This poetry, then, is a poetry of poetic contingency in relation to the political. As well as proposing an uncertain space of response that attempts to resist capitulation, it also delivers an undefined contingency that allows it to reshape its propositions of 'response' in the teeth of the changing face of capitalist mutation.

Different crises engage different responses from this text. All poetries do this to some degree, but few are specifically designed to read differently, and be read differently, as a strategy of response in itself. The ground of resistance shifts in the context of a new time or political reality as a function of this book's engagement with open variable intermezzo space. The reconstitutive collating of 'index', for example, changes its formulation as resistance as the frame of reference to 'riot' changes. The 2020 American context of George Floyd's death at police hands and President Trump's racially charged invocation of police violence in his (reused) 'when the looting starts, the shooting starts'⁷² remakes the reader's activation of the poem's resistance strategies. In this instance the 'something strictly unnameable|happens to the image of suffering|and what this has to do with riot' that the poem evokes changes the cascading effect of name after name where initial reports in the US press focused on 'black owned' businesses that were looted and destroyed. These are no longer businesses the poem lists but the seemingly endless list of black men and women killed by the police. Similarly, there are multiple and uncertain instances of 'revolution anyway' envisioned in the bringing into time in which we are able to act that

we see in the non-absolute open time of 'rough work' – a variable (and uncertain) naming and recomposing that responds to the reader's contexts.

In the 2020 time of crisis – pandemic politics, President Trump, Brexit, Cambridge Analytica, alternative facts, and so on – Rowe's uncertain messy time and times of revolution are reconstitutive of the strategies the poems employ as resistive. The status of partisan sloganism and the use and reuse of propaganda, misdirection and falsehood; the fallacy in social instruction and the shifting discourse on political, social and language exclusion; the reworking of futilising narratives (surveillance, cyber-warfare, media-bias, complicity, health vs economy, etc.) – all these have new applications as forms of a resistive 'now' that the poems envisage. *Nation* doesn't give us prescriptive or tailored solutions to the operation of social and language control at different times – this would be to misstate the point. What it does give us is an unfixing and necessarily uncertain methodology that shifts the ground of resistance under the processes of co-optation that support these; an open, variable intermezzo space (and time) that seeks a shifting in-between-ness as regards modes of resistance on the one hand and the actions of assimilation and re-assimilation and the complicity these would inure us to on the other. As Rowe says in 'the sound of pigs falling':

poetry is a virus
mutating
right
in front
of your face⁷³

Notes

- ¹ Slavoj Žižek, 'Thanks to the EU's villainy, Greece is now under financial occupation', *NewStatesman* website, 17 August 2015 <<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/08/slavoj-zizek-thanks-eu-s-villainy-greece-now-under-financial-occupation>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ² Mehreen Khan, 'ECB criticised for overstepping mandate in eurozone crisis', *Financial Times* website, 28 March 2017 <<https://www.ft.com/content/6ec278de-1399-11e7-b0c1-37e417ee6c76>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ³ Thomas Fazi, 'The troika saved banks and creditors – not Greece', *Open Democracy* website, 25 January 2015 <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/thomas-fazi/troika-saved-banks-and-creditors—not-greece>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ⁴ William Rowe, *Nation* (London: Klinamen, 2012; Newton-Le-Willows: Knives, Forks, and Spoons, 2015).

- ⁵ Raúl Zurita, *INRI*, trans. by William Rowe (Grosse Pointe Farms, MI: Marick Press, 2009, New York: nyrb, 2018).
- ⁶ William Walton Rowe, *Three Lyric Poets* (Liverpool: LUP/Northcote House, 2009).
- ⁷ *Salt Companion to Bill Griffiths*, ed. by William Rowe (Cambridge: Salt, 2007).
- ⁸ William Rowe, *Working the Signs* (London: Spanner, 1992).
- ⁹ William Rowe, *The Earth Has Been Destroyed* (London: Veer Books, 2009).
- ¹⁰ William Rowe, *Incisions* (Brighton: Iodine Press, 2014).
- ¹¹ William Rowe, *Collected Poems* (London: Crater, 2016). Hereafter referred to as *CP*.
- ¹² Rowe, *CP*, p. 150.
- ¹³ Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007).
- ¹⁴ William Rowe, email to the author (26 September 2019).
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Jon Clay, *Sensation, Contemporary Poetry and Deleuze: Transformative Intensities* (London: Continuum, 2010).
- ¹⁷ Clay defines deterritorialisation as the 'movement of individuation, of differentiating of innovation itself' and reterritorialization as 'the return to or reestablishment of the territory' which remains part of the process of individuation, but attempts to erase, undo and fix in the 'safely habitual' (*Ibid.*, p. 39).
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 46–50.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 148, 157.
- ²² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: The Athlone Press, 1988; Repr. London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 351–423 (p. 374).
- ²³ Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc, *State and Politics: Deleuze and Guattari on Marx*, trans. by Ames Hodges (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2016), p. 91.
- ²⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 422–23.
- ²⁵ Erica Hunt, 'Notes for an Oppositional Poetics', in *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*, ed. by Charles Bernstein (New York: Roof Books, 1990), pp.197–212 (pp. 199–200).
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 201.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 203.
- ²⁸ Peter Middleton, 'Imagined Readerships and Poetic Innovation in U.K. Poetry' in *Assembling Alternatives: Reading Postmodern Poetries Transnationally*, ed. by Romana Huk (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), pp. 128–142 (p. 134).
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- ³⁰ Valentin Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. by Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (London: Seminar Press, 1973), p. 22.
- ³¹ Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 92.
- ³² Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 122.
- ³³ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 380.
- ³⁴ Pierre Joris, *Poems for the Millennium: The University of California Book of Modern & Postmodern Poetry. Volume 2: From Post-War to Millennium*, ed. by Jerome Rothenberg and Pierre Joris (Berkeley & Los

- Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1998), p. 773.
- ³⁵ Pierre Joris, 'The Nomadism of Pablo Picasso', in *A Nomadic Poetics* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2003), pp. 115–120 (p. 115).
- ³⁶ Allen Fisher, 'Cogent Attention in the Work of Pierre Joris', in *Pierre Joris: Cartographies of the In-Between*, ed. by Peter Cockelbergh (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2011), pp. 179–86 (pp. 182–83).
- ³⁷ Rowe, *CP*, pp. 136–37.
- ³⁸ David Herd, *Through* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2016).
- ³⁹ David Herd, 'The View from Dover', *Los Angeles Review of Books website*, 3 March 2015 <<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/view-dover#!>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ⁴⁰ Peter Fussey, Jon Coaffee and Dick Hobbs, *Securing and Sustaining the Olympic City: Reconfiguring London for 2012 and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 150.
- ⁴¹ Ulli Freer, *Burner on the Buff*. London: Veer Books, 2006, 2013).
- ⁴² Art Crimes, 'The Words: A Graffiti Glossary', trans. by Takuya Hiramoto. *Art Crimes website*, March 2017 <<https://www.graffiti.org/faq/graffiti.glossary.html>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ⁴³ Juha Virtanen, 'Writing on: Context and Visual Culture in Recent Works of Allen Fisher and Ulli Freer', *Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry*, 8 (1) (2016). doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/biip.20> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ⁴⁴ Hunt, p. 202.
- ⁴⁵ Rowe, *CP*, pp. 143–44.
- ⁴⁶ Steve Willey, 'An Introduction to the Poetry of William Rowe: A Poetics of Negative Energy', *Culture Matters*, Monday, 17th February 2016 <<http://www.culturematters.org.uk/index.php/arts/poetry/item/2236-a-poetry-of-struggle-introduction-to-the-poetry-of-william-rowe>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ⁴⁷ Donatella della Porta and Lorenzo Zamponi, 'Protest and policing on October 15th, global day of action: the Italian case', *Policing and Society*, 23:1 (2013), 65–80 (p. 78).
- ⁴⁸ Ernesto Laclau, 'Dislocation and capitalism, social imaginary and democratic revolution', in *Ernesto Laclau: Post-Marxism, Populism and Critique*, ed. by David Howarth (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2015), p. 52.
- ⁴⁹ Rowe, *CP*, p. 138.
- ⁵⁰ Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, p. 20.
- ⁵¹ Oliver Marchant, 'Politics and the ontological difference: on the 'strictly philosophical' in Laclau's work', in *Laclau: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Simon Critchley and Oliver Marchant (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2004), pp. 54–72 (p. 58).
- ⁵² Rowe, *CP*, p. 156.
- ⁵³ Sean Bonney, *Happiness: Poems after Rimbaud* (London: Unkant Publishing, 2011), p. 37.
There is a wonderful reverberation in Bonney's invocation here for me of The The's Thatcherite era 'Three Orange Kisses from Kazan': 'I'd say, take your boss in your hands|and squeeze it,|until you hear this sound' (The The, 'Three Orange Kisses from Kazan', in *Soulmining* [Audiocassette] (UK: Epic, 1983)).
- ⁵⁴ Jeff Hilson, *Blurb in Blade Pitch Control Unit* (Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2005).
- ⁵⁵ Kathy-Ann Tan, 'London Calling. The Poetics of Disruption and Social Resistance in the works of Sean Bonney and Stephen Mooney', in *Contemporary Political Poetry in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Uwe Klawitter and Claus-Ulrich Viol (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2013), pp. 229–254 (p. 240).
- ⁵⁶ Robin Purves, 'Sean Bonney. Happiness. Poems After Rimbaud', *Hi Zero*, XI (2012) [np].
- ⁵⁷ William Rowe, 'Reflections on Sean Bonney's Happiness: Poems After Rimbaud', *Hi Zero*, XIX (2013) [np].
- ⁵⁸ Rowe, *CP*, p. 146.

- ⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 148.
- ⁶⁰ Edmund Husserl, *On the phenomenology of consciousness of internal time (1893–1917)*, trans. by J.B. Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), pp. 84ff, 120ff, 390.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., p. 117.
- ⁶² Herd, 'The View from Dover'.
- ⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 418.
- ⁶⁴ Walter Benjamin, 'Thesis on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, trans. by Harcourt, Brace and World Inc. (London: Random House/Pimlico Editions, 1999), pp. 257–58).
- ⁶⁵ Rowe, *CP*, p. 176.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 177.
- ⁶⁷ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. XV).
- ⁶⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 380.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 386.
- ⁷⁰ Sibertin-Blanc, p. 175.
- ⁷¹ Deleuze and Guattari, pp. 472–73.
- ⁷² Michael Rosenwald, 'When the looting starts, the shooting starts': Trump quotes Miami police chief's notorious 1967 warning', *Washington Post* website, 29 May 2020 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/29/when-the-looting-starts-the-shooting-starts-trump-walter-headley/>> (accessed 17 June 2020).
- ⁷³ Rowe, *CP*, p. 135.

Competing Interests

While there are no competing interests as such to declare, it is worth stating that William Rowe was my PhD supervisor at Birkbeck College, where I worked with him extensively as part of Contemporary Poetics Research Centre, and that I continue to work with him in relation to Veer Books.

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