SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT OF WRITING

INTRO

I'm going to frame my thoughts by talking principally about two recent projects because they each raise issues about my practice as a whole and correspond to the questions of bilingual awareness and conceptual structure that I wish to discuss at this conference.

SPIVAK

There's a very nice variation on the “begin where you are” word of wisdom and it comes from the postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak. In an early interview, Spivak says about the bilingual writer that: “you must clear your throat, clear your own space, spit out the mother tongue”\(^1\). She uses a physiological analogy to describe bilingual identity as a “self-conscious, self-separating project”\(^2\). One that is nevertheless also highly located and active. This certainly throws another relief on the cultural displacements frequently experienced by bilingual and bicultural speakers. Indeed, the “where” of the “you” is here perceived as an action inside the speaker’s mouth, and the place of linguistic identity starts as a friction applied consciously on the throat, “you must clear your throat”. The awareness of this friction on the throat, this obstruction, the linguistic material that creates the vibration against the throat, the air as conduit, the raspy sound of clearing one’s throat, all of this becomes part of how you begin to be where you are, linguistically. This chain of actions and responses is set as the condition to a self-aware use of one’s languages. It signifies the refusal or impossibility of monoglossic possession by one naturalised language, one naturalised speaking body. The point is both that of having a throat per se, and of needing to clear it. It’s got a knot or a word stuck in it, mother tongue, ie naturalised intuitive language.

In French it would be more complicated because one doesn’t just clear one’s throat, one has a cat in the throat. One would need to spit the cat out to clear one’s throat. At a profound level, one could certainly argue that this phrase is a reminder that what separates humans from animals, at least since the 18th Century, is articulated language. It is articulated language that keeps the cat from turning into a human. Articulated language is all that which becomes clear once the cat has been successfully removed from my throat. Conversely, it is all that which is threatened with inarticulacy if the throat is not cleared, if the cat still meows. But what if I were to decide to talk with a cat in the throat? Can one consider that the cat of my throat is the tone in my speech, the “grain of the voice”, the stutter of my silencings? As I become aware that I am trying to speak, my body morphs, my cat appears, languages come in languages are spat out. Cat is my speech’s accent. The explicit accentedness of its textuality. It is the self-aware cohabitation of languages, these languages caught in the throat that Spivak herself coughs up.

I am very concerned with instances of texts and language-art, sonic or spatial, that speak with a cat in the throat. Texts that can’t clear their throat without also spitting out a cat (un chat), literally, crachat, a spittle, but this one could be compounded into an English spit cat, or perhaps better a spatcat, in the palm of your hand. One could also clear one’s throat and realise one has a chatte in the hand. This maintains a libidinal and erotic bond with one’s pussycat. The question as to whether it is in

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1 spivak biblio+ page!
2 spivak biblio+ page!
fact one’s own pussycat or someone else’s depends very much on the kind of poetic expectation one is dealing with.

**AND AND AND AND**

On bios written for events such as this one and others, I always write "poet & writer" or "poet & performance artist". There’s been "poet and performance writer", "writer and text-based artist", "writer & performance artist", "writer and performance poet", "mixed media writer", "writer, poet and critic", "conceptual writer and critic" "writer based in London", "bilingual poet, critic, teacher".

Sending bios & summaries for shows and readings is a complex affair. I keep them singularly focused compared to Derek Jarman’s description as a filmmaker, gay activist, gardener.

Still the conjunction AND AND AND AND AND in "writer and performance poet" presupposes that the poet’s activities are comfortable with conjunctions, with connective practices, with co-existence and incompleteness. The authorial doubleness widens the supposed realm or reaches of the work, broadens out of the social and cultural difficulties in calling oneself a poet in the first place.

There is a tension in the very existence of this conjunction. Yet it is evident that many poets function across registers and occupy many positions with their work, and participate in the renewal and dissemination of cultural fields both at the level of their work proper and at that of their proper work, all of which often involve different degrees of social participation. This doubling of one’s own functional process is actually indicative of the kind of persistently unofficial and tactical position occupied by most poets in an epoch of deep suspicion towards language’s work and more acutely towards exploratory language art practices, especially within the realm of literature.

From a different perspective, the audio-visual literacies of our daily social communication realm, our persistent connectivity, not only inflects the dissemination of writing arts (as it does through online/digital/audio forms) and thus changes the nature of its readership, but also ultimately inflects the way we come to relate to textual production at large, both as producers and as recipients. We’re not dealing so much with a form of secondary orality, an orality inscribed by writing culture, as much as with an all-encompassing media literacy that poetics are called to perform through. The conjunction here applies itself to the collaborative and technological involvements a poet who’s also an and, rather than at an end, finds themselves dealing with.

**NOTE.**
The piece "Ampersand" that I've been playing on the screen behind me is a simple meditation on the ampersand using the full 64 ampersands of my Font library. It was transformed into a data piece and shown continuously on a large plasma screen for Bury Text Festival 2005. It was presented this year at Tate Modern as part of an event on Digital Media Writing.

The & is part of the verbal syntax by virtue of it being spatial and graphic. As one of the oldest exclusively visual/graphic signs of the Western alphabet, the ampersand cannot be spoken, it can only be shown. In its contemporary sense, it is empty, it binds elements together. In its historical diachronic sense, it is not only an exclusively graphic sign, but also one of the oldest shorthands we have got, all the way from medieval manuscripts, at endlines to speed up the process of copy. The connective conjunction AND is used by among others Deleuze to signify a cumulative, accretive structure, rather than a strictly syntactical one. The atemporal non-developmental accretion of the textual list engages with questions of non-syntactical narrativity. The avantgardist emphasis is on associative structure, visual materiality, performative textual events. While the ampersand is used by Beat writers as a sort of colloquial shorthand for the typewritten narrations of their urban & psychic lives.

**HYPHENATED PRACTICE**

This notion of a writing that is structurally ampersandic functions as a simple metaphor for a wider issue: it shows up the hyphenated practice of some writings, ie ones that explicitly utilise both verbal and nonverbal elements, both textual and audio-visual elements as part of their processes, and extend the poetic into social contexts. I will show that this certainly applies to cross-lingual and cross-media writing practices. This is crucial in an epoch of deep social and technological change such as the one we’re in. It is evident that the audio-visual literacies of our social communication cannot but inflect both the dissemination of writing arts (through online/digital/audio forms) and ultimately their production and compositional processes. And therefore also inflect the way we might come to relate to textual production at large.

In this sense I am inclined to consider conceptualism not primarily along strict critical lines (denaturalising the authorial intent, questioning the dissemination network or engaging in strict procedural events (although I do tick these boxes on off on off), but rather in the open-ended, integrative and often conflicted and socially engaged approaches that have also defined conceptual arts practices. To engage with language and verbal material at the level of poetic detail and then allow to set it off contextually and often punctually across various cultural settings and platforms. To work in project-related ways rather than out of an adopted style or stylistics.

A conceptual writer or conceptual poet so defined has a stake in arts practice, as much as they have one in poetics. Or perhaps one could simply say, they have a stake in broader cultural practice, one in which verbal and non verbal inscriptive methods coexist and are coextensive. And where poetry can be textual as much as it can be aural, audio. The inscriptive aspect of the text exists as part of a much larger documented event/gesture.

If I had to make a broad summary of the concerns of my practice as a poet this past decade it would be performativity/linguistic & bodily identities/poetics. Questions of space and designation have been to the forefront while I've been writing and working off page as much as on the page. This has happened very much in relation to acknowledging the social construction of the white page as discussed by Michel de Certeau. Closer to the bone and more poignantly, I've been reflecting on the French writer Georges Perec's sense that "space is a doubt". Finally, I've been deeply engaged in the
notion of "poetics of relation" as theorised by the Caribbean writer Edouard Glissant, as well as in that of "relational aesthetics" as advanced for interdisciplinary arts practices. Questions that have motivated my textual work and inscriptive processes are as follows:

- The question of multiple languages. Where and how does one write when one has not one language of origin, but several. It includes the question of linguistic belonging, language attrition, poetic aphasia.
- Use of multiple forms and spaces of inscription. Bringing poetry through a combination of modes and histories. Some from visual arts, some literary, some sonic.
- Exploration of ephemerality traces/sites. For instance, speaking and embodying or distributing speech. The temporal becomes a way of occupying this space: tactical ways of using it, of incorporating myself through my work to it, opening this combined space, this site of my work, to others.
- Space itself becomes a field of work, a local/e, precise with its own histories. The space of the book of the CD of the body of the site.

SAY PARSLEY

Say Parsley is a collaborative, site-related project, a sound & language piece shown in museum spaces. The project is deceptively minimal in the way it occupies space and its traces (textual and sonic) have been very difficult to document. For this piece, I work with a composer, Ciaran Maher, who is an Irish composer and installation artist based in Belfast. His principal interests are in pitch perception, tuning and the exposition of simple perceptible processes. He has also created work with/on composer James Tenney.
The first installation of the piece was created in 2001 and later documented in my collection *FIG* (2005). I've just come back from setting it up at MuHKa, the museum of contemporary arts in Antwerp, where it will be up for two months as part of a group show called Die Lucky Bush, curated by artist Imogen Stidworthy. The show as a whole addresses questions of language, belonging, proficiency, questions of artistic and/or social documents. This is the 3rd time we install Say Parsely and each time we do it, we have needed to adapt the work, notably its linguistic play, to the spatial and social conditions provided.

The crux of the piece consists in having identified a single psycho-acoustic principle and a few linguistic and phonemic processes in order to generate a field of perceptual and semantic possibilities that take place aurally in the space. The aural environment of Say Parsley becomes a place for mishearings, recognition, assumptions, misattribution. Through a few simple language and spatial tricks we want to explore or release the very arbitrariness of making sense. The controlling aspect of sense. The need to make sense. The authoritarian and political ends of keeping sense for oneself.

**PLAY PAIRING: "STANDARD/ENGLISH"**

describe: 2 words stereo phasing one octave apart.

The initial background to ‘Say Parsley’ is the biblical ‘shibboleth’, a violent event where language itself is gatekeeper, and a pretext to massacre. The pronunciation of a given word exposes the identity of the speaker. To speak becomes a give-away. Are you one of us, not one of us? Familiar drone of these past few millenia. The title itself commemorates the massacre of tens of thousands of Creole Haitians on the border of the Dominican Republic (1937) for failing to pronounce the R of "perejil" in the prescribed manner. It is the most recent example of a large scale shibboleth.

We initially created this piece in Britain for a British context, in November 2001, so in a climate of tension and great generalised suspicion. In English too the liquid letter R with its many variant pronunciations is a give away, indicative of dialectical as well as foreign origination. In the culturally pluralistic, yet divided, and still markedly monolingual society of contemporary Britain, variations in accent and deviations from a broad English pronunciation still frequently provoke some harassment and verbal, sometimes physical abuse. Just in 2004 politicians argued that it might be best if bicultural families would "SPEAK ENGLISH AT HOME" as an attempt at maintaining a homogeneously monolingual national culture.

In Antwerp, one main issue has arisen: we are about to present this installation in a bilingual French-Flemish context and at the heart of the EU with its 23 officially recognised languages and its flawed but remarkable policy of multilingualism.

**PLAY PAIRING: "SPEAK/FREELY"**

We decide to leave unchanged the word-pairings heard in the 2 sets of stereo speakers. They exploit an auditory illusion that causes listeners to hear words not actually present in the signal. As Flemish does share a sound and glossary root with English, it is more than likely that listeners will be able to create their own sense of what they hear. We work carefully with the placement of speakers to increase listeners’ ambiguities and potential mishearings. From the other two sitings we know that the pairings do release more words in the recesses of hearing. Even more surprising, hidden or disused first languages have a tendency to resurface in this constructed language space.
In the linguistically pluralistic EU, no-one speak English, everyone speak English, and everyone has an accent. How English is French? How Flemish my English? The version we did in Antwerp, at the heart of the EU and in a very hardline Flemish speaking part of the officially bilingual Belgium must think on this, however lightly. It turns out they have their own sinister shibboleth to contend with. Schild en Vriend. The phrase was a linguistically engineered massacre of French inhabitants 600 years ago. It has since become a rallying cry for Flemish separatists. We incorporate the conflicted bilingualism of Belgium into our piece by creating a small audio-visual data piece that plays on the missed correspondence between languages. The audio is a simple phonemic list of English words. The visual text spells out a similar sounding word but in Flemish or in French.

FOG looks like VOGUE.

TRIG looks like TRUK.

CRUMPLE like KROMTE.

We hang a small solo speaker just above head height (whose head? what standards are we measuring up to?) to face the wall on which the text appears.

CONCLUSION PARSLEY

What happens in such a piece from the point of view of writing. Here, writing serves the platform of both listening, directing the presence in space, and favouring misrecognition and/or remembering (one and the same thing here). I explore writing at the level of the aural: language heard spatially and contextually as much as recorded. I have to write both from a macro distance, the sounding of a word when spoken in your ear, and from a middle distance, the sounds of words organised in space in conjunction with other sounds of words. One could conceive of it as an auralisation of the joycean portemanteau. The accretive understanding created by "alcoholidays" for instance is here transmuted into an associative listening that unpacks potential mishearing or new hearing into recognisable words. It also forces a listener's own linguistic identification through a tonal accent or the discrepancies between single letters read or heard. Language is both playful and entrapping.

Of utmost interest to me is the fact that for this work to do work at a cultural level, it necessitates a radically neutralised approach to writing: anonymised, unstylised process. I have to keep my language to an absolute minimum in order to create maximum palimpsestic impact in the listener. My work
with language and the role of writing becomes like a classic lab experiment, a sort of socio-linguistic
exercise applied to cultural and cognitive condition. The chain of elements, space sound language,
make it an environment that balances between verbal, sonic and spatial perception.

"Say parsley" shares with sound art the use of sites/spaces as conducive to various kinds of aural
experience and with sonic poetry an interest in exploring the recording of spoken inscriptiveness.
Indeed, dealing with such a verbalised environment audiophonically cannot primarily be seen through
its literary value (which is hidden in the process, selection of appropriate word pairings, list of shifting
phonemes, reading-recording of text), but its writing and poetic methods increase its efficacy as a
sounded linguistic piece. The audio experience adds obvious dimensions of corporeality, temporality
and spatial work to that of the verbal and linguistic experience. It is tied to poetics and to the
literacies involved in listening and interpreting cultural voices and their sonic representations.

SHORTER CHAUCER TALES

I want to touch briefly on a completely different and highly similar project I'm involved with. This
project started in 2006 very much on a surprise invitation by Charles Bernstein and David Wallace,
and I will be presenting new sequences of this later this month in NY. I initially entitled the sequence
of pieces, Shorter Chaucer Tales, and in keeping with the oralisation of writing that such a
contemporary medievalist project aspires to it was for long only available as audio readings online at
PennSound. The Shorter Chaucer Tales is one of the more explicitly literary projects I've so far
undertaken. It is also the project of mine that most systematically seeks to address the articulations of
multilingual cross-cutting, at a synchronic as well as a diachronic and etymological level. Writing such
tales allows me explicit access to a whole range of textual strategies and language registers, not only
synchronic and contemporaneous, but also in the diachrony of the English language, since it is in
Middle English we find ourselves, and in the complex and varied world of the chaucerian text. It forces
a sort of projective and retrospective glance at the matter one is handling. In a sense, I see this
project as the proof that there is life after the continuous present. It emerges from and is tied to my
long-standing interest and personal tribulations with having, with being, and with being had in multiple
languages and socio-cultural contexts.

I said this project is literary. In a sense therefore it is historical or historified. It is preoccupied with
literary precedence, poetic rhythm, linguistic detail, narrative mirroring, mimetic ways of composing
writing. It wants to hold all this within short elastic plots or trajectories. It remembers what we know
so well today, that quite before the absolutism of authenticity, writing was an action on texts that
produces mimetic ventriloquist gas quite happily, while resting on what we would consider modern
methods of intertextual and appropriative techniques. Many of Chaucer's tales were known
adaptations, some word for word, and free translations. Furthermore, copyright didn't start regulating
the written text for another few centuries so the only querelles were with sloppy copyists. Why
rewrite what is familiar and perfect when one can just bring it home, transpose it. I followed the lead.
My first tale was a collation of food and wine references in the Canterbury Tales. I later managed to
convince a Norwegian journal that although strictly speaking this is not Norwegian, it could have been.
And they printed it as is, without translating it, just asking for a short framing statement.

READ OPENING LINES HOST TALE

MULTILINGUAL POETICS
The idea of multilingual poetics is increasingly used to refer to poetic projects in which the poet engages with a lexical menagerie of several languages within single pieces. We have here an impulse towards setting up traffic between different linguistic universes, and new forms of translative practice that work with cultural heterogeneity and do so frequently also to address question of cultural and linguistic dominance, and attending issues of language policy and language erasure within the culture. It is no coincidence that multilingual works are most frequently written and developed by writers who for one reason or another are themselves bilingual, might be politically diasporic, or who write in a culture where the relation between languages indicates highly uneven diglossic value markers.

Cultural politics were not foremost in Saussure's mind but for the structural linguist that he was, the plurality of languages would always function and confirm the arbitrariness of the sign. Writerly practices which not only display an awareness of this arbitrariness but refuse or cannot do without it, can be traced up among writers for whom the question is not how to make poetry pallate the "défaut des langues" (vaunted by Mallarmé, and early Modernists ); but rather the question is to highlight and inflect the social and historical default illustrated by monoglossic politics, and to explore the vast linguistic imaginaries, the arbitrariness of languages, that are emerging from the rather large crack in the polish of say, British English. Indeed, a multilingual or second language writer cannot rest nor trust the ideal of a complete, motivated, minological and pre-Babel language, at one with a Nature that writing might uncover, as nurtured in the daydreams of monolingual poets. On the contrary, language games seem mostly present to signify a conscious accentuation of the writer's linguistic and cultural relocation while questioning the viability of the monolingual coherence which large nation states and linguistic hegemonies often set out to project and protect. The official monolingual status of English in the US for instance hides and keeps back the increasingly important yet still unofficial influence and status of Spanish. The current threading of Black English to the Caribbean and on to a range of African languages gives another history to its linguistic make-up, than that of being a sub-genre of English proper, of proper English. Indeed the question of English today is not whether it can still be Standard but rather, and to the great nervousness of some British English linguists, what its status as a global lingua franca might mean for the language itself.

As the idea of monolingually identified nation states is becoming increasingly fraught, usually the product of large empire states intent on internalising through monolingualism or indeed monoliteracy their hold on their subjects, near and far, and as people are also finding themselves with much increased frequency living in countries in which they were not born, or are first or second generation citizens, hence have an interrupted sense of the past whether they do or don’t experience themselves as diasporic, there’s an increasing number of writers and poets that are turning to this mixed and often personal language experience to inform their writing politics. Briefly one can think of the early bilingual fluidity of Brazilian concrete poets, the heteroglossic displacements of Joyce, the asyntactical pages of European Anne Tardos, the multi-lingual project of the Korean American Theresa Hak Kyung Cha’s magistral Dictee, the Pessoa inspired ludism of Canadian Erin Moure, the French of Stacy Doris, the scholarly excavations of Rosmarie Waldrop, the crucial work done by Caribbean writers and theorists such as Edouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau Kamau Brathwaite, who argue for a highly dynamic linguistic and cultural creolity, via the performance works of the Mexican-American Coco Fusco, etc.

**PLOT**

It is a plot in itself to work in Middle English and this was part of the point. Language itself was my pilgrimage and led my narratives. At the end of the 14th century, Southern England had been
dominated by French and Latin and had witnessed the development of its complex hierarchical culture of literary romance and courtly love. And in its Northern parts, many city names and dialectical terms were still a strong reminder of the early Viking conquest and settlements. Chaucer's decision to work in a spoken English idiom confirmed the richness and versatility of a linguistic region that was starting to strongly de-frenchify its cultural language and de-latinate its vocabulary's antecedents. At any rate, the fixing of the English language was still very much up for grabs. Yet Chaucer's Middle English seemed closer to contemporary English than expected. Hardly surprising perhaps, since it is Chaucer's flexible and intensely rich and varied idiom that has become the model for our own English. Its syntax, its verbal tense and lack of declension are loosely familiar if you put your mind to it. On a personal note, it is also the closest written language I have ever come across where I can simultaneously see the refractions of the French and Norwegian languages of my background. Furthermore, the moral aspect of the Chaucerian tales, their satirical commentaries on all sorts of social behaviour, the strict narrative turn basically, is an aspect of the plot that felt crucial and tempting, if stylistically difficult to come to terms with. Wearing layers of linguistic mask, of jest, one moves as an authorial-character through the immoralities of one's own linguistic, cultural and political landscape.

In a radical manner, one can say that the dispersed, intensely regional dialects of Chaucer's days are again to be found, this time in the inventive and adaptive languages of today's many anglicised and post-colonial worlds, at-home and abroad: today's highly contextual and politically divergent Englishes. Furthermore, and as we see it in the EU, but also in non-western contexts, a basic form of English is now the third language taught and spoken in a great number of linguistic communities. British English will undoubtedly find itself threatened by this use of its national language as a lingua franca, separate from any national loyalty or bond. And since even BBC English finds itself adulterated by accents & the bad mistakes these days, and since American English is the pervasive form chosen by many non-native speakers, perhaps it'll again have to go by way of the French to create an academy in London that works for the preservation of English English.

TRANSPORT

The buses in London are extraordinary sites of linguistic activity and code switchings happen among all sorts of speakers from different linguistic communities. From one row to the next, there's a different English, and a different language pool. The ranges of accents are so present that the English spoken by a Cockney from East London sounds just as excentered as the rest of us. Crowds of school-children going home after school jump loudly and seamlessly from British English to exclamations and phrases in other shared languages or simply to local sub-cultural jargon that I, who no longer go to school, am privvy to. This is a very exciting cultural syntax, disjointed, intensely local while also translocal.

The practice of code switching, a term used by sociolinguists, is active among speakers that are fluent in more than one language, language here can also mean dialect, patois, discursive register etc. Like the school children. On examining processes of code switching what is interesting is the point of the cut, the jump that takes you from one language to the next and to the next or back to the first one. Of course linguists will always look for rules, but code-switching is of great interest for writing, and indeed has been used by many multilingual writers as the basis for their integrative syntax.

A person code switches usually at a logical syntactical point de la narration. Linguists are trying to find out if there are implicit diglossic rules in code switching. For instance, can one identify a functional exchange in language A, exclamations and cursing in language B, private digressive in language C, and
what each of these ABC languages actually represent to the speaker personally and culturally. Furthermore, if you’re in an English context when you start the code switching, the likelihood that you come back to English at some point is strong. So somehow there’s always une sorte de rhythmique, ikke sant, between the languages. A listener of multilingual work jumps along or accepts intermittent points of opacity. Such a poetics, made in parts of a transhistoric and multilingual vocabulary, favours narrative and associative insights and might function as a kind of aleatory bridging of linguistic realities. Edouard Glissant, as well as a great number of Caribbean writers, claims for Caribbean literature a move towards opacity. By this he does not mean aesthetic obscurity and hermeticism, but rather a conscious way of representing and preserving the varied cultural traffic, the diverse linguistic layering of Caribbean English. The move is of course also very much pitted against the imposed transparency of any subaltern identity and seeks to establish instead a literary practice, openly inspired by bakhtin’s heteroglossic politics, that manifests textually a language’s historic and contemporary plurality.

IN PROGRESS

I should say that this project is in many ways very much still in the make. All the research I do for it also helps constitute the basis for research I’m doing for a larger project in England, which will involve, within the next two years, a number of multilingual and bicultural speakers, or recorded speakers, in a mixed media event. This is an opportunity to reflect on the historical and political dimensions of multilingualism in England, on the shifting social make-up of its language communities, some of these transient, on cohabitation and the micro-frictions of what doesn’t work and why, as manifested through a linguistic and textual project. Finding ways of representing and producing these in a relevant form is foremost on my mind.

To engage across the centuries in a crochet of allusions or puns, there you have the principle and seeming insouciance of linguistic games. But I am trying to move from the level of the associative word and diachronic homophonic pun to the level of discourse formation and it follows, identificatory strategy. The point is to manifest our own contemporaneity in all its socio-linguistic opacity palpable, so that the intensely historicised arbitrariness and engrained xenophobia of our social languages and their lived functions, might be enhanced, provoked, and measured up very intimately, at the level of one’s speech.

We must be done with fears of a top-down liberal idea about the globalisation of English as though this in fact would flatten the world into one pidgin version of a master tongue. This is really more to do with market economy and yet another Western bid for kicking the world and keeping things exactly as they seem. If, as Guaytri Spivak has written, writing “is a clearing of space”, it is to do with the acceptance of writing as a contingent, profoundly temporal and embodied activity. Its role, in bilingual and often off-page textual projects such as mine, can be to largely activate a sort of language and culture regeneration zone, that asserts memories, narratives, by looking around, by digging in sites of language, and opening up sites of textual inscription for what is there. Temporariness and excavation, precariousness and renewal, all inscribed in the process of being in language &