

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

TISH Magazine 1961-1969:

another “sense of things”

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled “*TISH Magazine 1961-1969: another ‘sense of things’*” submitted by Derek Alexander Beaulieu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

The original nineteen issues of *TISH* magazine edited by Fred Wah, George Bowering, Frank Davey and others have been studied extensively. However, although they have not been reprinted or studied, the twenty-six issues produced in the six years after those editors left the magazine continued to be a working ground for the Vancouver literary community. “*TISH Magazine 1961-1969: another ‘sense of things’*” examines both *TISH* the magazine, and its various imprints and associated projects: *TISHtapes*, *TISHbooks* and *MOTION: a prose newsletter*. The magazine and its imprints were nodes for community exploration and gradually became charged spaces for social and political activism. This thesis examines the post Davey et al issues of *TISH* as a single node within a rhizomatic network of communities and transcribes and indexes *TISH* issues 20 through 45(E) as well as *MOTION* numbers 1 through 6 returning these issues to print and allowing further study.

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for Madeleine

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It begins
slowly, takes us
unaware, increasing
numbers — the numbers of them, the blood
stirs, then we are
moving together
into waves.

[...]

Gathering
formation, purposeful
motion, and yes we
shake the ground
steadily.

Peter Auxier, “Burrard Hill” *TISH* 23

Introduction: Story and History / Memory and Anecdote

Literary activity is never separate from the various contexts, situations and circumstances it arises from. In many respects, it is precisely the contexts and materials that really define it.

Barry McKinnon, “The Caledonia Writing Series”

Accounts of little magazines, small presses and literary communities often rely on “oral histories,”¹ faint recollections and oft-repeated legends. Barry McKinnon, in his 1983 recollection of the *Caledonia Writing Series* (1972-1980), referred to it as “a cupboard full of books, a bibliography, a stream of images [...] memory, and anecdote” (“The Caledonia Writing Series” 2). “Memory, and anecdote,” relied on for the history of small magazines and communities, lead to over-generalization and sweeping categorization:

[a]ny period of literary activity is always more complex than the eventual generalizations that might be made out it, yet the act of

¹ For example Robinson’s interviews with Gladys Hindmarch and Stan Persky, or the interviews with Daphne Marlatt, Lionel Kearns and others in Barbour’s Beyond TISH.

history inevitably leads to the large and convenient category: *this* group or *that* group [...] in *this* or that time and place.

(McKinnon “Introduction” 5; original emphasis)

This thesis examines a particular literary community: the writers involved with Vancouver’s magazine *TISH: a poetry newsletter* from 1961 through 1969. It is primarily a historical study, but it is both interrupted by and interpreted through literary theory. As such, it reflects on not just a sequence of events, but also the literary artifacts and writing practices that were produced from those events.

If history consists of important dates and individuals, literary communities call into question history’s “distinction between what may be called the outside and the inside of an event” (Collingwood 251). Looking at *TISH*’s history in terms of hierarchical structures and genealogies privileges a single source, a single historical precedent instead of the organic growth inherent in community development. For the purposes of this thesis, it is more useful to approach *TISH*’s literary community and history as rhizomatic non-hierarchical structures, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari, as opposed to a tree-based or “arborescent system:”

Accepting the primacy of hierarchical structures amounts to giving arborescent structures privileged status In a hierarchical system, an individual has only one active neighbor, his or her hierarchical

superior. (Rosenstiehl and Petitot as quoted in Deleuze and Guattari 16)

This approach allows for the amorphous gathering of like-minded individuals that eventually leads to the publication of *TISH* and the formation of poetic and political communities, “a formation that allows for diverse local and regional narratives of emergence and intervention” (Butling and Rudy 27). Historical exploration tends to be genealogical, though literary activity “defies a conventional chronological history” (McKinnon “The Caledonia Writing Series” 2). By exploring *TISH*’s “stems and filaments that seem to be roots,” a move can be made to recuperate *TISH* as an “acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying system [...] defined solely by the circulation of states” (Deleuze and Guattari 15, 21). An “acentered” system, *TISH* can be seen as a network of interactions; nodes where connections were made and grown:

journals occupy a crucial node in a network which both begins and ends with the educational formation of those who write, edit, and publish texts, and those who consume them. (Davey Canadian Literary Power 107)

These nodes, throughout *TISH*’s rhizomatic “antigenealogy,” take the form of people, classes, conferences, readings, lectures and as one would expect within any community, friendships, relationships and personal connections.

Examinations of *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter*² — a Vancouver based poetry magazine published between 1961 and 1969 primarily by students at the University of British Columbia — are no exception to this casual attitude toward history. At a 1985 round-table discussion on *TISH*, Lionel Kearns observed that “what [he] like[s] about *TISH* is that its *legend* keeps on developing with the years” (Niechoda and Hunter 90; original emphasis).³ Despite three book-length studies of *TISH* magazine — Keith Richardson’s Poetry and the Colonized Mind: *TISH*, C.H. Gervais’ The Writing Life: Historical and Critical Views of the *TISH* Movement and Douglas Barbour’s Beyond *TISH*, a special issue of *West Coast Line* — and Frank Davey’s full reprinting of *TISH* issues 1 through 19, there is still no written history of its founding (the focus of the first chapter of this thesis: “*TISH* Happens”), its relation to the accompanying fiction newsletter *MOTION*, or to the *TISHbooks* imprint (the focus of the second chapter: “Black Mountain,

² I have chosen to silently standardize the capitalization of *TISH* instead of *Tish* through-out this thesis without the disruptive “[sic]” although there is little agreement as to correct capitalization. I believe that the fully capitalized spelling foregrounds the anagram of the title — which will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

³ Lionel Kearns is cited in Niechoda and Hunter’s “A *TISH*story;” a transcription of a 1985 roundtable discussion with several *TISH* editors and contributors. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

*TISH*books and *MOTION*”). Neither is there reflection on the interaction of the *TISH* editors with the speakers at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference or the subsequent twenty-six issues of the magazine that appeared before its folding in 1969, the focus of the third and final chapter of this thesis, “1963 and after: *seen* and *scene*.”

Much of the written history of *TISH* defaults to what Thomas Carlyle referred to as the “great-men” model of history:

great men, their manner of appearance in our world’s business, how they have shaped themselves in the world’s history, what ideas men formed of them, what work they did; on heroes namely, and on their reception and performance; what I call hero-worship. (Carlyle n. pag)

Moreover, the original nineteen issues of *TISH*, as edited by Frank Davey, Fred Wah, George Bowering, Jamie Reid and David Dawson, have garnered the majority of academic and historical study to the detriment of the later six years of *TISH*’s publication. Ken Norris’ The Little Magazine in Canada 1925-1980: Its Role in the Development of Modernism and Post-Modernism in Canadian Poetry (1984), for example, dedicates thirty-one pages to *TISH* issues 1 through 19 and

subsequent magazines founded by the original editors,⁴ but only three pages to *TISH* 20 through E[45]⁵ and its relationship with other magazines:

[d]espite the fact that the magazine continued for six years after the first editorial period and served well various factions of the Vancouver literary scene, the important work done by *TISH* is contained in the first nineteen numbers. (Norris 122)

C.H. Gervais' The Writing Life: Historical & Critical Views of the *TISH* Movement (1976), published as a “companion volume” to Davey’s *TISH* No. 1-19 (1974) makes no mention of the post-1963 period of *TISH*’s publication (Gervais “Preface” 12). Literary history — like any history — is written by the powerful, and *TISH*’s history is no exception, “[i]t rewards and reinforces the patriarchal values of dominance, aggressiveness and competitiveness, qualities that were noticeably lacking” in the later editorial period of *TISH* (Butling “Hall of Fame Blocks Women” 65). Bowering, Davey and Wah — the “heroes” of the original

⁴ George Bowering’s *Imago* (1964-1974), Frank Davey’s *Open Letter* (1965-date) and Fred Wah’s *Sum* (1964-1965).

⁵ *TISH* was sequentially numbered for issues 1 through 43, issue 44 and 45 were lettered “D” and “E.” This shift in numbering system will be addressed in chapter three.

editorial period of *TISH* — all eventually gained positions of academic power⁶ guaranteeing that the original issues would continue to be discussed and studied. The bias of the original editors towards the first nineteen issues has been reflected both in criticism published to date on *TISH* and in their personal statements:

I didnt [sic]⁷ like the idea of the magazine's continuing with a new set of editors after its run, although I wouldn't have minded seeing them do a magazine with a slightly different direction. (Bowering "Interview with Barry McKinnon" 16)

The majority of criticism to date on *TISH* has focused on the first nineteen issues and has appeared through the efforts of the original editors with several articles appearing in Frank Davey's journal *Open Letter* as well as the special Beyond

⁶ George Bowering was recently (2002) named Canada's first Parliamentary Poet Laureate and taught at Simon Fraser University, University of Alberta (at Calgary), University of Western Ontario and Sir George Williams (Concordia) University; Frank Davey is the Carl F. Klinck Professor of Canadian Literature at the University of Western Ontario; Fred Wah recently retired after teaching at the University of Calgary for fourteen years.

⁷ Through-out the thesis I have chosen to retain the original pacing and idiosyncratic spelling used by the authors by avoiding the invasive [sic] or square brackets: [/], unless where required for clarity.

TISH issue of *West Coast Line* on which George Bowering appeared as a member of the editorial board.

Robert Hogg, an editor of *TISH*'s companion magazine *MOTION: A Prose Newsletter* (which will be discussed at greater length later in chapter two), and editor of *TISH* 25 and 26 notes “the orig. editors seem to have a vested interest in seeing *TISH* 1-19 as sacrosanct, the original thing” (Hogg, E-mail). The work of later editors, dismissed as having “no distinctive character” (Richardson 51) is marginalized as “lack[ing ...] argumentative energy” — a “comparatively staid” journal that had “ceased to engage its readership with material which purported to break ground poetically” (Richardson 55, 65). Richardson’s dismissal of *TISH* numbers 20 through E[45] because it failed to “break ground poetically” fully embraces Ezra Pound’s modernist edict to “Make it New:”

Tching prayed on the mountain and

wrote MAKE IT NEW

on his bath tub

Day by day make it new

cut underbrush,

pile the logs

keep it growing.

(*Cantos* LIII, 264-65)

By not continuing to “pile the logs / keep it growing,” *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter* — if measured by its dedication to Pound’s edict — betrays its very title by not remaining dedicated to the *new* in “newsletter.” *TISH* 20 through E[45] did lack the “argumentative energy” of the original issues, but it was perhaps a creative space that no longer needed to be a literary proving ground. Charles Bernstein questions the “valorization of confrontation and initiation” as the “surest signs of poetic authenticity” (Bernstein 165), an argument that can easily be applied to the later issues of *TISH*. *TISH* did not engage in “confrontation and initiation” but rather continued to locate itself within a community, in relationship to other centres:

proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing [...] the middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. (Deleuze and Guattari 25)

A constant dedication to *the new*, however, does not guarantee growth; “‘the new’ [...] will be overcome and made obsolete through the novelty of the next style” (Habermas 92). As I will argue, *TISH* 20 through E[45] have not been studied because of the relatively low profile of its editors since their period with *TISH*.

* * *

This thesis also includes four appendices. The first is a full transcription of *TISH* numbers 26 through E(45) returning these issues to print and enabling further examination of the material in each issue. The second appendix is an index to those issues in the same format as Frank Davey's *TISH No. 1-19* (1974). The last two appendices are a similar treatment for *MOTION: a prose newsletter*; a full transcription of all six issues of *MOTION* (1962) as well as a full index of the contents of those issues. By transcribing and indexing these issues this thesis enables further study of the later issues of *TISH* and the entire publication history of *MOTION*. Transcriptions of *TISH* were made from photocopies of the holdings at the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, SUNY Buffalo, and from the author's collection. Transcriptions of *MOTION* were made from photocopies of the holdings at the University of Calgary. *TISH* issues 20 through E[45] and *MOTION* issues 1 through 6 are transcribed into *Microsoft Word 2002* and are included in this thesis on the enclosed CDROM. Issues have been transcribed so as to maintain as much of the original formatting as possible, including page breaks and the use of white space. Typographic devices have been kept intact, including underlining, italics and the use of capital letters. Throughout the manuscript double dashes (--) have been replaced with em-dashes (—). A few spelling errors were silently corrected without the use of *[sic]* or any sort of editorial invasion; for example in *TISH* 21 the phrase "In hope of peach through art" has been silently corrected to "In hope of peace through art" as the context of the original letter

indicates (page 11). I have given no editorial preference to either British or American spellings, instead I have left spellings to reflect the original authors' intentions. The few passages that were unreadable due to poor reproduction (in the mimeograph publications) have been indicated by "[...]." Due to the technical limitations of mimeograph printing, it was extremely awkward and time-consuming to correct errors during the original typesetting of *TISH* and *MOTION*. Accordingly, errors were usually struck-through by a line of *X*'s or forward slashes ("/") with the corrected text alongside the cancelled errors. These corrections in the originals obviously affect line spacing and length. *TISH* 28, for example, contains the following line in Sam Perry's "Osseous Roots":

(to ~~put between the lips~~ insert between the lips (9)

I have removed the cancellation marks and the offending text in my transcription, restoring the line as:

(to insert between the lips

in order to preserve the poet intended pacing and use of the page as compositional field.

I have also maintained page size; 8 ½" x 14" (legal size) for *MOTION* issues 1 through 6 and *TISH* issues 20 through 40; and 8 ½" x 11" (letter size) for *TISH* issues 41 through E [45]. The original page numbering has been excluded from this transcription in favour of page numbers inserted on the lower-right hand corner of each issue. Page numbers were rarely included in the original issues, and

for the purpose of this transcription, and in the interest of facilitating further research, page numbers have been included. Unlike Davey's transcription of *TISH* issues 1 through 19, this transcription also includes all cover illustrations in order to give an accurate representation of the format and packaging of each issue (although coloured cover stock has not been noted or duplicated).

Transcribing the 26 issues of *TISH* and 6 issues of *MOTION* which have not been reprinted since their original publication gave me a new respect for the labour involved in mimeograph publishing especially when a monthly deadline was involved as was the case with *TISH* and *MOTION*. The amount of labour involved in transcribing and re-typesetting each of the issues of *TISH* and *MOTION* not only gave me an opportunity to read each text closely, but it also echoed the original act by the *TISH* editors of typing each issue onto mimeograph stencils. I can't help but imagine that the actual labour involved in typing the stencils for each issue may have been a contributing factor to the slipping publication schedule of latter issues.

* * *

Davey has made no secret about privileging space in his journal *Open Letter* to "chang[e] the climate so that the kind of writing [he] respects can have an easier existence" (Davey "Starting at our Skins" 100). Davey felt that "the literary

environment [was] unsatisfactory” in terms of criticism on his own writing and that of his contemporaries, and searched for “alternate ways of criticism, which would be more useful to the writers and would do a better job of dealing with their work” (Davey “Starting at our Skins” 100). To the extent that a text’s literary power comes not with its “short-term circulation but with its persistence in cultural memory” (Davey Canadian Literary Power 106) the original issues of *TISH* have gained a cultural cachet that the later issues have not, largely through the efforts of the original editors. If “the ones best served seem to be those who serve themselves” as Davey suggests in Canadian Literary Power (130) then the lack of critical attention to the later issues of *TISH* is the fault of its editors. Richardson suggests that the later issues suffered because they “ceased to [...] break ground poetically” (Richardson 65), a reading which Davey supports by arguing that the initial series of *TISH* was more important because it “caused writing to become in those two years the dominant concern of each of the five editors” (Davey “Introduction” *TISH* No. 1-19 10). Davey argued that because writing was not always the “dominant concern” of later editors, their work should be given less attention or regard. This seems a faulty argument, foregrounding a single art form over the possibility of the interaction between genres or forms, as well as the possibility of informing “outside” fields such as social politics (as in the case of Jamie Reid), underground / social politics and publishing (Dan McLeod) or teaching (Bob Hogg). In a later interview, Davey argues that “[p]eriodicals should

have this catalytic role where they help [...] writing come into being” (Davey “Starting at our Skins” 101). Little magazines are historically new frameworks created and needed by new writers, or writers that are politically marginalized, but they are also spaces for the development of interests outside of the literary arts. *TISH* exemplifies how a community of writers can bring different — or complementary — interests to the fore.

Chapter One: *TISH* happens

[T]he fact that *TISH* Magazine was happening is a lot more interesting than the poems that were written in it.

George Bowering⁸

In an untitled poetic statement in *TISH* 1, Jamie Reid describes poetry as “[a] total response to what is happening” (*untitled* 14), placing the poem within a space, to “‘place’ the things instead of / it wallowing around sort of outside, in the / universe” (Olson 17). Ken Norris argues that the Canadian modernist magazine — a category within which he includes *TISH* — was pervaded with “a sense of the present, of living in a new age, of breaking with the past and its accumulations of traditions” (1). This “sense of the present” was enacted in *TISH* as “a record of ongoing literary activity, a record that preserved every roughness, insight and stupidity that this activity enclosed” (Davey “Introducing *TISH*” 150). *TISH*’s record of “roughness, insight and stupidity” suggests not only a confidence in working outside of the normative literary tradition, but also a concentration on place whereby “nationalism gives way to a personal localism, not the *place* where

⁸ George Bowering is cited in Niechoda and Hunter’s “A *TISH*story;” a transcription of a 1985 roundtable discussion with several *TISH* editors and contributors. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

you are, but the place where *you* are” (Tallman “Wonder Merchants” 185; original emphasis). This “personal localism” in terms of *TISH* is one of community, intellectual / poetic and personal / geographic:

Writing now is a response to what is happening now [...] and anyone who wishes simply to refer to the badness (or goodness) of modern poetry must be prepared to reject what happens in the world it lives in as well. (Cull “a review” 7; original emphasis)

* * *

TISH was founded in August 1961 by George Bowering, Frank Davey, David Dawson, James Reid and Fredric Wah, all students of Warren Tallman’s at University of British Columbia.

If it were that easy to explain *TISH*’s literary history then this would be a rather short chapter, based almost entirely on dates and names. Instead what follows is a series of historical nodes describing spaces where the writers and editors of *TISH* gathered. This chapter is not a genealogical examination proving some sort of literary pedigree⁹ or a roadmap placing *TISH* as a final destination for a group of

⁹ See Beverly Mitchell’s “The Genealogy of *TISH*” Open Letter 2:3 (Fall, 1972): 32-51 as an example of the literary justification that I am trying to avoid.

travelers; it is an acentered rhizomatic exploration of creative sites, individuals and events.

The 1958-59 creative writing classes at the University of British Columbia, and the classes of Jake Zilber, Elliott Gose, Tony Friedson and Earle Birney, were initial nodes for the gathering younger writers of Vancouver. These initial classes were a “focal point” (Hindmarch 31) for writers Gladys [Maria] Hindmarch and Frank Davey, both of whom would eventually be involved with *TISH* Magazine. The political structure of these classes, as Hindmarch discusses in “Before *TISH*: from *Oral History of Vancouver*,” were constructed in a way that not only limited “individual thought and perception” but were also traditionally structured around individual achievement and grades (Hindmarch 31). As an undergraduate, Hindmarch found the structure of the class rather limiting, and was “mark-oriented” which provided difficulties when issues of voice and parody arose during interactions with Frank Davey, when Davey received higher grades for parodies of Hindmarch’s poems than she did for the originals (Hindmarch 31).¹⁰ Additionally, Hindmarch found that her grades improved from “70-75%” to “A marks” only after an improvisational piece of hers was accepted in New York by

¹⁰ Davey himself realizes that satire and parody were “cheap shot[s], and easy tricks[s].” He notes that he “got an ‘A’ from Jake Zilber in the 202 course by absolutely transfiguring my grades [...] by parodying Gladys Hindmarch’s poetry” (Davey in Bowering, “Starting at our Skins” 122).

Mademoiselle magazine (Hindmarch 32). The cachet of publishing in a “magazine devoted to the changing lifestyle of the 20-something woman” (homeonthewww.com) meant that “the terms had changed” (Hindmarch 32), that as a published poet the structure of the class and of the grading was now one where her personal achievements could be recognized.

* * *

The 1959-1960 bi-weekly Writers’ Workshop also “set a ground” for younger writers to meet and discuss their own writing in a less formal setting. The Writer’s Workshop brought together students from various UBC English and Creative Writing classes including Gladys [Maria] Hindmarch, Lionel Kearns, George Bowering, David Dawson, Jamie Reid, Fred Wah, Pauline Butling and Frank Davey. Most recollections of the Writers’ Workshop seem to be clouded by Frank Davey’s home-made sake, but these meetings promoted the student’s “find[ing] some way to become articulate” (Niechoda and Hunter 86).¹¹ Daphne Marlatt recalls her introduction to the Writers’ Workshop as being where the

¹¹Frank Davey is cited in Niechoda and Hunter’s “A *TISH*story;” a transcription of a 1985 roundtable discussion with several *TISH* editors and contributors. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

restrictions of the middle-class UBC campus were lessened by a greater feeling of community:

in the fall of 1960 i started my first year at UBC majoring in English fortunately, my English 100 prof. was Tony Friedsen, an engaging teacher & a lively scholar from England who was interested in creative writing. My first year essays were all over the place, probably far from academic, but he recognized something in them & told me about the Writers' Workshop which was meeting informally at rotating professors' houses (including his & his wife's, once anyway) & encouraged me to go. i was having a difficult time adjusting to the size of the campus (having graduated from a small & fairly new high school, Delbrook in North Vancouver) & felt very shy & very naive, but i finally managed to make myself go to a meeting around the end of first term (December '60). that's when i first met Frank [Davey] & George [Bowering], not sure if Fred [Wah] was there, Jamie [Reid] was probably there, Dave Dawson probably — & soon met all the others. these meetings were very stimulating, people would read whatever they'd written recently & everyone responded, there was a lot of laughter & challenge & bonhomie along with the beer (or home-made sake — don't think anyone could afford wine then). (Marlatt, E-mail)

The Writer's Workshop meetings moved through a variety of professor's homes including those of Tony Friedson and Elliott Gose before settling by the end of the academic year at the home of Warren and Ellen Tallman and a discussion around the publication of Donald Allen's The New American Poetry 1945-1960 (1961).

The students and writers involved in these groups came to UBC from a variety of "outside" positions — geographic (Abbotsford, Nelson, Ladysmith, Oliver), economic (working-class) and political (left-wing). These marginalized positions combined with the youth "proved empowering [...] because it led them to look elsewhere for support, encouragement and inspiration" (Butling and Rudy 185). Marlatt, Davey and the other students "definitely felt as if our own interests somehow were met, with the exception of Warren [Tallman], unsympathetically" (Niechoda and Hunter 92-93). The efforts of Ellen and Warren Tallman became a node of support for the *TISH* poets, encouraging their dissension and helped focus their "abrasive energy" (93) initially around their own writing and the study of Allen's The New American Poetry 1945-1960 and later in the pages of *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter* and *MOTION: A Prose Newsletter*.

* * *

Ellen and Warren Tallman came to Vancouver from Berkeley in 1956 to teach at University of British Columbia, and their courses and contacts — not to

mention their personal and financial support and friendship — were nodes of support for this group of young writers and academics. Warren Tallman, self-described as a “typically panicky wimpy English prof” (Tallman In The Midst 204) placed Allen’s The New American Poetry: 1945-1960 on his 1960-61 “Studies in English Poetry” syllabus. Ellen Tallman, who was also an undergraduate English instructor, had known several of the poets of the “San Francisco Renaissance” during her period as a student at Mills College, University of California at Berkeley (Butling and Rudy 199).¹² Both inside and out of the classroom, Warren Tallman created a space where his students could develop their voices and think outside of the academic structures that Hindmarch and Davey had encountered in the 1958-59 creative writing classes. Warren Tallman’s pedagogy foregrounded close and concentrated readings of specific texts, challenging students to work outside of the normative classroom:

Warren’s idea was that university students have to read so much, and they don’t really absorb all the reading, they don’t ever have a chance to absorb it and really think. So why not have a course that is relatively light — not light-hearted, but that the reading load is light and has focus. (Hindmarch 34)

¹² See Elaine Dailey’s “Ellen Tallman, *Sketch by Elaine Dailey*” for details of Ellen Tallman’s period at Mills College.

Warren’s classes were far from “light” as they challenged classroom structure by putting more of the impetus on the students to confront the lecturer as voice of authority:

one of the major things that I learned in my experience with *TISH* was though this technique that Warren had in the classroom, and outside the classroom, called resistance. Warren would always throw up these baffles. Even when he was teaching, he would throw up incredible interpretations of poems, so you’d have to fight back.

(Niechoda and Hunter 89)¹³

By “let[ting] all sorts of things just simply happen” (Hindmarch 34), Tallman was more than a “typically panicky wimpy English prof.” He not only “encourage[d], suppl[ied] beer, and financ[ing]” (Davey *untitled* 10) but he forced his students to *speak*, to have something to say;

So I walk into the kitchen and I say, “Geez Ellen, here they come — what’ll we do?” And Ellen says [...] “Tell them that they’ve got to *say* something.” And then I would very calmly walk into the living

¹³ Fred Wah is cited in Niechoda and Hunter’s “A *TISH*story;” a transcription of a 1985 roundtable discussion with several *TISH* editors and contributors. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

room and say, “Well now, what I think is, you should really *say* something.” (Niechoda and Hunter 90; original emphasis)¹⁴

In addition to asking his students to “really *say* something” Warren Tallman was also instrumental in bringing poets to Vancouver to help foster that exchange. Through Ellen Tallman’s connections in San Francisco, they were able to bring Robert Duncan—a member of the so-called “San Francisco Renaissance” featured in Donald Allen’s The New American Poetry 1945-1960 — to Vancouver for a series of informal lectures in May of 1961.

At the Tallmans’ instigation, Duncan had been to Vancouver before, once in December 1959 for a lecture in the Tallmans’ basement, and in February of 1961 for readings at the Festival of Contemporary Arts. Duncan’s July 1961 visit was organized by Warren Tallman, but within a community-driven structure. The students who had gathered around the Tallmans’ house in the discussions of Allen’s The New American Poetry 1945-1960 did the “absurd but intelligent thing” (Tallman “Wonder Merchants” 177) and each contributed to paying Duncan to spend a period of time in Vancouver.¹⁵ Duncan’s \$105 return airplane

¹⁴ Warren Tallman is cited in Niechoda and Hunter’s “A *TISH*story;” a transcription of a 1985 roundtable discussion with several *TISH* editors and contributors. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

¹⁵ The specific amount each person contributed is somewhat in question, with Butling and Rudy stating \$10 per person (“Writing in Our Time” 185 n.8) and

fare from Berkeley to Vancouver was covered by the poets and their friends, with Ellen and Warren Tallman housing Duncan for the duration of his visit to Vancouver. Duncan delivered three three-hour lectures July 23-25, 1961 (although he stayed for most of August of that year as well) and talked

on Pound, the Imagists, Olson and the *Maximus Poems*, his own ‘Structure of Rime’ poems [...]Creeley, Levertov, Ginsberg, and the early days with Jack Spicer and Robin Blaser during the Romantic ‘Berkeley Renaissance’ of the mid-1940’s. (Tallman “Wonder Merchants” 177)¹⁶

By contributing monetarily, each contributor was personally invested in Duncan’s presence in Vancouver over July and August of 1961. This community-driven action is indicative not of Davey’s claim that “the ones best served seem to be those who serve themselves” (Canadian Literary Power 130) but of action where the ones best served are those who serve each other — a *community*. Duncan’s presence was one of a series of intersections within a community of writers, a single node in a network of rhizomes:

Hindmarch (Niechoda and Hunter, 86) and Tallman (“Wonder Merchants” 30) both stating \$5 per person.

¹⁶ Each of Duncan’s lectures was taped by Fred Wah and is available online at www.slought.net.

when Duncan came up and gave those lectures, there was [...] about a two or three year history for some of us in moving toward being writers ourselves, in helping each other with criticism, or anger, or whatever else would serve as a catalyst. (Niechoda and Hunter 86)

Duncan's informal lectures clarified issues surrounding Allen's anthology and his "vast collection of lore, some familiar, some curious, some startling" (Tallman "Wonder Merchants" 178) introduced to the future *TISH* poets stories of magazines such as *Origin*, Cid Corman's periodical of experimental poetry published in Japan; *Black Mountain Review*, a journal published from Black Mountain College as edited by Charles Olson, Joel Oppenheimer and Robert Creeley; and *The Floating Bear: a newsletter*, Diane di Prima and LeRoi Jones' poetry newsletter; each of which reflected a poetics of a place, a community of writers exploring "freedom from received standards and establishment bias" (Davey "Introducing *TISH*" 152). Warren Tallman continued to bring writers to Vancouver who would prove instrumental to the *TISH* poets, including Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Margaret Avison and Denise Levertov in 1963; and Jack Spicer in 1965 — these visits and their effect on Vancouver communities will be discussed in later chapters.

The *TISH* poets had been interested in venturing into publishing, and as early as 1959, Fred Wah and Lionel Kearns had suggested forming a magazine entitled *Cock* only to be rebuffed, according to Gladys [Maria] Hindmarch by Warren

Tallman's comment "'Start a magazine? You don't write enough, you don't know enough to start a magazine'" (Hindmarch 35). Davey later joked that "whenever you met Fred Wah, you said 'Hello Fred,' and he would reply 'Let's start a magazine'" (Niechoda and Hunter 90). After discussing with Duncan the communities forming around American magazines "the question was shifting from 'should we' to 'how'" (Davey "Introducing *TISH*" 152). Although "Warren sort of objected to it [...] Duncan encouraged" founding a magazine; Warren's objection was not surprising, another of his "baffles," a "manoeuvre on Warren's part — to object — so that they had to have a certain strength, to pull together and do it — which they did" (Hindmarch 36).

The night of Duncan's final lecture, July 25, 1961, was also the night that the soon-to-be-editors settled on a name for the forthcoming magazine. After a suggestion by Duncan they agreed on *TISH*, a phonetic inversion of the word "shit." Discussions centered on a dissatisfaction that many Canadian poems at the time were "synthetic, impersonally fashioned objects" and that the title should reflect a more process-driven poetics (Davey "Introducing *TISH*" 152). *TISH*, as an anagrammatic title, inherently reveals the editors' influences and inspirations — Duncan drew comparison to archaeological examination of coprolites:

[archaeologists] wanted to know what was in the turd [...] 'cause how did you know what the people were eating? You had no idea what the people were eating except in those few fossilized remains.

(Duncan *Lecture* July 23, 1961)

TISH: A Poetry Newsletter, and later *MOTION: A Prose Newsletter*, were explorations of the nodes in writing; spaces to realize and explore both “what the people were eating” and “what was in the turd.”

Chapter Two: *Nodes: Black Mountain, TISHbooks and MOTION*

[E]ach succeeding poem is a realignment of the boundaries.

Jamie Reid¹⁷

i. *TISH* and Black Mountain College

Before the first issue of *TISH* could be edited and published, an editorial group had to form and lay out some direction for the magazine and its structure. The politics of the editorial group were decided the same evening as the decision to publish at all.

Later that evening the politics of the magazine began with the need to select an editor and devise an editorial structure. None of us wanted a strong ‘editor-in-chief’ (not one of us, in fact, trusted the literary judgment of all of his colleagues). Having an editor with veto power seemed of little advantage over submitting our work to alien quarterlies. (Davey “Introducing *TISH*” 153)

TISH 1 (September 1961) lists George Bowering, David Dawson, James Reid and Fredric Wah as “Contributing Editors” and Frank Davey as “Editor” (although Davey’s title shifted to “Managing Editor” with *TISH* 13);

¹⁷ Reid, Jamie. *untitled* (“What’s a poem?...”) in Davey *TISH* No. 1-19. 14.

My election that night was [...] due to my appearing the least doctrinaire of the older editors (Bowering, Wah and myself), and being thus the least threatening to all. (Davey “Introducing *TISH*” 153-154)

This arrangement continued for the initial 19 issues of *TISH*.¹⁸ What the editors had formed was an *editorial collective*; “*TISH* was the first poetry collective around this place, though we didnt use the word” (Bowering, E-mail), with the official editors as a “core” group and other writers, like Gladys [Maria] Hindmarch, Daphne Buckle [Marlatt] and Lionel Kearns involved on the periphery.

Kearns was in fact invited to join *TISH*, but declined over differences in poetics; “I declined to be an editor because I couldn’t agree with the ideas that all my funny friends had about writing and poetry [...] then with the first and second issues I saw what an amazing *medium TISH* was” (Niechoda and Hunter 92; original emphasis). While not an official editor, Kearns’ work would appear in twelve of the first nineteen issues, five of the later twenty-six issues of *TISH* and in his own *TISH*book. He would remain an important voice in the magazine and its editorial group. Each of Kearns, Buckle [Marlatt] and Hindmarch participated in

¹⁸ Although, for some reason, George Bowering’s name is left off the cover of *TISH* 12 entirely. When questioned about the omission for this thesis, neither Bowering nor Davey could offer a reason.

discussions around the magazine and its submissions but were never formally acknowledged as members of the *TISH* collective (both Hindmarch and Buckle [Marlatt] were involved officially in later issues):

every time I went into the cafeteria [at UBC], I would join in a discussion or argument going on about some poem that was being submitted to *TISH*. By the time the next issue came out, I had seen at least half of it. (Hindmarch as quoted in Butling ““Hall of Fame Blocks Women”” 63)

The editorial collective did not foreground a single editor’s vision of the magazine’s direction — editorial decisions were made democratically with each editor receiving a single vote, and a majority vote needed for any piece to be included in the magazine — including any work by the editors themselves. All work was given the same scrutiny, and if found lacking, was excluded. This process helped define, for the editors, their place within a poetic, where “[t]he poet is neither a grader nor a mother. His job is to participate” (Bowering *untitled* 17). Each editor’s own work also had to compare with the quality of work that they receive from other poets, and they were obviously aware of the effect of the collective on their own work:

[...] a poem is a definition a graph a mind to define to locate the poet and to define the temporary momentary boundaries of his awareness.

each succeeding poem is a realignment of the boundaries.

(Reid *untitled* 14)

Association with an editorial collective not only fosters a poet's own personal work, but also aids in the development of a community, a "realignment of the boundaries" of poetic and personal experience. *TISH* was an active space for development, "a newsletter — a record of work-in-progress — rather than a magazine" (Davey "Introducing *TISH*" 154). The division between poetry and personal life broke down within the editorial collective, as "[t]he origin of the poem is an action (interaction, reaction)" (Fred Wah *untitled* 23) within the rhizomatic nodes of community, family and friends — "The Writing Life."¹⁹

The relationship between the editing and writing by *TISH*'s editors and that of its "siring movement" (Davey "Editorial" *TISH* No.1-19 13) — the writers of Black Mountain College, especially Charles Olson and Robert Creeley — has been widely discussed both within *TISH*'s pages and in outside criticism. Black Mountain College, in operation from 1933 through 1956, was a

radically democratic, loosely structured community where forward-thinking artists and scholars could work in a supportive atmosphere, free from bureaucratic procedures, academic traditions, and social

¹⁹ As C.H.Gervais titled his collection of essays on *TISH*, The Writing Life:

Historical & Critical Views of the *TISH* Movement.

regulations that generally dominate American university education.

(Patterson 18)

The faculty and student body of Black Mountain College included poets Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Joel Oppenheimer, Fielding Dawson, Robert Duncan, Ed Dorn as well as the artists de Kooning, Kline, Rauschenberg, Twombly, Motherwell, Fuller, Cage and Cunningham. The influence of Olson, Creeley and Duncan's poetics on the writers of Vancouver was categorized by Robin Mathews as an American "invasion and colonization of a part of the poetic culture of Canada" (7). Richardson's jingoistic study is dismissed by Peter Quartermain as "a misguided and dangerous book," "sloppily produced" by a "slovenly intellect" (84). Richardson castigates the editors of *TISH* for accepting a so-called "U.S. poetic tradition" (13), and claims that the editors "forsook Canadian tradition, denigrated Canadian achievement [...] and sought to supplant the Canadian with the U.S. tradition" (Mathews 9). This concentration on nationalism and tradition, puts emphasis on country of origin instead of the organic, rhizomatic view of history, where

[t]radition is made up of what happens, which may be desirable and which may not. A concern with tradition, in any case, lies outside the work, the working, the art, of the poem. (Quartermain 82)

Richardson's study is rather selective in its evidence for this poetic "invasion," in *TISH* 8, Davey addressed the issue of Canadian-American relations and jingoistic protection of literary tradition:

Poetry is not an international competition. Moreover, poets do not write as patriots, but as men. Their country is merely incidental. Canada does not exist except as a political arrangement for the convenience of individuals accidentally happening to live within its arbitrary area [...] Let's have no more superficial jingoism in poetry. If a man/poet ever comes to represent his homeland or his home town, he will do so inevitably, not intentionally. As for comparisons, the community of poetry is a universal thing, as is man, and political divisions can never apply. (Davey "Editorial" *TISH* No.1-19 155)

Rather than a poetic invasion, or colonization, what Olson's writing suggested to the *TISH* poets was a sense of the *locus* (defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as a "place in which something is situated, locality" or a "subject, head [or] topic"). This sense of locus enabled "fellow-writers [to] become not competitors but citizens-in-language with common assumptions about their roles [...] and with common goals" (Davey "Introduction" 24). This was a rejection of the "'sturdy woodsman' concept of the Canadian poet, self-fathering and self-nourishing" (Davey "Introduction" 18) in favour of the community-driven idea of

belonging to a specific geography, of belonging to the political and social life of that geography, or belonging to both a local community of writers and an international community of writers [...] of being at home in place, community and language. (Davey “Introduction” 19)

While “[p]lace is no more than a man does with it” (Davey “Editorial” *TISH* No.1-19 155), the rhizomatic idea of community and its nodes of activity was to Denise Levertov

a constellation rather than [...] a linear sequence. And in that constellation the major stars are without question the messages of instruction by means of which my intelligence grew keener, my artistic conscience more acute; messages of love, support, and solidarity in the fellowship of poetry. (qtd. in Harris 196)

As “a poetry newsletter — Vancouver,” *TISH* was a *node*, a *locus* within the greater Vancouver arts community²⁰ the magazine both added to and reflected the health of the communities of Vancouver at the time “the poetry isn’t necessarily about the city (most of it isn’t), but in reflection it defines the scene” (Dawson “Editorial” 5). As a node for exploration of community, *TISH*, its imprint, and associated prose magazine *MOTION* “constantly located the ‘sense of things’”

²⁰ See Eva-Marie Kroller’s [George Bowering: Bright Circles of Colour](#) for a discussion of *TISH* as a single node within the Vancouver arts culture of the 1960’s; a “community of correspondences.”

(Dawson “Editorial” 5). The editors of *TISH*, in all of its incarnations, were in the “business of being in a community [...] a kind of introduction to the commitment of the larger community of the language and of poetry” (Bowering “Interview with Caroline Bayard and Jack David” 84).

Bowering’s use of the word “business” suggests an investment in an *economy* of community. This was not a monetary economy, but rather one based more on the idea of the exchange-based gift-economy. That is not to say that matters of finances did not enter into the production of *TISH*; editorial pages often included pleas that *TISH* was “[t]heoretically supported by contributions from its readers” (*TISH* 10 in *TISH* No.1-19 201) and “[n]eeds [f]inancing” (*TISH* 13 in *TISH* No.1-19 251). As Davey recollects, while most issues were distributed solely by mailing list, some issues were distributed through bookstores, particularly Vancouver’s Duthies Books, which

had a small problem with *TISH* [...] it had no price. So [they] invented a price of 25 cents, and agreed that Duthies would get a 40% discount. I left 10 copies and the next month dropped by with ten of the new issue. He solemnly gave me \$1.50 for the sales from his till of his pocket. We repeated this ritual 19 times. About ten years later I learned [...] that he had given most of the copies away.
(Davey “Barcodes on *TISH*” 21)

TISH, like many small magazines, struggled to operate in a marginalized economic position. It needed financial support to sustain mailing costs, printing costs, upkeep and repairs on the presses, but also knew that “the ones best served seem to be those who serve themselves” (Davey Canadian Literary Power 130). Often, Pauline Butling points out, this resulted in “‘liberation’ anecdotes” of stealing materials from the UBC English Department and campus bookstores that “demonstrate the importance of the liberatory impulse” of the *TISH* editors (Butling and Rudy 189). The limited funding often impeded *TISH*'s development, as is demonstrated in *TISH* 13:

NOTICE:

This issue was delayed by the *TISH* printing press' breakdown last month. It has almost been delayed forever by the ensuing repair bill which is still unpaid.

Unless we manage to raise \$35 soon, we will not be able to afford paper for another issue for several months.

Please, if you are interested, send **HELP**

(*TISH* 13 in *TISH* No.1-19 259; original emphasis)

and in *TISH* 14, where obviously reader contributions had continued:

TISH thanks all those readers

who sent money to cover

repair bills. We now have

over one-third of our objective

(*TISH* 14 in *TISH* No.1-19 298; original emphasis)

In the two months since their original plea for financial assistance, the editors were able to continue to raise funds for repairs:

TISH is, of course, deeply grateful to those who have given us financial assistance of late. We have now reached app. ½ of our financial objective to pay off our repair bills

(*TISH* 15 in *TISH* No.1-19 317; original emphasis).

The press breakdown and the ensuing bills did not ultimately adversely affect *TISH*'s publication schedule, but its side venture *TISH*books was severely crippled by these limitations.

ii. *TISH*books and *MOTION*

We were amazingly energetic and regular about getting the magazine out, 19 issues in a row that came out on the 14th of the month [...] But with the books it was just the opposite. We wd let things lie in heaps forever.

George Bowering²¹

During 1962 and 1963 the editors of *TISH*books struggled to print “2 published books, 1 partly finished book ([...]assembled without the knowledge of the

²¹ Bowering, George. E-mail to the author. Fall 2002.

publisher) one unfinished book, and 1 pamphlet” (Davey, E-mail) — Frank Davey’s D-Day and After, Lionel Kearns’ Songs of Circumstance, George Bowering’s Sticks & Stones, Robert F. Grady’s On Walking²² and Samuel Perry’s Personal Locus: Maximus of Gloucester from Dogtown: Charles Olson — respectively. As most of these publications were released in extremely limited editions or were never officially distributed, there is minimal critical work done on them; *TISH*books is not addressed, nor even mentioned, in Gervais’ The Writing Life, Richardson’s Poetry and the Colonized Mind: TISH or in Barbour’s Beyond TISH issue of *West Coast Line*. If the legend of *TISH* “keeps on developing with the years” as Lionel Kearns noted (Niechoda and Hunter 90), *TISH*books have surpassed even that to enter the realm of myth — in some cases there is little evidence of the books’ very existence. Due to this lack of critical work on *TISH*books, I have relied on interviews with the *TISH* editors — especially Frank Davey — to shed light on these understudied editions. While I have already examined the relationship the editors had with each other within the format of the editorial collective of *TISH*, *TISH*books was arranged in a different format:

The *TISH*books were collectively authorized by the five eds, but were not edited by them. We decided which books there would be,

²² Robert F. Grady’s On Walking was not published, and is unavailable in manuscript form.

but left it to the authors to determine the texts that would constitute them. (Davey, E-mail)

Editorially, the publications of the *TISH*books imprint were not technically edited by the *TISH* editors, but rather they were primarily publications by the authors, a more permissive mode for writing and development of the editor's own writing:

[T]he policy was very flexible. If any member of the collective had decided to publish a *TISH*book of his own work, for example, or even perhaps a selection of other *TISH* and non-*TISH* poets, it would be discussed in an informal way among the members of the collective and their friends, and a kind of casual consensus decision would be taken.

I refer to a "collective," but it was never so formal as a full-fledged collective, rather, a loose association of people around the production of the magazine. The only time the core collective was fully operative was in deciding the content for particular issues of the magazine. If myself or Dave Cull for example, had proposed publishing his work as a *TISH*book, the only issue might be who would do the work, and who would pay for it. Usually it would be expected that the author would pay, but there was no body of policy which governed this. The author and whoever might be willing to help him would do the design and the typesetting, organize the cover

design, etc., in very loose consultation with members of the collective, who were mostly prepared to provide whatever help might be necessary. In practice, I would think, the consent of Frank Davey and George Bowering as the most influential members of the editorial board, would have been decisive in arriving at any decision of this kind. Their opposition might easily be overruled by a majority. Things were very loose — in the main, individual members of the collective could easily do what they wanted and obtain support from other members in projects of this kind, I would think. [...] I'm pretty strong in my belief though that if I myself had been ready to publish a small chapbook, the others would have simply said go ahead as long as you pay for it and do the work, and then they would have given me what help and advice they could in completing the project, including loans of money to cover temporary shortfalls, writing intros, etc. (Reid, E-mail)

Reid's conjecture that other manuscripts would have been published if brought forward is only that, conjecture, for as Davey notes, "[t]here were no other books considered" (Davey, E-mail).

The first book published by *TISH*books was Frank Davey's D-Day and After, published in an edition of 400 numbered copies retailing at 65¢ a copy and initially advertised in *TISH* 7 May 14, 1962 (*TISH* No.1-19 133). D-Day and After

was professionally printed at *The Oliver Chronicle* in Bowering's hometown of Oliver, B.C. under the *Rattlesnake Press* imprint, the only *TISH*book to receive such a treatment. D-Day and After is novice work, reflecting as Warren Tallman notes in his introduction, a "poet who is still reaching out for the skills and assurances which can emerge" ("Introduction" n. pag). Like *TISH*, *TISH*books was a node within the larger community, which "announce[d] the presence of a locale," of "the human geography in which response is rooted" (Tallman "Introduction" n. pag).

As George Bowering has become Canada's first Parliamentary Poet Laureate, a member of the Order of Canada and has twice won the Governor-General's Award, the second *TISH*book is probably the most famous, if not infamous, of the publications. Bowering's Sticks & Stones was announced as "available soon" in *TISH* 9 (*TISH* No.1-19 200) but never released for sale nor ever mentioned in *TISH*'s pages again.²³ Featuring drawings by Gordon Payne and a preface by Robert Creeley, Sticks & Stones was marred from the beginning by poor design and printing:

²³ For a longer discussion of the problems surrounding the publication of the *TISH*books edition of Sticks & Stones, see Roy Miki's "Was It a Real Book or Was It Just Made Up?" in George Bowering's 1989 edition of Sticks & Stones and Miki's A Record of Writing: An Annotated and Illustrated Bibliography of George Bowering.

Margins on some pages — e.g. Creeley intro — end somewhere in the page crease. Unreadable & bad publicity so pages will have to be re-done. But have run out of money both personally and corporationally & can't buy more paper or cover stock.

(Davey letter to Bowering, 1 June 1962 as quoted in Miki A Record of Writing 4)

Between 30 and 50 copies of Sticks & Stones were distributed despite “a collective decision not to bind & distribute [...] because we were so embarrassed by the production quality and our inability to include the drawings” (Davey, E-mail).

Like D-Day and After, Bowering's Sticks & Stones is young work, also engaging the role of the poet within a community where “words [...] become a world” (Creeley “Preface” 3). Announced as “available soon” in *TISH* 9 (TISH No.1-19 200), the third *TISH*book, Robert Grady's On Walking, was also eventually abandoned due to printing errors and lack of financial means:

We (Fred [Wah] was the pressman) also printed R. Francis Grady's On Walking, but it was also a printing disaster, of the same lousy faint smudged quality as S & S. Our problem was that the *TISH* offset press needed an overhaul which we couldn't afford, and that we had wasted all the paper we had invested in to produce the two books and couldn't afford more paper. (Davey, E-mail)

Unlike Bowering's Sticks & Stones, Grady's book remained unreleased in any form, and ultimately the unbound On Walking pages "were to be thrown in the trash along with the S & S pages" (Davey, E-mail).

Lionel Kearns' Songs of Circumstance was the second book successfully seen through the *TISH*books imprint, despite facing some of the same technical difficulties that the previous two books had faced:

In retrospect, I can see that we perhaps should have had all the books printed by 'real' printers as mine was, although Kearns' stacked verse could have only been set on hand-typed and drawn offset masters and printed on an offset press [...] Lionel and George 'typeset' their own books by typing them onto paper or metal offset press masters (we used both) using an IBM electric typewriter that we rented — and Fred tried to do the printing, on our rapidly deteriorating Multilith Model 80 offset press. (Davey, E-mail)

Songs of Circumstance documents Kearns' experimentation with stacked verse; a page-based notational system of "special form to the poem's stress and juncture patterning [...] present[ing] the eye with a visual design which directly corresponds to the poem's formal rhythm" (Kearns "Stacked-Verse" n. pag).²⁴

²⁴ See also Kearns' "The Rationale of Stacked Verse" and "Notes on the Stack" (*TISH* 16) for a full exploration of the notational system and its appearances in print.

The final *TISH*books publication was Samuel Perry's pamphlet Personal Locus: Maximus of Gloucester from Dogtown: Charles Olson, reprinted from *TISH* 10 (*TISH* No.1-19 204-210).²⁵ Personal Locus was announced for sale at 25¢ in an edition of at least 50 copies in *TISH* 19 (*TISH* No.1-19 403).²⁶ Marked by "printing disaster[s]," a "rapidly deteriorating" press and a lack of money, *TISH*books was never really able to become more than an extended experiment in small press publishing, but it did typify the expanding interests of the editors of *TISH* from the newsletter proper into other nodes of discourse and dissemination.

* * *

Appearing in the same issue as the original publication of Samuel Perry's essay Personal Locus: Maximus of Gloucester from Dogtown: Charles Olson was an

²⁵ It was also later reprinted, after Perry's death, in a memorial section of *Open Letter* 6 (1967) as guest-edited by Ted Whittaker.

²⁶ *TISH* 19's announcement says that "*TISH*books has fifty copies of Samuel Perry's pamphlet" (*TISH* No.1-19 403) and Davey in correspondence with the author mentioned that it was "a successful printing, and numerous copies were distributed."

announcement for *MOTION: A Prose Newsletter*,²⁷ the first issue of which was free to subscribers of *TISH*:

* * **NOTICE** — The first issue of *MOTION* was sent to persons already subscribing to *TISH*, with the belief that those interested in the West Coast poetry movement would also like to know what's going on out here in prose. This does not mean that *MOTION* will automatically be sent to *TISH* subscribers. On the contrary, *MOTION* will be sent only to those who respond by writing. (*TISH* 10 in *TISH* No.1-19 220)

MOTION: A Prose Newsletter was published for six issues from May through December 1962 as edited by David Cull and Robert Hogg “with great hopes of becoming a burgeoning and integral little mag, alongside *TISH*” (Hogg, E-mail). It was published in the same format as *TISH*, and “originate[d] with the conviction that something must be done — Now — And with the West Coast scene — something is already happening prosewise” (Hogg “Editorial” *MOTION* 1 n. pag). *MOTION* is very much *TISH*'s companion with a shared location (“published in affiliation with *TISH*books”) and format, overlapping editors, and several of the same contributors, including some members of the *TISH* editorial group. Rarely mentioned in studies of *TISH* or its editors, *MOTION* was “seen as a poor 2nd

²⁷ See Appendices C and D for a full transcription of *MOTION* and an index to its contents.

cousin to *TISH*” (Marlatt, E-mail). Any study of *TISH* must include *MOTION*. It has easily been ignored in the past, because it “failed to really get much excitement beyond [its] immediate circle” (Hogg, E-mail). But as Daphne Marlatt states:

those of us who were interested in writing prose & fiction were delighted when Bob [Hogg] started *MOTION*. it never received the attention that *TISH* did but it was just as important to me as an outlet for work, as news of what was happening in prose, as a way of connecting with other prose/fiction writers — a major connection with Gladys [Hindmarch] for instance. i think *MOTION* was seen as a poor 2nd cousin to *TISH* because the focus was on poetry as THE vehicle for thought & investigation [...] though why it should have been so exclusively poetry i don't know. [...]George [Bowering] was writing fiction all along of course, as were some of the rest of us. but somehow *MOTION* never figured as an innovative landmark, even though the prose being published in it was, or attempted to be. (Marlatt, E-mail; original emphasis)

The editorial of the first issue which exhibits a tremendous energy and excitement about new forms of prose, is worth quoting in full:

MOTION originates with the conviction that something must be done — Now — And with the West Coast scene — something is

already happening prosewise We want you to know. Which is why *MOTION* is a newsletter / a correspondence, not a mag. And which answers in part what *MOTION* is. The newsletter itself must answer the rest. Much the same for the direction. it will be determined by the fact, the what comes out of editing with a bias for the new, the experimental, the way out. The writers to begin the action / the writing, to begin the motion that follows. The motion will be in the word the final act will imply / show / be the direction as it moves — Ultimately this becomes an individual thing and *MOTION* believes that whereas 2 writers may angle in the same direction. they will do so on not only separate, but different paths. Getting there is not a matter of following in footpaths but of exploring new territory / blazing a trail. But to get out of the woods *MOTION* wants to swing outward to experiment with the new. And progress in the prose field is unlimited / is necessary / must be. It must go on. Old bounds must be broken — not so that new restrictions may be imposed, but so that we may realize the freedom we have. We see *MOTION* as a 2 way movement — Interaction is essential to the action. And response (yours) will keep us believing in you sending us more. The fact is this costs money — which *MOTION* does not have.

SUPPORT us, and WRITE us, we are writing to you! (Hogg

“Editorial” *MOTION* 1 n. pag; original emphasis)

MOTION was a permissive node for a community of writers, a place to “begin the action / the writing, to begin the motion that follows” (Hogg, “Editorial” *MOTION* 1 n. pag). As with *TISH*, *MOTION* was designed as a newsletter, a community-oriented node where “[i]nteraction is essential to the action” (Hogg “Editorial” *MOTION* 1 n. pag).

Despite the efforts of its editors, *MOTION* suffered the same financial and technological problems as *TISH* and *TISH*books. *MOTION* changed its publication schedule to bi-monthly with its fifth issue and, despite promises that “[t]he magazine will continue to appear every second month from now on” (*MOTION* 5 n. pag), it was cancelled completely with its sixth issue, December 25, 1962. *MOTION* did primarily consist of the work of its two editors David Cull and Robert Hogg; but even that does not necessarily explain its end, as the initial issues of *TISH* also largely published its own editors’ writing:

egotistical as it may seem, [this] is the one justification *MOTION* has for coming out alongside other magazines it cannot hope to compete with. Rather than variety, it depends on consistency, a sense of continuity of style [...] the only fair way to judge the newsletter’s consistency is to look at each new issue as it appears. (Hogg “Editorial” *MOTION* 6 n. pag)

Hogg argues that *MOTION* ceased publication because “there were better looking venues to send prose to, some of wch cd pay! That was probably the chief reason for its demise” (E-mail). This suggests that *MOTION* was in direct competition with

Prism in Vancouver, *Evidence*, *Tamarack* and *The Fiddlehead* in the East, not to mention all the little mags and large editions in the U.S. publishing prose of all kinds, circulating to wide audiences, and presenting their material in handsome formats. (Hogg “Editorial” *MOTION* 6 n. pag)

This is simply not the case. *MOTION* was no more in competition for contributors or readers with *The Fiddlehead* than it was with *TISH*. *MOTION*'s mandate was never to “circulat[e] to wide audiences” in “handsome formats;” it did not perceive itself as “competition for any of the ‘name brand’ magazines” (Cull “Editorial” 1). *MOTION*'s demise was due to a combination of factors — finances, technology, time and cultural emphasis. The “rapidly deteriorating Multilith Model 80 offset press” (Davey, E-mail) used by *TISH*, *TISH*books and *MOTION* was an increasing burden on the editors in terms of time and quality of printing, and also financially — it could simply no longer operate sufficiently under the strain of regular monthly publication of two magazines and the occasional book publication. The labour involved in typing masters for each issue of *MOTION* was also prohibitive

“insofar as the prose filled the page, whereas the poetry in *TISH* filled only a portion” (Hogg, E-mail).

Despite the support of a small group of readers like Marlatt and Hindmarch, energy levels could not be maintained to support *TISH*, *TISHbooks* and *MOTION*. By May 1963 *TISHbooks* had announced the release of what would prove its final publication; *MOTION: A Prose Newsletter* had ceased publication, and original editors Fredric Wah, Frank Davey, George Bowering and James Reid were all leaving *TISH*. *TISH* 18 announced the University of British Columbia Summer School Poetry Course (English 410) running from July 24 through August 16, 1963. Organized by Warren Tallman and Robert Creeley, this three-week course featured lectures, panels and discussions by Margaret Avison, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson and Phillip Whalen and would later be known as The Vancouver Poetry Conference. It marked a turning point for *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter* and its role in the greater Vancouver writing community.

Chapter Three: 1963 and after: *seen and scene*

a scene made up by the mind,
that is not mine, but is a made place

Robert Duncan “Often I am Permitted to Return to a Meadow”

i. The 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference

Like so many of the events in *TISH*'s history, and in the history of the Vancouver writing community generally, there is surprisingly little written on the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference. Recollections of the events are published in interviews, some transcriptions and a small number of published photographs and journal entries.²⁸ From July 24th through August 16th, 1963, the University of British Columbia offered “(1) English 410, a credit course in poetry writing, (2) an Extension Department non-credit course in contemporary poetry, and (3) a series of four Friday Readings (UBC English 410 Documents)” featuring panel

²⁸ The most notable photographs are those by Allen Ginsberg in his collection Snapshot Poetics: A Photographic Memoir of The Beat Era and by Karen Tallman in Olson: The Journal of the Charles Olson Archives and on the front cover of Warren Tallman's In the Midst. The issue of Olson: The Journal of the Charles Olson Archives also contains a sample of student journals, including those by Coolidge, Butling, Marlatt and Bowering.

discussions, readings, workshops, and informal gatherings with Margaret Avison, Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Charles Olson, Phillip Whalen and over fifty registered students and auditors.²⁹ The conference was originally planned by Robert Creeley, Warren Tallman, Earle Birney and other members of the English and Extension departments with the wider scope of drama, poetry, criticism and fiction. After disagreements over the possible hiring by UBC of Irving Layton (which eventually did not happen), Earle Birney having “tak[en] it as a personal insult” left the English 410 organizing committee and subsequently left British Columbia for Mexico and Europe for a year (Tallman “Letter”). Birney’s departure left Tallman as the driving force behind the event, and the final line-up of speakers reflects his concerns. While Margaret Avison dubbed the event “Olsonfest” (Vidaver 2), the conference is mostly dominated by Creeley, Duncan and Ginsberg and their discussions of locality and voice in community. Even while organizing the conference, Warren Tallman wondered about the effect the speakers would have on the *TISH* poets and specifically on

²⁹ See: MINUTES of the Charles Olson Society #30 (April 1999) as guest edited by Aaron Vidaver for a selection of documents around this conference including a complete list of registrants and course expectations. Each of the panel discussions and readings were taped by Fred Wah and are also available online through www.slought.net.

their concept of the Vancouver community and its place within larger circles. In a letter to Robert Creeley, Tallman stated that he was

particularly hoping that the people from elsewhere, students and poets, will somewhat dent the small town provincialism of the *TISH* and other Vancouver children (interesting that “children” was involuntary). (Tallman “Letter”)

Tallman’s concern over the “small town provincialism” reveals both a parental worry for the direction of Vancouver writing and a concern around issues of place and perception by the “*TISH* and other Vancouver children.” Those concerns around place and voice were frequently addressed at the Vancouver conference, especially by Creeley and Duncan. During the July 31, 1963 morning discussion, a long conversation around Olson’s idea of the *polis* and the individual arises when an audience member asks about the phrase “Polis is eyes.”³⁰ This discussion is of particular interest in light of *TISH* magazine and its role in defining a moment, a community of writers. Responding to a quote by Olson that there is “no such many as mass, there are only eyes in all heads, to be looked out of,” Creeley states that

³⁰ This particular panel discussion is available online through www.slought.net and is transcribed by Aaron Vidaver as “Polis is Eyes: Morning Session, July 31, 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference” in MINUTES of the Charles Olson Society #30 (April 1999). Unless otherwise stated, all references in discussion of this panel are to Vidaver’s transcription.

the primary ground for me seems *where are we — where am I? What context for reality can I gain? Literally, what ground can I find under my feet?* [...] Where are we? But *we*, see, I go back equally to the plural of “I” as a false value unless it’s realized in something other than a specious collectivity of persons, literally with no active principle to join them. (Vidaver “Polis is Eyes” 21; original emphasis)³¹

From this point the discussion moves to an exploration of the poetics of the individual within a larger community and the importance of place to that community — that *polis* — and how poetics enables communities to “make up their own stories out of what they see directly and contact directly rather than getting it from secondary sources” (Vidaver “Polis is Eyes” 23).³² This suggests that the poet’s responsibility is to report and to record what Ginsberg referred to in discussing Olson’s The Maximus Poems as a “new personal history of what is happening there now to him, out of the scene in front of him” (Vidaver “Polis is

³¹ Robert Creeley is cited in Vidaver’s “Polis is Eyes: Morning Session, July 31, 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference;” a transcription of that panel’s discussions. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

³² Allen Ginsberg is cited in Vidaver’s “Polis is Eyes: Morning Session, July 31, 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference;” a transcription of that panel’s discussions. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

Eyes” 26). Excerpts published from Daphne Marlatt’s journal from the July 31st morning session illustrate how she interpreted the speakers’ statements into a poetics and politics of space and individuality within community:

ex — out — the outward ‘making’ / manifesting *out* from the corpus /
inner cosmos — that ‘I am’ / my cosmos of being

& ‘polis is eyes’: we use our eyes to see / be aware of all that is around us — leads to individuals & their unique awarenesses (I am complete *in my own body*) & thus ‘polis’ is also my / your body: each cell as individual / complete one aware of others, working with others but in itself at same

time → cosmos

(Gr. kosmos — order, harmony / the world)

(Marlatt “Excerpts” 79; original emphasis)

As quoted in chapter one, Jamie Reid’s untitled poem in *TISH* 1 — two years before Creeley and Ginsberg’s statements — is a perfect exploration of the poet’s role within a community as both explorer and re-definer of boundaries. For the editors of *TISH*, both pre- and post-1963, the poem was

A total response to what is happening.

a Dance of the intellect imagination physiology in response to
the music that goes on outside in the real word, outside Self.

but what have we got besides perception and awareness and its
translation, language, within ourselves to make poems. Nothing
is the answer

so a poem is a definition a graph a mind a map to define to
locate the poet and to define the temporary momentary boundaries
of his awareness

each succeeding poem is a realignment of the boundaries.

(*untitled* 14)

The conflation of personal boundaries — the “temporary momentary boundaries / of his awareness” — and political boundaries — those defined by “a graph,” or “a map” — are central to the poetics of the *TISH* editors. The emphasis on *locus* and the idea that “what is happening *here* is distinct from what is happening *there*” (Vidaver “Polis is Eyes” 31; original emphasis) was continued throughout *TISH*’s history and was increasingly explored in terms of voice, social politics and activism.

The only publications which directly address the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference are Carol Bergé’s The Vancouver Report and *TISH* 21. Bergé’s book was described by future *TISH* editor Stan Persky as an “absolutely horrible piece of writing” displaying “how stupid a description of anything can be” (Persky Oral

History 4). As one of the few published pieces of writing on the conference, however, it should be at least considered. The Vancouver Report foreshadows Richardson's Poetry and the Colonized Mind: TISH by complaining that “[p]erhaps the Black Mountain Spotted Virus is stoppable; if so, it will be despite the Canadian newspaper *TISH*, otherwise known as Virus Mary” (1), and refers to Vancouver and *TISH* poets in order of their “susceptibility” to Black Mountain’s influence. Bergé — like Richardson — talks of the American speakers at the conference in militaristic tones similar to those dismissed by Frank Davey as “superficial jingoism” (“Editorial” *TISH* No.1-19 155): “The U.S. has sent [...] some if the just-back-from-Mexico brigade; & the I’ll-be-living-in-N.Y-after-this-brigade” (1). Bergé’s vitriol is not limited to the conference in general and is specifically leveled at Fred Wah and Pauline Butling who Bergé refers to as “asskissing,” opportunist “lion-hunters” (2,3), revealing more about Bergé’s own biases than the actual events surrounding the conference.

More indicative of the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference’s effects on the Vancouver community — and the direction of *TISH* after the conference — is *TISH* 21 (September 1963) an assembled collage published to present

flashes of insight. moments of anger, frustration [...] in some mad order — to give (perhaps more accurately than in any other way) the texture of the conference: a document of response.

(Dawson “Editorial” *TISH* 21 1)

TISH 21 was the second issue published under the new editorial collective of Peter Auxier, Daphne Buckle [Marlatt], Dave Cull, David Dawson, Gladys [Maria] Hindmarch and Dan McLeod. As *TISH* re-emerged under a new editorial collective, its role as a *site* for new writing and community shifted to one that both created and reflected a new poetic and political engagement with community.

ii. 1963-1967: *sight, site and nonsite*

[M]ust *locate* anything before you can deal with it.

Pauline Wah “Notes from Olson’s Classes at Vancouver.”

A useful way of examining the role of a literary magazine in a community is through Robert Smithson’s formulations of the *site* and *nonsite*. Robert Smithson was a landscape artist in the 1960’s and 1970’s best known for his *Spiral Jetty* (1970) and *Partially Buried Woodshed* (1970). His work, as Gary Shapiro notes, explored the “dialectic between the *site* (the source of material or the place of a physical alteration of the land) and the *nonsite* (its parallel or representation in the gallery)” (Shapiro 2; emphasis added). In terms of Smithson’s artwork, the *nonsites* “have a gallery or museum component, consisting usually of a container or set of containers that hold rocks, soil, or some other material from a specific place” (Shapiro 69), while the *site* is the active location of the artwork itself. The relationship between site and nonsite is constantly troubled as the place “from which the material is taken is also a part of the work, and the effect of the work as

a whole is to defeat any sense of simple location and to set up [...] a dialectic between the site and the nonsite” (Shapiro 72). Describing *TISH* as “a record of on-going literary activity, a record that preserved every roughness, insight and stupidity that this activity enclosed” (“Introducing *TISH*” 150), Frank Davey effectively categorizes the magazine as a nonsite for the polis of Vancouver at the time.

For *TISH* magazine the relationship between the Smithsonian site and nonsite is an apt one as it embodies the relationship between the magazine and the community it both responds to and embodies. *TISH* is a single node within a rhizomatic community, but it also has “a museum or gallery component,” allowing that the active site of writing is outside of the magazine proper — *TISH* is but a snapshot, a “a container” that holds “material from a specific place” (Shapiro 69). *TISH* 20 and 21 — and in fact much of the later issues of *TISH* — reflect that troubled site / nonsite relationship. In the editorial for *TISH* 20 — the first issue after a five-month delay and the departure of most of the original editors — David Dawson locates *TISH* editorially as “constantly locat[ing] the ‘sense of things’ here, in Vancouver” (Dawson “Editorial” *TISH* 20 5). Dawson further locates Vancouver poetry as both in and outside of the geographic location:

the poetry isnt necessarily about the city (most of it isnt), but in reflection it defines the scene. what we print reflects our sense of poetry, our sense of what a poem is. (Dawson “Editorial” *TISH* 20 5)

This “sense of things” was a reflection of *TISH*'s place within the writing community — both reflecting and adding to its growth and representation — a nonsite for Vancouver's site.

* * *

Keith Richardson, in his Poetry and the Colonized Mind: *TISH*, groups *TISH* into four editorial periods roughly corresponding to the involvement of editors; issues 1 through 19, 20 through 24, 25 through 40 and finally issues 41 through E(45). Other than the division between *TISH* 1 through 19 and the later issues (due to the departure of most of the editors after issue 19), I do not believe that this is an overly useful distinction as it foregrounds individual efforts over the collective direction of the magazine and its involvement within the larger community.

Richardson's distinctions categorize *TISH* more as a *site* than a *nonsite*.

The post-1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference issues of *TISH* are quite similar in tone to those published before the conference, although the publication schedule — six issues in 1963, five issues each in 1964 and 1965, six issues in 1966, two issues per year in 1967 and 1968 and three issues in 1969, *TISH*'s final year — obviously does not have the sustained focus and energy as did the original nineteen issues. The magazine continued to locate its efforts within Vancouver geographically, but also continued to signal to its readers what was happening

outside of its geographical borders. Keith Richardson, not surprisingly, categorizes *TISH*'s non-geographically limited definitions of community in jingoistic terms. He states that “as *TISH* reduced Canadian cultural ties, it increased west coast U.S. ties” and that the magazine was “concerned to inform readers of the activities of the U.S poets” that “defined the growing Vancouver — Berkeley cultural axis” (Richardson 58, 59).

Poetry continued to be the main concern of *TISH*. But the number of prose forms — announcements, reviews, letters and essays — increased in later issues. Announcements included information on new releases by *Island*, *The Northwest Review*, *Floating Bear*, *OYEZ*, *Weed*, *Ganglia* as well as past *TISH*-editors' efforts such as *The Open Letter*, *The Niagara Frontier Review* and *Imago* magazines. Also included were announcements for musical events like “The ‘New Wave’ Jazz” (*TISH* 32), The Jefferson Airplane (*TISH* 33) and Country Joe and the Fish (*TISH* 40) and for “underground” events like those at The Sound Gallery (*TISH* 37) and The Banana Smoke-In (*TISH* 40).

Review space was dedicated to new work by Vancouver writers — bill bissett (reviewed in *TISH* 22), Maxine Gadd (*TISH* 26 and 35) and Roy Kiyōoka (*TISH* 25) — past-*TISH* editors — Davey in *TISH* 26, Bowering in *TISH* 29, Fred Wah's *Sum* Magazine in *TISH* 23 — alongside more established writers such as Jack Kerouac (*TISH* 22), Robin Blaser (*TISH* 30) and Jerome Rothenberg (*TISH* 37). Letters from readers and contributors included those by Bowering (*TISH* 27), Gary

Snyder and Red Lane (both *TISH* 29), Stan Persky and Charles Olson (both *TISH* 38). The later issues of *TISH* also included several notable essays, including those by Dan Kasowitz (*TISH* 37) and Warren Tallman (*TISH* 33 and 43). Prose obviously continued to have a role with the *TISH* editors — even after the demise of *MOTION: A Prose Newsletter* in 1962 — both as a critical and discursive form and as a political and narrative form.

Gladys [Maria] Hindmarch's prose piece "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Boathouse" (*TISH* 27 6-7) is an example of the direction prose took in later issues of *TISH*. Hindmarch updates the nursery rhyme form to reflect issues of class and gender inequality and stereotyping in working-class communities where children "dirty with sawdust from the mill mud from the delta pitch" begged "from the bakery from the loggers on the street whoever they would meet indians and fishermen and nuns and tradesmen bartenders and butchers and cobblers" (6). Written within the performative structure of internal rhyme and metre, Hindmarch's piece laments the lack of social assistance for a woman and her children living in substandard conditions and trapped in a cycle of abuse in a town that was "getting tired of them" (6). This kind of socially aware voice was increasingly apparent in *TISH*'s pages. But the concentration on poetics shifted to include social politics most apparently in issues 40 through E[45], as I will discuss later in this chapter.

* * *

An intriguing, but ill-fated, side project — *TISHTAPES* — was announced in *TISH* 32:

IF YOU ARE ILLITERATE AND CAN READ THIS

you should be trying to find out more about

taped editions of *TISH*

— *TISHTAPES*

(*TISH* 32 5; original emphasis)

This initial announcement in *TISH* 32 does use the idea of appealing to an illiterate audience as a marketing ploy and joke, but does suggest that there was a consideration of *TISH* as a multi-media project. The next issue of *TISH* also contained mention of *TISHTAPES*: “NEXT ISSUE: Lots of poems & further announcement on taped editions” (*TISH* 33 12 original emphasis). Taped editions would have reached a larger audience and opened a further dimension to the performativity of the poems contained in each issue. With *TISH* 34 came a larger statement of intent and direction for *TISHTAPES*:

THE FIRST *TISHTAPE* will be distributed May 1. The cost will be around \$2-\$2.50, first come first served. Orders should be sent to *TISHTAPES* at the *TISH* address. This tape will consist of the entire content of *TISH* 31. So far, we have tapes of Daphne Buckle, David

Dawson, Maxine Gadd and Gerard Malanga reading their own work.

The remaining tapes will be read by the editors unless we receive their corresponding tapes by the copy date. (*TISH* 34 5; original emphasis)

While this announcement does make it seem like *TISHTAPES* were forthcoming, they are not mentioned again in *TISH*'s pages, nor could my research and inquiries turn up any evidence that they had ever been produced. *TISH* 31 through 37 were published almost monthly (*TISH* 36 was delayed by one month), a return to a regular publishing schedule that had not been in effect since *TISH* 19 (and would not be again by *TISH*'s demise in April 1969). It is very possible that the effort involved in returning *TISH* to a monthly schedule left little time for the production of *TISHTAPES*. Regardless, *TISHTAPES* reveals an openness to new technology, a will to experiment with new forms, and a continued exploration of *TISH* as a “moving and vocal mag” (Davey “Editorial” *TISH* No.1-19 13).

* * *

The technology flirted with in *TISHTAPES* was also mentioned in a series of lectures once again organized by Warren Tallman. June 13 through 17, 1965 brought three lectures by San Francisco poet Jack Spicer for “semi-public readings with commentary” (Gizzi xx). Spicer’s lectures, along with his July 14, 1965

Berkeley lecture, are transcribed and published in Peter Gizzi's The House that Jack Built: The Collected Lectures of Jack Spicer. Spicer's lectures were not directly responded to in the pages of *TISH* but were attended by several members of the Vancouver community including Peter Auxier, George Bowering, Eliot Gose, Gladys Hindmarch, Dorothy Livesay, Ellen and Warren Tallman and others. Although "Spicer was noticeably intoxicated and dishevelled, he took these events seriously," "made sure that they were being taped" (Gizzi xix) and spoke informally on a broad range of topics surrounding poetry, poetics and the social. Spicer was adamant that "if you have an idea that you want to develop, don't write a poem about it because it's almost bound to be a bad poem" (Gizzi 14), an attitude that had repercussions for the remainder of *TISH*'s existence. Increasingly social issues were explored in its pages through prose and epistolary forms instead of poetry.

Spicer was also quite critical of *TISH*'s editorial policy, and of Canadian poetry as a whole, stating that

Fundamentally I think that the thing that I've seen about Canadian poets, which is mainly in *TISH*, is the lack really of trying to experiment with their own stuff. (Gizzi 141)

This lack of experimentation, Spicer argued, was both a problem with poets and with editors, and specifically in the relationship between the two. Responding to

an audience statement that “*TISH* wont allow [experimentation],” Spicer sees fault in both the writing community and the editors of specific magazines:

Oh I know that everyone says that, but I don’t think it’s true. I think that *TISH* is about as much of a creation of all the people not wanting to take chances as it is any particular editor not wanting to take chances. (Gizzi 141)

TISH had a reputation of being insular but Spicer’s comments put the responsibility of experimentation on the writing community as a whole, seeing it as a symbiotic relationship. He recognizes that the writing community might be “scared of trying out things on them” (Gizzi 142), but that it is the responsibility of a community to push itself. The real effect of Spicer’s poetics, and those of the wider San Francisco scene, were not felt within *TISH*’s pages until the arrival of Stan Persky and Robin Blaser a year later and Persky’s subsequent involvement with *TISH* starting in May 1968.

iii. 1968-1969: *TISH* 40 through E[45] and *The Georgia Straight*

[A] call to opening the boundaries of strict [...] communities.

Rick Byrne³³

³³ Byrne, Rick. “Editor’s Note.” *TISH* No. 42 (May 1968): n. pag.

In the audience for Jack Spicer's Berkeley lecture in July of 1965 was San Francisco poet Stan Persky. Persky was aware of the Vancouver writing community through Spicer, and from a few encounters with *TISH*, most notably through an exchange with George Bowering about his review of Spicer's The Heads of the Town Up to The Aether (*TISH* 14). When Warren Tallman and Ralph Maud offered Persky's partner Robin Blaser a position at Simon Fraser University the two moved to Vancouver in July 1966 (Persky Oral History 12). Persky first appeared in *TISH* 38 (November 1966) but freely admitted to Brad Robinson in Oral History of Vancouver: Stan Persky's Section that his "secret plot was to capture control of *TISH*" (12).

Persky's original plan was to publish an issue of *TISH* with the co-operation of Jack Spicer and independent of the actual editors:

I almost published an issue of *TISH* while I was in San Francisco in 1965. Spicer, who was up here at the time, was supposed to send down some poems from young poets that he found, & his own poems for *TISH*. He did three poems for *TISH* which never got published at that time in *TISH*. They later did. He was going to send this down & I was going to mimeograph off an issue of *TISH* & zoom it back up to Spicer. It's that demand for the imaginative that characterizes the politics of poetry that I knew that immediately attracted my attention. (Persky Oral History 14)

Given Spicer's comments about *TISH* at his Vancouver lectures, it's surprising to hear that he would be interested in effectively guest-editing an issue of *TISH*, although it could have been a way for Spicer and Persky to foreground the kind of experimentalism that they found lacking in *TISH*'s pages. The Spicer / Persky issue was never realized but it does illuminate an issue that Persky struggled with throughout his period with *TISH*, and as a member of the Vancouver community, that of "cultural nationalism" (Persky Oral History 12).

Persky's interaction with *TISH* was quite aggressive — challenging *TISH*'s role in Vancouver, and trying to trouble both the editorial position and the position it held in relation to other magazines and communities. He "had some notion of publishing another *TISH*" wanting to "keep the title & publish another magazine called *TISH Local*" (Persky Oral History 13). The idea of challenging *TISH* with another magazine called *TISH Local* would have fractured the direction of the magazine at the time (already suffering under a tenuous publication schedule). What Persky did instead was join the editorial collective of *TISH*, change its format completely for the final four issues, run an increasing amount of prose and other non-poetry forms, develop a relationship with the burgeoning underground newspaper *The Georgia Straight*, and eventually end *TISH*'s production completely.

Persky's first issue of *TISH*, No. 41 (February 1968), brought a completely new look. Gone were the 11"x14" mimeographed pages, stapled at the corner, and

folded twice for mailing. *TISH* was now 8 ½” x 11” with silk-screened covers looking like a typical “little magazine.” More importantly, reflecting its occasional publication schedule, *TISH* was no longer subtitled “a poetry newsletter,” it was just *TISH*. This format continued until Persky “came to the conclusion that it shouldn’t exist, that it was false for it to exist” (Persky Oral History 14) and it ceased publication April 1969.

The final issues of *TISH* are categorized not just by the new format, but also with an emphasis on anti-academia, social politics and an increased relationship with *The Georgia Straight* which began publishing in May 1967. For editors Peter Auxier and Dan McLeod *TISH* was increasingly stifling, and not corresponding to the broad range of issues that they wanted to address:

It’s hard to describe where we were at that particular time. We were not, for the most part, a bunch of graduate students with a single vision, or poetic vision apart from the mainstream, as it was before. [...] [W]e started to look beyond a magazine that communicated to 300 people on a mailing list, and to something bigger than that. (Niechoda and Hunter 94)³⁴

³⁴ Dan McLeod is cited in Niechoda and Hunter’s “A *TISH*story;” a transcription of a 1985 roundtable discussion with several *TISH* editors and contributors. Please see the Bibliography for a full listing of participants.

McLeod and Auxier both left *TISH* just before Persky joined the collective, although McLeod in particular was still a very real presence in *TISH*'s pages.

McLeod had been the only editor involved with *TISH* continuously from issue 20 through issue 40 and was vital to the emergence of *The Georgia Straight*. Warren Tallman categorized McLeod's work as expanding *TISH*'s horizon's beyond the strictly literary:

most of the major *TISH* movers expanded activity beyond what *TISH* had been. I think that Dan did that in a particular way, when he moved from those numbers in *TISH* where he was the main editor actually, into the early *Georgia Straight*, which was a much more public forum [...] It was keeping up an expanded literary activity.

(Niechoda and Hunter 95)

This sense of "expanded literary activity" is most obvious in *TISH* D[44]. As a move designed to "send bibliographers, librarians, rare butterfly collectors, litter-rare-y experts, etc., climbing up the ivy covered walls" the magazine, starting with issue 44 was lettered instead of numbered, so that the last two issues were *TISH* D and E respectively (Persky "Bibliographic" n. pag). Persky's move to re-number the issues and send academics "climbing up the ivy covered walls" echoes Spicer's earlier comments in 1965 that

most of the poets from, say, nineteen to twenty-seven that I know, who are good in San Francisco, are really against education because

they know that education is essentially going to fuck them up
 because they know they can't resist [...] not to arrange themselves
 them themselves instead of letting them be arranged by whatever is
 the source of the poem. (Gizzi 9)

Spicer's work continued to appear in *TISH* through the efforts of Persky even after Spicer's death in 1965. In another move orchestrated to frustrate the academy and scholarly research, the poem "Five Variations on the Earth" appeared in *TISH* D[44] attributed to Spicer and ostensibly dictated to the editors of *TISH* on Spicer's "44th birthday (Jan. 30, 1969)" as a means of "warn[ing] off those seeking to bring out definitive editions of his early poems" (Persky "Bibliographic" n. pag). Like Persky's efforts to frustrate bibliographers of *TISH*, the "Five Variations on the Earth" were written and published so that "even the most faithful students of [Spicer's] work will be hard put to decide what is and what is not Jack Spicer" (Persky "Bibliographic" n. pag).

This anti-establishment position was increasingly apparent in *TISH*, and especially in *TISH* D's editorial which aligns itself with communal activity and an outsider mindset:

D (as in, guess what that you smoke, drop or shoot up) is a *TISH*-takes-a-trip issue, held together by the fact that all the writers are involved in communes, free schools, experimental programs, hippie-

rural-reconstruction and the like. (Reading it again, more seriously, it's an issue of folk-writing)." (Persky "Bibliographic" n. pag)

TISH D [44], as "folk-writing," acts as a container — a *nonsite* — for some of the energy and writing that was occurring in the *site* of Vancouver. *TISH* D [44], in addition to large amount of poetry, opens with Dylan Cramer's "To All of the Dear 'Night People'" a plea for responsibility to community and also includes two prose pieces: Dan McLeod's "The Underground Newspaper Editor" and Stan Persky's "October 26, 1968."

"The Underground Newspaper Editor" is a prose telling of a single day's work by Dan McLeod as editor of *The Georgia Straight* and how that role intersects with his personal life. The interaction between the personal and the social — the private and the public — becomes blurred in McLeod's essay where "the tension of this day, along with the futility of trials, endless official harassment, and on top of that not being able to eat over the sadness of lost love" (McLeod n. pag). Having just been at court facing libel and obscenity charges for his work at *The Georgia Straight*, McLeod wanders to UBC to find solace and relaxation. What he found instead was that UBC "seemed like a prison" and the library "seemed like a cage" (McLeod n. pag). Considering *TISH*'s history, it is quite telling to have UBC described as a "prison" by one of *TISH*'s editors. McLeod's essay illustrates how *TISH* had moved beyond its own original intention and confines and become a social magazine. Frank Davey's editorial in *TISH* 1 states that *TISH* "is the result

and proof of a movement, which we, the editors, feel is shared by other people as well as ourselves” (“Editorial” *TISH* No.1-19 13). In the context of *TISH* 1 that “movement” was a poetic one formed by students in relation to its “siring movement,” Black Mountain College and the work of Creeley, Duncan and Olson. Davey’s comments could have just as easily been written in *TISH* D, but the “movement” had shifted away from the politics of poetry (poetics) to the politics of the social — the community — and the role of the poet within that community.

“October 26, 1968” is also political prose. Persky takes issue with the intentions of the organizers of a political rally “coordinated by a bunch of uptight assholes, inveigling the walkers to chant slogans in unison at the dark homogenous mass of onlookers” (Persky “October” n. pag) as not respecting open communication and allowing political power to remain with the people, instead of with organizers. In a breathless, driving passage Persky argues that:

if there’s going to be some talking, it could not be the haranguing style that is used to persuade those who don’t agree but which actually only frightens them more, but some serious talk about what’s happened since we last met, an effort to understand where it’s going, without the need to condemn, since we’re all more or less convinced anyway, and then something about what we’re doing in the city, in the community, with each other. (Persky “October” n. pag)

TISH had become both a place to document and to explore what the editors and the larger community were “doing in the city, in the community, with each other.”

For nine years *TISH* was a permissive node of activity within community in Vancouver. As the role of *The Georgia Straight* as “Vancouver’s free press” increased to become a voice for both underground and literary activity, the need for *TISH* decreased. *TISH*’s social mandate had grown to include extra-literary and cross-artistic concerns, concerns that could no longer be met in the restricted form of a “poetry newsletter” with a distribution of 300 copies distributed primarily by mailing list and through a few select bookstores. The community had out-grown the restraints of *TISH*, and needed a voice which reached beyond “a poetry newsletter.” As Stan Persky said in Oral History of Vancouver: Stan Persky’s Section, *TISH* helped enable “the beginning of poetry in this particular place [Vancouver]. Suddenly the city has an imagination. It didn’t have one before, a collectivity” (21-22).

Conclusion: *a working ground*

[I]f [...] new writers use the magazine to work out their part in the process, if it is *a working ground*; then the maximum use for all will be there.

Robert Duncan “Letter to John Weiners”³⁵

Over its entire nine-year history, *TISH* magazine enacted both a shift in poetics and an embracing of forms of writing which reflected social movements. As such it was a product of its time and place. As Charles Bernstein stated in his reaction to Michael Davidson’s study of the San Francisco Renaissance:

[A]ctivities such as this one have to be understood as situational. For one thing, you’re responding to factors that exist historically, at the most concrete level. The poetic positions taken have to be understood within the context of other poetic positions that are articulated by other poets, or nonpoets, at the moment but also in the past. (Bernstein 156)

Certainly the issues of *TISH* after the departure of its founding editors in March 1963 emphasized that “poetry is the continuation of politics by other means”

³⁵ Emphasis added.

(Bernstein 160). Its pages were increasingly home to narratives around what Susan Rudy and Pauline Butling referred to as “liberation movements:”

the shift to a processual, open-form poetics [...] went hand in hand with liberation movements: the pursuit of sexual freedom, psychedelic freedom, liberation from middle-class values, from hierarchical systems, gay liberation, women’s liberation, etc. were often intertwined with radical poetics. Whether articulated in terms of regional, sexual, phenomenological or psychological locations, the poets affirmed various “locals” against the homogenizing, controlling power of the dominant. (46)

By 1969, the “locals” that *TISH* was exploring had grown past its own pages. As Dan McLeod noted, eventually *TISH*’s subscription list and print run were insufficient for the editors’ aims of reaching a larger audience and having a greater direct impact on the Vancouver community (Niechoda and Hunter 94). This is not to say that poetics became a secondary concern for the editors; rather the relationship between poetics and social politics became increasingly blurred. Again, Bernstein provides a useful definition of poetics and how it can be applied to both poetry and wider forms of writing:

poetics as an invasion of the poetic into other realms: overflowing the bounds of genres, spilling into talk, essays, politics, philosophy... Poetics as a sort of *applied poetic*, in the sense that

engineering is a form of applied mathematics. (Bernstein 151;
original emphasis)

TISH, especially in its later issues, displays a sense of this “applied poetic,” as the contents of the magazine increasingly included letters, prose pieces and articles on social politics each infused with the poetic forms that the earlier editors had explored.

The influence of the lectures by Robert Duncan in 1961, at the 1963 Vancouver Poetry Conference, and by Jack Spicer in 1965 provided a grounding in international theories of poetics. Robin Mathews categorizes *TISH*'s embracing of theories of poetics by American poets as supporting a “U.S. poetic tradition” (13) concerned with the “invasion and colonization of a part of the poetic culture of Canada” (7). Bergé's categorization of *TISH* as “Virus Mary” (1) seems to underscore a feeling of cliquishness towards *TISH*, revealing perhaps more about Bergé's attitudes to poetic community than about the magazine itself. Nodes like *TISH* “may [...] appear cliquish and intolerant from the outside. But for those on the inside, they can be highly enabling” (Butling and Rudy 53). *TISH*'s pages may have been cliquish, but they can also be seen as a permissive site, a site where exploration of poetic and social issues could be conducted without repercussions; what appears to be dogmatic and hermeneutic [...] must simultaneously be understood as an effective oppositional strategy

that allows the needed social space for poetry to be created.

(Bernstein 166)

To repeat the quotation from Persky I cited earlier, *TISH* helped enable the “beginning of poetry in this particular place [Vancouver]. Suddenly the city has an imagination. It didn’t have one before, a collectivity” (21-22).

TISH's offshoots *MOTION*, *TISH*books and *TISH*tapes — while all eventually abandoned in various stages of completion — also provided space for needed experimentation. These three projects allowed for concentration on issues in writing projects that would not have fit *TISH*'s editorial mandate. *MOTION* was a permissive node for a youthful group of prose writers struggling to have a space of their own; *TISH*books allowed for extended single-author development, and *TISH*tapes, while never realized, suggested another direction for the *TISH* poets — into possible multimedia and new media work (which would later be explored by Lionel Kearns).

The appendices of this thesis bring back into print all of the issues of *TISH* and *MOTION* published after the departure of George Bowering, Fred Wah, Jamie Reid and Frank Davey, allowing for further study and discussion of these rarely addressed issues. Transcribing these issues not only taught me a great deal about the continued effort that *TISH* and *MOTION* were in terms of production, but also gave me an opportunity to explore the content of the two magazines. *TISH* and *MOTION* were places for experimentation and exploration, and as such illuminate

the role of the little magazine within a community. By returning these documents into print it is my hope that continued study can occur on *TISH* and *MOTION*, their role in Vancouver writing communities — especially those communities marginalized by gender and sexuality. Additionally the role of *TISH* within the greater communities of geographically diverse little magazines (for instance its relationship with *The Floating Bear: a newsletter* or *Combustion*) and writing communities also needs exploring.

TISH provided a “working ground” (Duncan “Letter” n.pag.) for writers in the Vancouver community from 1961 through 1969 where

a significant collective practice of cultural opposition and poetic integrity [...] sustained the ability to make independent critiques at the margins (sexually, geographically, stylistically) of [...] culture.

(Bernstein 165-166)

TISH operated as both a Smithsonian site and a nonsite for Vancouver writing. It both developed a community of writers and provided a container for a moment of activity.

The writing in *TISH* was not always at a polished and superior level, nor was it meant to be. The magazine succeeded because it was a “working ground,” a place for experimentation and risk. As a nonsite, *TISH* was “a record of on-going literary activity, a record that preserved every roughness, insight and stupidity that this activity enclosed” (Davey “Introducing *TISH*” 150). If, as Bernstein notes,

“poetry is the continuation of politics by other means” (Bernstein 160) then *TISH*'s shift to include an increased number of articles on social politics was a natural one. Its dissolution in 1969 was not an abandonment of *TISH*'s principles but rather an enfolding of them into the pages of the burgeoning *Georgia Straight* founded by members of *TISH*'s own editorial collective.

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Note: All references to the initial 19 issues of *TISH* will be from Davey, Frank, ed. *TISH* No. 1-19. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974. *TISH* issues 20 through E[45] and *MOTION* issues 1 through 6 have not been reprinted since their initial publication; therefore textual references are from individual issues.

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Appendix A: *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter* Issues 20 through E[45]

TISH issues 20 through E[45] are transcribed into *Microsoft Word 2002* and are included in this thesis on the enclosed CDROM.

Appendix B: Index of *TISH: A Poetry Newsletter* Issues 20 through E[45]

Note: all page numbers reference the compiled manuscript of *TISH* issues 20 through E[45] (Appendix A).

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MOTION issues 1 through 6 are transcribed into *Microsoft Word 2002* and are included in this thesis on the enclosed CDROM

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