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POSTPOETRY

Writing the act of, and the act to

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*French poet, Jean-Marie Gleize, is better known in French than English. However, over the last decade, scholarship has begun to emerge in English about his postpoésie writing and his recent poetry collection, Tarnac: A Preparatory Act has been translated into English. In his Oxford talk, 'Democracy', Gleize outlines what the Tarnac collection develops: why a 'preparatory act' of resistance is now a musical question — one of resonance. Gleize's acts of writing he calls dispositif writing and the approach resonates with poet Charles Olson's ideas outlined in his Black Mountain College Charter, *The Act of Writing in the Context of Post-Modern Man*. Olson's ideas are often assumed to pertain solely to breath and voice, owing to his infamous 'Projective Verse' manifesto, but a lot of his work was about the act of inscribing. By looking to Performance Writing, a field which first emerged as a course and drew on Olson's charter, the ideas pertaining to the act and action of inscription are illustrated. Additionally, by relating dispositif writing to performance writing dispositions and the ideas inherent in Olson's charter, the validity of all three approaches illustrate how the 'act of' and the 'act to' inscribing spaces within the line and sign is a form of poetics, albeit, post-poetry.*

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Dartington College of Arts, in Devon, United Kingdom, spearheaded a course known as 'Performance Writing' in the 1990s. Subsequently, the course generated an ongoing field in which to situate art and writing practices, referred to today by the same complicating phrase, performance writing. Lesser known is how Charles Olson's Black Mountain College Charter, *The Act of Writing in the Context of Post-Modern Man* (1952) influenced the Dartington course. To read Olson's charter today highlights not only how one can go about a so-called performance writing approach but how Olson's ideas resonate with concepts French poet Jean-Marie Gleize puts forth in his poetics. In order to illustrate how these ideas resonate between performance writing approaches, Olson's charter, and Gleize's poetics, a brief background will be given to each area.

Performance Writing

One of the convenors of the Performance Writing course, poet and academic Caroline Bergvall, proposed in her keynote for the first Performance Writing symposium, 1996, that the ‘textual contemporaneity’ of performance writing was an event found in (the textual sites of) visual, sonic and movement arts. All such arts hold, Bergvall pointed out, a writing of sorts (Bergvall 1996: 32). Therefore, performance writing as ‘textual contemporaneity’ can ‘only locate itself as part of the atomisation of literature, music, theatre and so on’ (31). The field of performance writing, Bergvall argued, provided a space in which to locate cross-disciplinary work; that ‘unless one happens to make cross-disciplinary text-work a specific area of research, the likelihood is that much will escape one’s attention’ (30).

Today, the phrase ‘performance writing’ continues to refer to these approaches of writing events that are found in literature, music, theatre, and performance art. Hence, dispositions of performance writing include writing as an ongoing action that explores the space between process and product (Cheek qtd. in Buuck, par. 12). Such contemporaneous dispositions of performance writing tends toward live approaches, utilising time-based media, embodiment, movement, and iteration. Additionally, performance writing approaches also allow for the exploration of various writings as textual events. David Buuck explains these approaches in *Jacket 2*, ‘What is Performance Writing’:

[Performance writing] distinguish[es] such forms [approaches of performance writing] from an emphasis on ‘performance poetry’ (slam, spoken word, etc.) or performance art practices that are not driven by non-narrative and/or avant-garde poetics. (par.1)

Despite the use of the word ‘form’ (performance writing approaches emphasise context, therefore ‘shape’ provides a more apt descriptor) Buuck discerns how performance writing dispositions are not solely elicited by spoken or voiced performances, nor are they driven by narrative performances; they are more akin to performance art practices which look to non-narrative and avant-garde poetics.

In order to address issues of logocentrism and phonocentrism^[1] inherent in the phrase, another convenor of the course, academic and poet John Hall, establishes in his collection of essays on performance writing:

It is easier to think of the performance of language as oral, as speaking, with writing perhaps as a preparation or substitute for or record of such speaking, but from the start [of the Performance Writing course] we did not want to treat these as part of a dualism. (2013: 47)

By not separating writing from speaking in terms of performance, one is more readily able to address phonocentric and logocentric notions. Donald Francis McKenzie’s *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (1999) proposes that Saussure’s semiotics permitted logocentric thinking, and how that led to the narrow interpretation of what a text is today, and what writing is:

Saussure’s insistence upon the primacy of speech has created a further problem for book-based bibliography by confining critical attention to verbal structures as an alphabetic transcription of what are conceived only as words to be spoken. Other formalized language, or, more properly perhaps, dialects of written language — graphic algebraic, hieroglyphic, and, most significantly for our purposes, typographic — have suffered an exclusion from

critical debate about the interpretation of texts because they are not speech-related. (34)

These ‘dialects of written language’ are dispositions performance writing constitutes, that is, a writing not narrowly confined as alphabetic transcription. McKenzie continues:

They [alphabetic transcriptions] are instrumental of course to writing and printing, but given the close interdependence of linguistics, structuralism, and hermeneutics, and the intellectual dominance of those disciplines in recent years, it is not surprising perhaps that the history of non-verbal sign systems, including even punctuation, is still in its infancy, or that the history of typographic conventions as mediators of the meaning has yet to be written. (34)

Because performance writing is not a ‘thing’ as Hall said, the writing does not need to signify as such. Therefore, mark-making, and other graphic instances of writing — dialects of written language — can be included as performance writing approaches. Often, writing without alphabetic meaning is referred to as asemic writing. Some of such writing can be included within performance writing approaches; however, the focus of asemic writing tends toward production, or outcome, rather than process. Of course, there are exceptions and the ‘painting writer’, Cy Twombly, is referred to in Peter Schwenger’s book, *The Art of Asemic* (2019) as an early exemplar of asemic writing. Twombly was a student of Olson’s at Black Mountain College and his work in many ways epitomises Olson’s charter, soon to be discussed. What is evident in Twombly’s work is his process, and like that of performance writing approaches, he worked to express the spaces within and between the line and sign. Roland Barthes drew on his ideas of ‘asemic space’ to explain the inscribing of space in Cy Twombly’s paintings, elaborating on the concept of trace (Schwenger 2019: 46). Of the trace, Barthes writes, ‘an intermediate sign, or unfulfilled, or overfulfilled, a transitory clue about who-knows-what’ (qtd. in Schwenger 2019: 45). The key word here is ‘transitory’ and Twombly expressed how the action within the spaces between the line and sign is a negotiable space, a space of transition. By painting/writing these transitional spaces his work focused on process, rather than painting/writing for production, and these expressions of movement and space in the line illustrate performance writing approaches.

Additionally, how a reader acts when reading writing is a matter included in the field of performance writing as ‘w/reading’, with a ‘w’ in front of ‘reading’ to indicate how the performance of writing also occurs through the reader. Despite performance writing being concerned with time-based events, the act of reading is acknowledged by Rachel Lois Clapham et al in the edited collection of poets and artists responding to performance writing, *(W)reading Performance Writing: A Study Room Guide on performance writing* (2010). In this collected work, Clapham et al include Bergvall and, interestingly, poet Charles Bernstein as exemplars of performance writing. Clapham’s edited book operates as a site, and site, as cris cheek points out, is a condition of the book. Cheek was also involved in the Performance Writing course from the outset (Hall 2013: 35).

Textuality and materiality cohere in poetic texts as an event, and in some instances, a collection of poetry can be read as a performance writing approach (cheek, par. 9). In the act of reading and writing (w/reading) Jerome McGann (1988) notes how the materiality and textuality of poetry provides meaning rather than reading the ‘levels’ of meaning in poetry. For example, McGann proposes the text is different from versioning of text executed in the instance of materiality (par. 20).

Performance writing has been significant for how it redresses other ‘dialects of written language’, which include writing as action and more or other than alphabetic transcription. Encouraging study of non-verbal sign systems, Charles Olson’s Black Mountain College charter looked into non-alphabetic writing, and why he called such writing ‘non-literary’ (Olson 1974: 12).

Charles Olson’s Black Mountain College Charter

Before turning to Gleize’s work, aspects of Olson’s charter will be considered, which will in turn illustrate the examples that correspond to Gleize’s work, and reiterate approaches to performance writing.

The Performance Writing course drew from Charles Olson’s Black Mountain College charter, *The Act of Writing in Context of Post-Modern Man* (1974) (Allsopp 2000: 33).^[ii] Olson’s one page charter consists of three key paragraphs. His concern is with non-compositional and non-literary work so as to problematise the act, or action, of writing. Olson explains:

The effort is definitely non-literary. Neither is the reading in “literature,” like they say, nor is the writing “composition.” ... The idea is to enable the person to achieve the beginnings of a disposition toward reality now, by which he or she can bring himself or herself to bear as value. (1974: 12-13)

Olson is calling for writing that is non-literary, not literature and not composition, in order to focus on writing as process. Therefore, both the textuality and materiality of the writing is important. On the one hand there is writing or, as mentioned earlier, ‘textual contemporaneity’ that engages with textuality, but is able ‘only to locate itself as part of the atomisation of literature, music, theatre and so on’ (Bergvall 2004: 31). On the other hand, there is the materiality, the writing ephemera, as well as the w/reader, and so on. But the material, in Olson’s explanation, becomes embodiment, and part of the textuality, as is similarly the case in performance writing. Take, for example, the typewriter and the act of typing. The type-hammer, with a metal letter slug, swings from the action of being struck by another lever under the pressure of one’s finger, and then swings into action, firing toward the page. The type-hammer itself can imprint a letter, and it is both material and textual like braille. It is the inked cloth, a ribbon which lifts in between the hammer and page at the last moment, that creates the textuality of an inked letter. It is because of this relationship between the material and the textual that approaches to performance writing, Bergvall argued, had to be located as cross-disciplinary (31). This relationship, or rather, symbiosis between textuality and materiality, or process and product (but not to be mistaken as classing performance writing with modes of production per se), parallels the earlier mentioned ideas of both McKenzie’s ‘dialects of written languages’ and Mc Gann’s textual and material distinctions. The position of a ‘reality now’ (Olson 1974: 12-13) and how one self’s bearing contributes toward this points to an embodied writing, hence performance writing approaches as contemporaneous. Olson goes on to say:

The proposition is the simplest: to release the person’s energy word-wise, and thus begin the hammering of form out of content ... [to] find the kinetics of experience disclosed — the

kinetics of themselves as persons as well as of the stuff they have to work on, and by. (12)

Olson points clearly to the kinetic, the movement of writing, as both inscribing and embodiment. The hammer as a motif appears in his famous manifesto 'Projective Verse' (1997) for Olson celebrated the typewriter (Gillott 2018: 9). Olson was certainly aware of the action of the type-hammer when he refers to its usage in his writing. Brendan C Gillott argues how 'Projective Verse' contains a logic of inscription. Gillott builds a strong argument in his paper, 'Charles Olson's Projective Verse and the Inscription of the Breath' (2018) for writing as the 'act of the instant', referring to the 'inscriptional register' of the typewriter which reflected 'a concern with carving and engraving' (1).

Olson's concern with both movement and the act of inscription calls students to think outside of Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian history, beyond 'great' writers, whom he quotes as Melville, Dostoevsky, Rimbaud and Lawrence. While they are 'four directions ... the person is his or her own material' (1974: 12). Here, Olson uses 'Post-Modern' to refer to 'history before, after and outside Graeco-Roman, Judeo-Christian history' (Butterick 1980: 6). Olson's references to thinking outside of Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman ways of perceiving involved considering different kinds of writing, that is, dialects of written language. He was excited by cuneiform and the Mayan script, by writing given to a particular textuality and character based, of both the symbol and the sign, including Chinese characters, and a pictorial depiction of the sign (Hoeynck 2018: xviii). Thus, writing, for Olson, needed to be an act of inscribing and reading to be an 'act of the instant,' as given by pictorial depictions (Olson 1967: 5).

Olson's interest in 'dialects of written language' included writing not narrowly confined as alphabetic transcription, thereby challenging the dominance of speech-related texts. Olson's attempts to overcome logocentric thinking, Spanos claims, was apparent '[a]s early as 1946, [when] Olson began an investigation into abstraction or, to use current cant, logocentrism' (1980: 358). As Bergvall notes, the movement of the body, the hand and body writing, disrupts logocentric and phonocentric knowledge (2004: n.p.), as does the type-hammer.

The Performance Writing course, aided by Olson's charter, brings to light Olson's ideas and why he was encouraging his students to look beyond Western tradition as a way to redress the intellectual dominance of linguistics, structuralism, and hermeneutics, an imbalance McKenzie outlines (1999). Olson's charter also draws attention to the act of inscribing often overlooked in his 'Projective Verse' manifesto and misunderstood as simply voicing script.

Jean-Marie Gleize

Jean-Marie Gleize, a prolific French writer and critic of experimental poetry, is lesser known to an English-speaking audience (Thomas 2008a: 28). Jean-Jacques Thomas' paper on Gleize's poetry, 'Jean-Marie Gleize's Poetic Pics' (Thomas 2008), offers a thorough introduction to Gleize for an English-speaking audience. To date, only Gleize's poetry collection *Tarnac: A Preparatory Act* has been translated into English. There is, nevertheless, some scholarship on Gleize in English as well as his 'Democracy' talk delivered at Oxford in 2013, along with various interviews.

In Gleize's French collection of essays, *Altitude zéro* (1997) Gleize outlines those to whom his writing resonates. These include: Anne-Marie Albiach, Michel Deguy, Francis Ponge, Christian Prigent, Arthur Rimbaud, and Denis Roche. It is worth noting that Ezra Pound had a significant influence on Denis Roche (Wall-Romana 2011), as Pound did on Olson, and similarly Twombly (Trussell 2000).^[iii] Thomas aligns Gleize's work alongside that of Roche in another paper, 'Photographic Memories of French Poetry: Denis Roche, Jean-Marie Gleize' (Thomas 2008) on account of his use of image in his texts. Thomas describes this combination of image and writing as an intra-textuality rather than an inter-textuality (29). The relationship is within rather than between the texts. Similarly, Olson's charter and performance writing corresponds to this concept of 'intra-textuality.'^[iv]

Writing on the history of Gleize's work and influences, Christophe Wall-Romana (2011) points out Gleize's position by explaining Gleize's *dispositif* poetry. *Dispositif* writing is a definition Gleize has developed over time to explain his way of working. In his essay, '*Un Bleu Incohérent*', he explains this process, which Wall-Romana summarises:

First comes an operation of simplification/reduction/schematization that he identifies with a square ... which functions as the 'dispositif spatial' of a virtual installation. Subsequently, Gleize operates repetitions, complications, and actualizations of this dispositif, which thus migrates to other texts, to performances, or even to critical interventions. (2011: 449-450)

Wall-Romana adds the example of the *dispositif* writing from Gleize's *Film à venir: Conversions* (2007), which 'mixes childhood recollections, theoretical notes, diary entries, film fragments and interwoven locales, together with extracts from talks, readings, correspondence and conversations with other poets' (Wall-Romana 2011: 450). Similarly, these are the approaches in *Tarnac*. Gleize further explains his *dispositif* writing in his collection of French essays, *Altitude zéro* (1997):

Cet espace, le lieu où s'écrit le texte, s'ouvre sur d'autres espaces qui lui sont intérieurs, des espaces antérieurs et intérieurs mais aussi contemporains et extérieurs, selon une logique et une topique impensables hors d'ici, dans l'acte [d'écrire]. (19)

In English:^[v]

This space, the place where the text is written, opens up to other spaces which are internal to it, former and internal spaces but also contemporary and external, according to a logic and a topic unthinkable outside from here, in the act [of writing] (19).

This space then, that Gleize has described, is the a space opened out (or moved into) through the act of writing and intra-textuality. Thomas explains how Gleize's dispositions reflect approaches to performance writing and Olson's charter:

Gleize's post-poetry generates textual forms that are on the side of plasticity (literary shape) while rejecting the notion of form as a set of formal prescriptions and principles as the core instrument of literary expression (and more specifically poetry). (32)

For Gleize, questions of the poet and poetry can also be embodied through acts of living, not as a poet per se, but as a humble recorder (Thomas 2008: 34-35). Such a position accords with Olson's

'*humilias*' from his ideas on 'objectism', and Karen Barad's concept of intra-action. Rather than subject-object dichotomies, there is simultaneity. However, while Gleize undoes the subject-object disposition through *dispositif* writing, Olson denies the 'subject-object predication of Alexandrian grammar and Western epistemology,' as 'a useful creative attitude' (1967: 60). Olson's objectism countered subjectivity, 'for a man is himself an object, whatever he may take to be his advantages' and called for the 'ego' to be in check (Olson 1997: 247). Olson believed these advantages of humility allowed the writer a 'humilitas sufficient to make him of use' (247). Gleize exemplifies this concept of Olson's 'use' in being a 'humble recorder' which is a focus away from a writer's subjectivity, to writing in service of something greater (Thomas 2008: 34-35). Although Gleize's 'something greater' pivots from activism informed by Maoist and militant ideologies (Clover, qtd in Gleize 2014: 165) and his poetics have objectivist leanings, there is more crossover, or resonance, than difference (or dissonance) with performance writing approaches and Olson's ideas. Gleize's post poetics are conversant with performance writing approaches and Olson's charter through their shared processes of working with 'dialects of written language' (McKenzie 1999: 34) to intensify questions.

In his lecture *Democracy* Gleize points to Rimbaud's lost text of 'Democracy' in *Illuminations* to explain his own poetics, and what he considers is political — consciously resistant. He writes:

[T]here is for those, among whom I am one, who continue to read and write within that which we name poetry (that is to say, who situate themselves marginally within the practice of literature itself grown culturally secondary and minor), essentially the consciousness of not being much in phase with democracy as ambient value, as political ideology and as form of government, the feeling of being in no regard represented by the professional politicians and others who themselves are manipulated and ventriloquized by the holds of real power (that of the globalized economy), and with an insuperable sense of paralysis or choking powerlessness. (Gleize 2013: par. 6)

Gleize therefore sees poetry which is marginal and 'experimental' as having political agency even though the poet may be apolitical (par. 6). He explains how a split occurred in French contemporary poetry in the 1980s (Lynch 2013: 3). Out of this split, two principal 'poles' emerged: one is what Gleize calls 're-poetry', the return to conservative literary approaches which restored itself to the common reader and the public (par. 8). The 'second pole' is what this paper orientates towards, the experimental, and what Gleize calls 'critical art', such as his own poetry, *postpoésie* (post-poetry) or *dispositif* writing (par. 8).

The 'second pole' Gleize proposes, the experimental, has emerged out of resistance. No longer able to take for granted the space of democracy that earlier generations of poets inhabited, Gleize unpacks how experimental ways of working today become 'subjects ... for practical "democracy"' (par. 9). The active refusal to ignore current modes of expression and mass culture, such as, 'media, screens, collections of official statements, assemblage, sampling, various *détournements*, etc.,' (par. 9) all become viable approaches in post-poetry (as well as such media being utilised in performance writing). Gleize examines this 'retreat' into a conglomeration of texts:

[The retreat] indicates a neutral stance, an indifference to concerns of content (even an

unspoken adherence to what they do convey), or whether to the contrary these poets [Gleize included] subscribe to a perspective comprising a form of active “resistance” to these formats, these contents, these modes of circulation and public display, etc. These “after-writings” — [aka post-poetry] after the dissolution of dogmas, after the last wave of avant-garde theorizing and sectarianism, with faces both of the “ironic” and of the “serious” (collage-writing, investigative or documentary writing) — can doubtless be read as critical but no less as preserving for the reader their share of ambiguity and constitutive undecidability. (par. 8)

The resistance is in the words, in the excess, the noise, and the

unmaking and remaking the ceaseless superflux of immaterial information ... by resisting just the same ... ceaseless flow of images, which occupy our space, screen-walls that separate us from each other and from reality. (par. 11)

The approaches to writing in the above quotations, and what points to the post-poetry movement, *postpoésie*, is centred around the French journal *Nioques*. The journal, which emerged in 1990, when it was created by Gleize, is today published by La Fabrique out of Paris (Thomas 2008: 33).

Tarnac: A Preparatory Act

Gleize’s collection, *Tarnac: A Preparatory Act*, uses images, documentary writing, iteration, and re-versioning, or in other words, *dispositif* writing, aka *postpoésie* (post-poetry). The re-doable qualities of Gleize’s approach pertain to the use of the verb ‘act’ and his materials of collage, influenced by *détournement*; incongruously juxtaposing collage and montage is done with a critical aim (2014a: par. 21). He hijacks the legal term of a preparatory act — an act performed in preparation of a terrorist offence — to intensify the political and poetic ideas in the collection. The book as site, and in this case, the site of action, is acknowledged by Gleize, ‘since books are themselves acts, I think’ (par. 35). Gleize dedicates his book to the Tarnac 9 (Tarnac 10 following a later arrest), Julien Coupat and ‘his comrades’.

In this collection Gleize challenges the pretence of the poetry book. The front cover features an ad hoc somewhat botched-up job of using a black marker to cover something else, pointing to these other kinds of textual matters: McKenzie’s dialects of written language. Easy detective work notes traces of fingerprints from a hand that once used a liquid ink. The conventions of how a cover for a poetry collection cover ought to appear are broken. The cover indicates this will not be a ‘re-poetry’ literary text.

Both the material and textual sites in Gleize’s work are a performativity of writing. The textual becomes the material as shown on the cover, and the notion of ‘ad hoc’ pertains to the act of the instant which uses chance, a relevant way of working in some areas of performance (Lynch 2016: 212).

The chance of finding a polaroid picture in the old town of Assisi, a province of Perugia, Umbria, Italy, coheres much of the material. Assisi, home to the venerated Saint Francis, the spiritual aspirant, is

referenced in Gleize's grandfather's writing from Tarnac (2014a: 36), covering the feast day of Saint Francis, 8 October, across six of these feast days from 1952-1958.

The preparatory act is a black positive, an oxymoronic phrase. The image found in Assisi is never documented, unlike the other images in the collection. We simply have to take the speaker's word for it, but a black positive is easily forged, and as Wall-Romana comments, 'fundamentally negative', which becomes a 'reinvention' (2011: 451).

Black is a feature of this collection, from the material blacked out cover to the textual writings of black throughout. For example, 'In this film an image is said to be "black at the center"' (Gleize 2014a: 107) and 'You were asking me how to photograph the night' (13). Indeed, black is Gleize's poetics: 'It [poetry] should be prose, an actual prose, flat and neat, in black, just as if it were a mere copy of life' (Gleize qtd. in Thomas 2008: 35); or, 'transmitted like a sentence, black ball at the beginning (still black) or like an image that time had not yet revealed, subject to several years of black rains' (Gleize 2014a: 68). As to the 'image that time had not yet revealed', the speaker describes the process of gathering the documented images — that the preparatory act is done retrospectively (13).

Additionally, Gleize draws a relationship to the different dialects of written language and in this case the typology of writing:

The surface of writings is like the mirror of lakes, rivers, streams. It seems to reflect the uppermost sky, but this uppermost sky is in truth only the reflection of the sky caught in water.

He acknowledges:

Meanwhile the image covers the image / *until it becomes a deviated dialect writing*. [Author's italics] (95)

Images, therefore, are also a shape of writing, as clearly indicated in the phrase: 'I=M=A=G=E' (85) echoing the layout and 'equals' sign originally used by the *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* poets to emphasise the *act* of language — and of course by the New American poets, which includes Black Mountain, the generation before the Language Poets. Interestingly, Gleize includes '*A=N=G=E*' (angels, not translated) in the same style and therefore invoking the act of the Language Poets. One might even take the angel as akin to enlightenment, or the Enlightenment (89).

Gleize outlines his process of poetry when referring to one of his earlier publications, *Simplification lyrique* (1987). Here again the process is akin to the descriptions of performance writing approaches, and the embodied inscribing of language, as given in Olson's charter:

I speak of a series of acts, not in a theatrical sense, but as a reference to the idea of a concrete practice, featuring real situations, physical movements, and gestures that might lead to a certain number of effects. (Gleize 2014a par. 15)

Hence, Gleize's ways of working — 'act', 'enquiry', 'documentary', 'movement', 'gesture' — are all fitting dispositions of performance writing, and akin to Olson's charter, but his work addresses another dimension: the political.

Gleize's relationship with Tarnac is personal. He was born there, raised there, has read his poetry there, and has family both living and buried in Tarnac. Most people know Tarnac as a targeted terrorist cell: Tarnac 9 (later becoming Tarnac 10). On 11 November 2008, a quiet commune in Tarnac was overrun by more than 160 police in helicopters and vans. They descended on the peaceful commune comprised of alternative life-stylers, those who have taken alternative action in a world of 'governments of wheeler-dealers and merchants' (Gleize 2013).

The invasion in the Tarnac commune leaves the trace of trauma.^[vi] The commune is a group mostly of young people who share political and philosophic interests (Clover qtd in Gleize 2014: 166). The speaker shows, with documented evidence, their relationship with Tarnac and the impact of the invasion, through a black positive experience of 'nothing left between God and us' and 'no photograph of the garden' (64) to the final Section 17, titled, 'Scraps'. The speaker expresses the despair and sense of hopelessness, 'A stream of blood to the offertory. A God emptied' (46). The scraps reiterate those such as the found polaroid, 'black tossed, refuse' but this refuse, these scraps, are also a redoing, a remaking. The speaker in this final section of the collection is again eliciting performance writing approaches — repetition, iteration, the redoing — in other words, working with the materiality and text; the activity of writing:

On the very last page, the definition given for the word "scraps" seemed an allusion to cutting, pasting, placing, juxtaposition, this settling of matter in suspension, in a state of slow decomposition. (152)

The repetitive actions and the materiality of writing fit not only performance writing dispositions but also refer to the notion of Freud's drive. Some scholars writing on matters of performance writing have used repetition and iteration interchangeably; there is however a difference, both in psychoanalysis and literature. Most notably, Gertrude Stein is a case for the latter, while Freud noted repetition as a condition of the Death Drive. Here, Gleize's way of working brings both iteration and repetition into focus. The action of repetition as 'mnemonic trace', a phrase Gleize uses to describe his way of working (2014a: 37), is used in psychology to describe that which ruptures the protective shield of Freud's biological Death Drive theory. The acts of repetition to master the trauma — that of the rupturing of Tarnac — become scraps paired by Gleize in the above description with iterative dispositions of performance writing: cutting, pasting, placing, juxtaposing to settle 'matter in suspension' (37). Moreover, Gleize refers to working with an 'anterior present' (37) in this writing, which resonates with Olson's position of a 'reality now' and how one self's bearing contributes toward this (Olson 1974: 12-13). For Gleize, both his childhood and present occur simultaneously: the past continues as present — in process, just as the material, the scraps, are also a writing in process (Gleize 2014a: 37). The speaker who works with 'scraps' is in a repetitive act of trying to assemble that which will eventually acquiesce to decomposition — not of composition: 'there is only dust left, and the child disappears into the dust and into the image of dust' (Gleize 2014: 89). Thus, the decomposition is Olson's 'not of composition' outlined in his charter (1974: 12-13). Decomposition is the antithesis of production, and the process of 'scraps' speaks to an undoing, rather than a making. Gleize develops his concept of 'de-composition' into re-doing, re-iteration, or 're-composition'; 'de-composition ... also carries with it the history of a re-composition' (2014a: par. 43).

For Gleize, this matter of non-production then is also a political issue:

I often find myself caught in something of a quandary about production, since everything inevitably seems to be recuperated by the capitalist machine. I wonder if it wouldn't be best to stay silent, not to produce, to refuse to participate. This is what the Tarnac people did, in a sense. I feel haunted by certain questions: How can we not contribute to the ambient noise? How do we continue to contribute to a culture that does not address its financial contradictions, one that is encountering a severe failure of its institutions (think of the crisis in the university), or whose production of theory and knowledge is often seen as elitist? (2014a par. 3)

On the final page of *Tarnac*, following the Contents (given in reverse order although the French copy begins with the Contents) is a quotation, also found on the last page in the French copy: 'of nothing lie' (2014: 163). The speaker draws on the philosophical conundrum of truth and lies, as well as the philosophical question of reality, where nothing may lie beyond — in this case, the final page. This statement references the commonly used phrase, 'nothing more than a lie', and variations on this. However, rather than the statement being dismissive, it is instructive. It may or may not point to the preparatory act, but the inverted syntax opens out uncertain and multiple meanings. It is both acting with the w/reader and unveiling the pretence of writing's performativity. Gleize says his work is orientated toward the present and what is to come. He explains:

[The position of my work is] what I might call an anterior present, mnemonic traces, the present of childhood that persists in a very sensible and material way, and with a present to come. It is in this sense a stratified present, a present in *acts*, waiting and preparing for what is to come. (2014a: 37, author's italics)

To this present/future, Gleize quotes, earlier in the collection, from Section 164 of Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), the seminal text for the Situationist movement:

The world already has the dream of such a time; it has yet to come into possession of the consciousness that will allow it to experience its reality. (qtd in Gleize 2014: 90)

Debord's Section 164 is at the end of Chapter Six, 'Spectacular Time'. In Gleize's book there is a similarly titled section, 'Real Time', but Gleize quotes Debord's Section 164 at the end of the penultimate section, before 'Building Cabins', the final section in Gleize's collection. It is apparent Gleize has structured this work in sections echoing those of Debord's text and the anonymously written (though rumoured to be attributed to those from Tarnac 9) *The Coming Insurrection*. The sub-headings are instructive, or descriptive, as are those in the aforementioned texts. In both *The Coming Insurrection* and *Tarnac* is the section 'Insurrection,' while other headings have a similar orientation.

Gleize presents the section 'TRNC' without the vowels for Tarnac, which gives the appearance of the inscription above Christ on the cross: *INRI*. Only the Catholic crucifix bears the inscription on the cross and reference to it here heralds Saint Francis, whose awakening to a life of martyrdom came when the San Damiano cross instructed him to repair 'my church' before he was due to go into battle. The crucifix emblemises holy suffering. *INRI* is the acronym of the Latin phrase for Jesus of

Nazareth, King of the Jews, also written in Greek, and Hebrew. Hebrew script does not write out the vowels; therefore, with Hebrew letters the phrase reads (right to left) *ישוע הנוצרי ומלך היהודים*, inscribed as *יהוה* or *YHWH* (John 19: 19). *TRNC* then is an allusion to the suffering of the Tarnac 9, and their ‘resurrection’ will be the coming insurrection.

Gleize’s work is political, not as a manifesto, but through the act of intensifying writing, and he says, ‘there is no solution ... writing has no purpose but to intensify the questions’ (2013: par. 11). Gleize offers experimental poetry as a site for experimental politics: ‘Experimental politics, at significant distance from political institutions, are or should be in principle like experimental art and poetry, by definition’ (2014a: 3). He uses the metaphor of building cabins to describe the act of experimental writing and experimental politics:

It is for us to build our own cabins and the paths which connect them (these may be journals, editorial microstructures, alternative circuits of distribution), and if our cabins are destroyed, we rebuild them elsewhere without becoming discouraged. (2013: par. 12)

The poet is ‘more-than’, for the text is ‘more-than’. Therefore, both the commune and the building of cabins are places to live and approaches to writing.

Gleize's collection of essays, *Altitude zéro* (1997), depicts on the cover a gathering of blue collar workers, all in overalls, a uniform that echoes Gleize’s left-winged politics. As mentioned, Gleize identifies as a Maoist and militant (Clover qtd in Gleize 2014: 165) and these ideas are iterated in the anonymously written *The Coming Insurrection*, which proposes how to capture State power through insurgence, mobilisation, and other strategies — ideas reiterated in the yellow vest movement: once again, Julien Coupat was arrested, for a preparatory act, this time for having a yellow vest in his car, the irony of course being that it is a legal requirement for drivers to carry a yellow vest (*Commune Act IV*, par. 2).

Revolution is a matter of resonance — how truths resonate between people. Gleize resonates enough with Julien Coupat to dedicate a collection of work to him and his comrades. Gleize asserts that the poet must live in a revolutionary manner, one of resonance (Thomas 2008: 35). Gleize perceptively frames how a revolution is now a musical question (2014: 73). The collection carries the ‘VIBRATION’ of a future resonance, of preparatory acts, in the musical question (73).

The poem in *Tarnac*, ‘A Preparatory Act’, soon follows the opening. Made up of two-line stanzas, it lists statements about how France has reinstated the *lois scélérates*, the ‘criminal conspiracy to commit a terrorist act’ (2014: 15). Of the police behaviour, Gleize explains: ‘antiterrorism is now a technique of government, a mode for managing populations’ (16). The Terrorist Act is the preparatory act which removes accountability of those in power and makes those without power accountable. Another black positive.

The book which follows, the next in what Gleize calls a ‘cycle’, is *Le Livre des cabanes* (The Book of Cabins) (2015). It is a site of building action. The book has not yet been translated into English, but here is a Google translation from the book’s blurb:

We build cabins. We are moving. / We are invisible. / Like angels, we have no names.

/ We all have the same name. / We inhabit your ruins, but. / We call a possible revolution. / We write logic & politics. (Seuil 2015: n.p.)

The act of living, of counterculture, pertains to a revolution through resonance of values not reflected in capitalist proclivities. It would appear that Gleize identifies his work, his poetry, with counterculture, alternative acts of living, rather than writing 're-poetry' for popular culture/consumption. His work is the preparatory act of writing in a post-poetry era for the present future.

Olson's suggestions laid out in the Black Mountain College charter, which would go on to support dispositions of performance writing, chime resonantly with *dispositif* writing or post-poetry. Even if one does not resonate with Maoism, any critical artist is likely to identify with Gleize's concerns as to what the role of writing and poetics is today. Post-poetry might just be a good cabin to build, with a black picket-fence.

[i] Phonocentrism, within the craft of writing, is the assumption that language through voice is immediate, original, and not constrained like writing. Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (2002), claims 'no linguistic sign before writing' (84). In doing so, Ong introduces phonocentrism as inherent in the use of voice. Tracing all written communication back to orality, including thought, Ong argues Jacques Derrida made an oversight. Derrida's logocentrism challenges Ong's phonocentrism (immediacy and hence superiority of speech to writing).

[ii] It is argued Olson's use of postmodern was one of the first instances of the phrase. George F Butterick gives an excellent account of Olson's thinking on postmodernism in *Charles Olson and the Postmodern Advance* (1980). Butterick claims Olson is the first to use the term 'post-modern' and not Arnold Toynbee as Michael Koehlër claims (8). Additionally, Margaret Rose who reiterates Toynbee's use references Michael Kohlër, although she spells his surname 'Koehler' (101).

[iii] There has not been the space, nor has it been the focus of this essay, to trace the developments and links from Surrealism and the Avant-Garde to Black Mountain, Dartington College of Arts, and Gleize's work. However, there are many crossovers, from Josef and Anni Albers at Black Mountain to the 'Lost Generation' in Paris, and the relationship between French and American poetry. Of the latter, Double Change, a French-based group of poets and academics have been actively involved in the relationship between French and American poetics. Some of those involved with Double Change have also been involved in the translation of some of Gleize's work.

[iv] Karan Barad's intra-action is relevant to Olson's 'objectism' and there is a plausible argument for the relationship between these positions and Gleize's poetics, discussed later.

[v] Google Translate

[vi] Tarnac Commune published *Tiqquin*, a former philosophical journal which was dissolved in 2001. The phrase is now used to describe a philosophical concept which emerged from these texts. It is possible some people from the Tarnac commune were involved with the Invisible Committee who authored in 2007 *Insurrection qui vient*, later translated and published in English as *The Coming*

Insurrection (Clover qtd. in Greize 2014: 166).

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