

Baudelaire - 1855

Like all my friends I have tried more than once to lock myself up within a system in order to preach there at my ease. But a system is a kind of damnation which forces one to perpetual recantation: it is always necessary to be inventing a new one, and the drudgery involved is a cruel punishment. (The Mirror of Art).

The Mirror of Art - 1955. D. M. G. 1956

Perls - Gestalt Prayer

I do my thing. and you do your thing.
I am not in this world to live up to your expectations.
And you are not in this world to live up to mine.
You are you and I am I.
And if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful.
If not, it can't be helped.

Peter Marin - The Open Truth and Fiery Vehemence of Youth.

What is really shared among members of a particular culture is a condition, a kind of internal 'landscape', the psychic shape that a particular time and place assumes within a man as the extent and limit of his perceptions, dreams, and pleasure and pain...

I am trying to surround you, I see that, I am trying to make with these words a kind of city so natural, so familiar, that the other world, the one that appears to be, will look by comparison absurd and flat, limited, unnecessary... Perhaps, as in the myth, Aphrodite can rise only where Cronos' testicles have fallen into the sea.

(The Center Magazine, January 1969; reprinted in The Movement Toward a New America, ed. Mitchell Goodman, 1970)

Stravinsky -

The true purpose of linear historicism is simply to open up more Midwestern territories of the mind to Ph.D. candidates...

William Carlos Williams - I Wanted to Write a Poem (1958) p. 22

Paterson V must be written.... Paterson IV ends with the protagonist breaking through the bushes, identifying himself with the land, with America. He finally will die but it can't be categorically stated that death ends anything. When you're through with sex, with ambition, what can an old man create? Art, of course, a piece of art that will go beyond him into the lives of young people, the people who haven't had time to create. The old man meets the young people and lives on.

Robert Duncan - From the Day Book (p. 41)

we can know or imagine no more about the good of the poem than we know or imagine about the good of the society.

(Origin 10 : second series, July 1963)

Pound - A Stray Document

phanopoeia: " an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time, which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth...

William Carlos Williams - The Poem as a Field of Action (1948)

How can we accept Einstein's theory of relativity, affecting our very conception of the heavens about us of which poets write so much, without incorporating its essential fact - the relativity of measurements - into our own category of activity: the poem. Do we think we stand outside the universe?

Robert Duncan - Nights and Days 1

In the map of stars we began to map ourselves. Our projection of what we are was also a first poetry. A first making of a thing or image that projected a spiritual form in what we did not know. Well... There must have been another projected spiritual form - not only this but also this - when the Adam named their things and kinds of the earth, another network of sticks and stones "that never hurt one". In our literary listings and groupings, we are doing all of that, nothing more. We make constellations in poetry that are, if they be anything, linked by gender, works of our selves then, ideograms of spirit, of when and where what we are is happening.

(Summa 1, 1968)

Michel Foucault - The Order of Things (1966, trans. 1970) xvii

What has been removed, in short, is the famous 'operating table'; and rendering to [Raymond Roussel] a small part of what is still his due, I use that word 'table' in two superimposed senses: the nickel-plated, rubbery table swathed in white, glittering beneath a glass sun devouring all shadow - the table where, for an instant, perhaps for-ever, the umbrella encounters the sewing-machine; and also a table, a tabula, that enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences - the table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space.

...that there is a worse kind of disorder than that of the incongruous, the linking together of things that are inappropriate; I mean the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry, of the heteroclitite; and that word should be taken in its most literal, etymological sense: in such a state, things are 'laid', 'placed', 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a place of residence for them, to define a common locus beneath them all.

R.D. Laing - The Politics of Experience (1967) p.15

The other person's behaviour is an experience of mine. My behaviour is an experience of the other. The task of social phenomenology is to relate my experience of the other's behaviour to the other's experience of my behaviour. Its study is the relations between experience and experience: its true field is inter-experience.

William Everson (Brother Antoninus) - Earth Poetry (1970)

No matter how skillfully you employ the mastery of environment in the uses of environment, as long as your attitude does not transcend the merely operative, the merely utilitarian, you will be constructing only another kind of edifice, man's triumph rather than nature's triumph.... the danger in a triumphant ecology is the secularization of nature, rather than the sacralization of man through nature, which it properly ought to mean....

The correct management of natural resources can never mean the recovery of nature. For the recovery of nature can only come through contemplation, and contemplation, while it has no quarrel with management in the sense of forbearance, certainly does have a quarrel with management in the sense of business.

(Sierra Club Bulletin, July 1970; reprinted as a pamphlet, Oyez, 1971)

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Olson.

The poet who explores the meaning of the term polis, the city in history - through the principle of unlimited coherence - "limits are what any one of us finds himself inside of" -

Walter Ong - The Presence of the Word, 1967 - "The word remains for us at root a mystery, a datum in the sense-world existing in closest association with that other mystery which is understanding itself."

Olson the poet of the word's possibilities for the essentially nonverbal nature of the basic proposition and the human life.

L.S. Dembo - Conceptions of Reality in Modern American Poetry, 1966 - p.213 - "...Maximus "the man in the world"-an accurate enough epithet if it is taken to suggest poetic-colloquial revelation of nature, history, self - or conversely, the expansion of personal speech to universal logos."

Olson - Maximus IV - "Maximus to Gloucester, Letter 27 [withheld]" -

An American
is a complex of occasions,
themselves a geometry
of spatial nature.

I have this sense,
that I am one
with my skin

Plus this - plus this:
that forever the geography
which leans in
on me I compell
backwards I compell Gloucester
to yield, to
change
Polis
in this

Olson- The Maximus Poems - "The Songs of Maximus - Song 1" -

colored pictures
of all things to eat: dirty
postcards And words, words, words
all over everything
No eyes or ears left
to do their own doings (all
invaded , appropriated, outraged , all senses
including the mind, that worker on what is
And that other sense

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made to give even the most wretched, or any of us, wretched,
that consolation (greased
lulled
even the street-cars
song

Olson - Proprioception p.16 - definition of theogony -

placement of man and things among all possibilities of creation, rather than
one alone, of modern history, and politics, and science and literature, or arms,
the Indo-European chariot, and virum, the old epic.

- Causal Mythology p.2 -

that which exists through itself is what is called meaning

Colin O. Sauer - Land and Life, ed. John Leighly, 1967 - p.3 -

The far corners of the New World are jumbled but real museums of the remote
antiquity of man. Here, in the contemporary populations, common primordial traits,
physical and cultural, are preserved by which waves of colonization may be traced
that spread southward from the Alaskan gateway and began within the Ice Age.

Olson - The Maximus Poems - "Letter, May 2, 1959" -

...I am interfused
with the rubbish
of creation...

.... step off
onto the nation The sea
will rush over The ice
will drag boulders Commerce
was changed the fathometer
was invented here the present
is worse give nothing now your credence
start all over step off the
Orontes onto land no Typhon
no understanding of a cave...

Colin O. Sauer - "The Morphology of Landscape" (Leighly *ibid.* p.349)-

[What happens to man] through the influence of his physical surroundings is beyond
the competence of the geographer; at most he may keep informed as to the physiologic
research in that field. What man does in an area because of tabu or totemism or
because of his own will involves use of environment rather than the active agency
of the environment.

Fenollosa - The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry -

The very soil of Chinese life seems entangled in the roots of its speech.... Their
ideographs are like blood-stained battle-flags to an old campaigner. With us, the
poet is the only one for whom the accumulated treasures of the race-words are real
and active. Poetic language is always vibrant with fold on fold of overtones and with
natural affinities.

Wright Basis: form follows function - architecture should be organic with natural environment. This basis is therefore the basic inconsistency of his work: a Thoreau rejection of rent for land, money or manhood (the bases of capitalism), without an adequate political and economic theory of change in society or the city. He lived and built capitalistically. His ideal, Broadacre City, is based on electrification, mechanical mobility and organic architecture - decentralized, integrated - a definition of his democratic structure. But he believes in the "architectural soloist", the family as the basis, the centre of all his works, and the house rather than the environment and the community as the focus of living. Wright remained paternalist and oligarchic. In that vision of decentralization and reintegration lies our natural twentieth century dawn. (The Living City, 1958 -p.26)

In the light of the space needs of the twentieth century we see in [the city] not only similar inflamed exaggerations of tissue but more and more painfully forced circulation, comparable to high blood pressure in the human system. (The Living City, p.33)

Architecture is organic only because it is intrinsic. In the reflex it seeks to serve man rather than to become a force trying to rule over him. Another reason why we say organic architecture cultivates "the space within" as a reality instead of the roof and walls: It is building from inside out, instead of from outside in..... The old city, already distinctly dated by its own excess, is only further outmoded by every forced increase. Our natural resource now is in new possibilities of access to good uses of good ground; an agronomy intelligently administered. (The Living City, pp. 96 and 39)

No less than an acre to each individual man, woman and child. (ibid).

To be of the twentieth century this city must be built in these comprehensive terms of organic spiritual need instead of the meum and tuum of a profit system. (ibid.p.152)

The ancient city naturally grew and existed as the great aid and abettor of human intercourse. A city became the immediate source of wealth and power by way of such human intercourse as was essential to social, industrial, and financial growth. Only by congregating thus in aggregations, the vaster the aggregation the better, could the fruits of human living then best be had. In that day the real life of the city lay in the stress of individual ties, the contacts of super-individuals, encountering upon other individualities. The electric spark of curiosity and surprise was alone in the streets, in public meetings. In the home it was found only occasionally as people congregated there. All was excitingly gregarious and gregarious in order to be exciting. (Autobiography, 1945 p.319)

Mumford ref. David R. Yeimer -The City as Metaphor - re Cummings, WCW, Auden etc

The principle instruments of the American city are merely distractions that take our eyes off the environment, instead of instruments which would help us to mould it creatively as little a little nearer to humane hopes and dreams. ("The City" - in Harold E. Stearns, Civilization in the United States, 1922 -p.9)

The lack of consciousness of what was happening and what might happen to the city as an entity, this was one of the main obstacles to its spiritual, has involved a widening of the means of communication and cooperation. (The Transformation of Man, 1957 p.146)

Every mistake in urban design that could be made was made by the new railroad engineers, for whom the movement of trains was more important than the human objects achieved by that movement. (The City in History, 1961, p.525)

The world will not become a neighbourhood even if every part of it is bound by instant communication and rapid transportation, if the neighbourhood itself as an ideal and a social form is allowed to disappear. (The Transformation of Man, p.150)

Given the pressure to sink capital more extensively into the underground city, less money becomes available for space and architectural beauty above ground; indeed the next step in the city's development, already undertaken in many American cities, is to extend the principles of the underground city even to the design of buildings that are visibly above ground, and so defeat art at every point. (The City in History, p.547)

Universities exhibiting "the current metropolitan vices of overgrowth and congestion, dissociation and disorganization". (1961 - The City in History - Analysis No.56)

If the university is to function as the organizing nucleus in the new urban implosion, it must not merely decentralize and reorganize its facilities on a regional basis...but undergo an inner transformation: from pedagogy to paideia, from science to wisdom, from detachment to commitment. Out of this will spring a new system of learning, a new attitude towards every manifestation of life, as different from the science and technology founded by Galileo, Bacon, Descartes and Newton as they were from the theology of Thomas Aquinas. Without this Great Instauration our plans for city development will remain sterile and superficial. (The City in History, p.545)

Neither family nor property nor vocational respect nor an earned income nor an identifiable home helps the segregated displaced minority to resist further internal disintegration. (The Urban Prospect- foreword -1968)

The skyscraper] is a sort of vertical filing case with uniform windows, a uniform facade, uniform accommodations, rising floor by floor in competition for light and air and above all financial prestige with other skyscrapers. (The City in History, p.535)

Now the great function of the city is to permit, indeed, to encourage and incite, the greatest number of meetings, encounters, challenges, between all persons, classes or groups, providing as it were a stage, upon which the dream of life may be enacted, with the actors taking their turn as spectators and spectators as actors. (Culture of Cities, 1938 p.20)

McLuhan

the ideal form of my book would be an ideogram. Or perhaps it could be a film; but otherwise I can find no way of creating an inconclusive image that is lineal and sequential.

(see McLuhan Hot and Cool, ed. Gerald E. Stearns, 1968, p. 204)

But: McLuhan describes the environment as "technological determinism" - he is a "media determinist" (refs. - Richard Kostelanetz: "Marshall McLuhan - A Hot Apostle in a Cool Culture", Twentieth Century, Autumn, 1966; Andrew Tudor in Media Sociology: A Reader, ed. Jeremy Tunstall)

Sidney Finkelstein - Sense and Nonsense of McLuhan, 1968.

p.10 In expounding his historical examples, McLuhan undercuts and ignores the entire creative activity of human labour in changing the world, making it more adaptable to human needs, discovering its secrets, co-operatively altering its environment, periodically changing the formation of society itself... How these technologies came he doesn't care. They came, mysteriously, and lo! the poor human being is caught in their grip.

Lewis Mumford - Technics and Civilization, 1934 - p. 215 -

The gains in technics are never registered automatically in society; they require equally adroit inventions and adaptations in politics; and the careless habit of attributing to mechanical improvements a direct role as instruments of culture and civilization puts a demand upon the machine to which it cannot respond.

(i.e. Like Darwin and Freud, McLuhan omits the political and social situation for human beings, the nature of cultural process and choice).

Finkelstein - p. 24 -

The fact is that to administer such an empire [as the Roman Empire] or the Egyptian Empire, for that matter, would have been impossible without a mass of records, chronicles, and numbers of scribes, or in other words without some form of writing on paper. And so it would be perfectly valid to say, 'without papyrus, there would not have been a Roman Empire'. But this is quite different from saying that papyrus 'created the Roman Empire'. A real fact turns into a generalized untruth.

McLuhan - Understanding Media, 1964 .

Electromagnetic technology requires utter docility and quiescence of meditation such as benefits an organism that now wears its brain outside its skull and its nerves outside its hide. Man must serve his electric technology with the same servomechanistic fidelity with which he served his coracle, his canoe, his typography and all other extensions of his physical organs. But there is a difference, that previous technologies were partial and fragmentary, and the electric is total and inclusive.

(Therefore McLuhan criticises Mumford's distrust of the machine as an anti-vital force, similar to the city - the Rousseauist position: in The Mechanical Bride, 1951, McLuhan referring to Mumford -

there is the dubious assumption that the organic is the opposite of the mechanical. Professor Norbert Wiener, maker of mechanical brains, asserts that since all organic characteristics can now be mechanically produced, the old rivalry between mechanism and vitalism is finished. (p. 34)

i.e. the key fact is McLuhan's conversion to Roman Catholicism, the universalizing system deliberately joined - he has always taught at RC institutions, and his philosophic guide from The Gutenberg Galaxy, 1962, onwards - and perhaps earlier -

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has been Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit scientist and cosmic evolutionist .

For the electronic age, as de Chardin insisted, is not mechanical but organic, and has little sympathy with the values achieved through typography .

(Gutenberg, p.135)

i.e. McLuhan is the prophet of the technological electronic extensions of the body and nervous system as the extension of man into that spatial universal energy called God by de Chardin. The "global embrace" of McLuhan's "external central nervous system" is related to de Chardin's "Noosphere" - and his conceptual belief that in evolution everything that rises must converge.

Teilhard de Chardin - The Phenomenon of Man, 1955 -

Through the discovery yesterday of the railway, the motor car, and the aeroplane, the physical influence of each man formerly restricted to a few miles, now extends to hundreds of leagues or more. Better still, thanks to the prodigious biological events represented by the discovery of electro-magnetic waves, each individual finds himself henceforth (actively or passively) simultaneously present over land and sea, in every corner of the earth.

So that: in this way earth "finds its soul" - or McLuhan's new form of cosmic consciousness; or neo-tribalism -

Understanding Media -

"the computer promises by technology a Pentecostal condition of universal understanding and unity"

McLuhan - War and Peace in the Global Village, 1968 -

When one has been hurt by new technology, when the private person or the corporate body finds its entire identity endangered by physical or psychic change, it lashes back in a fury of self-defence.... EVERY NEW TECHNOLOGY NECESSITATES A NEW WAR.... (p.97-8)

As a crash programme of Westernization and education, the war consists of initiating the East in the mechanical technology of the industrial age. (p.37)

Understanding Media -

Once we have surrendered our senses and nervous systems to the private manipulation of those who would try to benefit from taking a lease on our eyes and ears and nerves, we don't really have any rights left.

Example of McLuhan's untruths:

There is an Oxford college that memorialized the life-long devotion of one of its servants by the inscription:

HE KNEW HIS PLACE

In the semi-feudal world of Oxford that remark has none of the sinister or sneering quality that it naturally evokes in democratic ears. England is still a land in which the highest gentry and the lowly cockney share a set of tribal loyalties that exclude the possibility of personal ambition or private goals. At both of these social extremes there is an assumption of total involvement in role that renders the striving for social or commercial success quite meaningless.

(Counterblast, 1969)

i.e. McLuhan's dream of the valid society closely resembles that of the Anglo-Catholic American expatriate, Conservative, Royalist, medievalist T.S.Eliot.