

‘giving tongue’**cris cheek**

When I was 4, my dad read me poems at bedtime. I heard a staple diet of Lewis Carroll and Edward Lear for two following years. It was the phonic logics of these poems that repeatedly drew me in; a hovering between song and poem. Their quirky iambic cadences which hinted at conventional meanings, without appearing to deliver them, snared me. They harboured senses that seemed to present a less policeable or graspeable, flip side of consensual meaning; although I wouldn't have thought about it like that then. These were poems that failed to deliver nonsense, remaining curiously tied in to my emergent experiences. Yet they are commonly referred to as 'nonsense' poems. This despite the ironic commentary that Carroll provides through Alice in the text that accompanies 'The Jabberwocky'. ⁽¹⁾ I over-romanticise my childhood now, as lying awake in the gathering darkness, rapt in the sounds shaped by my father's mouth, rocked into sleep by the pleasure-giving movements of a kinship tongue; wrapped in Victorian sonolinguistic play.

Voices of authority inflect us, particularly when young of course, throughout our lives. Most habitually, in my case, a received sound of the predominantly European aspirational middle-classes, in the north east London suburbs of post World War Two England. Teenwards I gravitated towards deliberately resisting this stiff-upper-lip-ish sound, increasingly attracted to various period oppositional speech attitudes; Mick

Jagger's disdainful mid-sixties London scowl, later Johnny Rotten's rasping mangled mock-cockney disgust and Poly Styrene's siren wail 'Oh Bondage! Up Yours!' (1). My response was to the bad manners of the saying and the unkempt matters of the said.

Aside from pop music, other widely available models for dissonant speech were to be found in comedy of that era. (3) Poetry though, still gave off the air of managing to remain

largely unaffected by a decade of turmoil in other artforms. Perhaps it's hard to understand, outside the prevailing context of British poetries at that time, how startling it was, for a young Londoner, to hear Bill Griffiths read in 1975 a section of poetry such as;

'the buds brown, brutalized, at their gate out the state

sub jugum

in vulf-vault

in the gardens of Poknies and po-lice

coplines teacher; breach

tongues out

mouths up clovery windows

Latchmere

solitary - no - lead-lifting

tongue

tight as tap'

(Griffiths, B. *War w/ Windsor*. London: Writers Forum & Pirate Press, 1974: text 6)

but here, for me, was a brace of invigorating air, in a literary climate dominated by the well-turned (and too often slackly-tuned) phrase. It was part of a body of writing that helped to reawaken my interest in the potential for poetry against what was an otherwise drab diet of proper English verses, contracted in the service of petty-epiphanic niceties. Griffiths' 'buds', brutalized at the prison gate, are far darker and more fiercely engaged with the machinations of a coercive state, than Larkin's comparatively tweely formulated suggestion that your mum and dad fuck you up. Griffiths writes a compacting sense, and consequently a crunched sound, of English, riven by implied erasure, targetted at social control, operated through the legislature. His 'tongues out' are committed to solitary, in a passage that links the silencing of speech to social violence within a British justice system, whose centers could no longer hold. Here are historically bitter ('vulf-vault') salival juices, leaking from beneath a battered body of linguistic decorum. Attention being turned, states of attention being retuned, onto the ruptured humours of colloquial ellision, in conflict with the official language and record of a post-modern Britain.

Writings published by Bill Griffiths, Ulli Freer, Glenda George, Barry MacSweeney, Jeremy Prynne and Allen Fisher, amongst many, in the mid-late nineteen seventies, signal a shift of syntactical sensibility and subsequently of sonic shapings, away from the conservative sentiments offered by the Movement and they who had followed in its mostly dreary wake. Syntax, no longer the creation of a well-formed sentence, became an instrument with which to interrogate the ideologies of linguistic communication and its cadences of easy listening. The veil of Bourdieu's 'illusion of

linguistic communism' (Bourdieu, P. *Language & Symbolic Power*. London: Polity Press, 1991: 43) was teased aside. Syntactical disruptions unloosened the conventions of meaning making, offering a critique of poetic rapture. Re-examinations of syntax, went hand in mouth with rewriting the sonic terrains of poetries in these Englishes. But the monolithic block of literary English was subjected to other pressures at that time, signalled by writings which moved against the tum-tee-tum march of colonial parades, in a

rhythmical revolution for writing and its reading, symbolized by the moment when Kamau Brathwaite took his measure from Calypso in the opening phrase of that eponymous poem; 'The stone had skidded arc'd and bloomed into islands' (Brathwaite, Edward. *Rights of Passage*. New York: Oxford UP, 1967: 47) Not only a sensibility, but a strophe had also shifted.

The sounds of English today are the sounds of Englishes, both within the borders of that nation state which had exported the seeds through empire and trade, to beyond those borders in former commonwealths and world market places. Resultant loss of monodirectional control, the hegemonic orders of top-down imposition, can be apprehended at every intersection between those Englishes, and throughout their linguistic diasporas. I celebrate that loss, as a positive sign that this is a language in a turmoil of great promise, opening, rather than resistant to, that vibrant plethora of influence and change which has enabled it to become so translocal. What seems undesirable is a language that mirrors the merely partially capacitated office body, chairbound, with relatively fixed view? These Englishes can now be heard as proliferating measures of dispossession and deterritorialisation, as re-patched versions;

understood as a quilt conspicuously out of kilter with a body that it no longer covers. Its signature cadences continue to diversify, are entropically obliged. Harnesses on the geochoreography of the English tongue have been undermined, often delightfully to my ears, by a rollercoaster of flips and spins and racinating tunes, such as this:

‘lang time

my song lock up tight

eena mi troat

like if a ever open mi mout

jus to breathe

de roar woould shake dis eart

an matterkine

split

an microchip cho jus fly’

(Breeze, Jean ‘Binta’. *Red Rebel Song*) (5)

Read as an expectant from imposed silence, this song-poem enacts disquiet at complicit post-colonial literary models of consumption. Breeze’s advocacy, in a shift from ‘my’ to ‘mi’, is a re-verberation of a declining body of speakings and speakers, a reconnection of ‘troat’ to ‘eart’; a vibration of sound between body and ground. The tongue, in being rewritten for strongly percussive representations and not pushing between her teeth to slacken through a repetitive ‘th’, is kept moving, and so identified as

a site for the retaking of a measure of control. Her tongue is emphasised as an instrument for speaking out from under received self-restraint. Through the articulation of a palette of resistance to denial she repositions learning a 'lang' way from those classicisms exploited by a more conventionally celebrated Caribbean writer such as Derek Walcott. The projection of language as physical resonance, a toning of charged semantic particles in a rhythm that syncopates silent beats and sounded beats, energised by breath, is performed through a carefully re-weighted and spatially re-choreographed tongue. She reaffirms a purpose for language, for 'lang', to chime with song. (6)

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Older binaries, between oralities and literacies and between the languages of mutating flux and of hegemonic standards have reached a crisis point, more or less during the same period of time. The former through proliferating forms of indirect testimony, the latter intertwined with diasporic variegation. An entrenched defender of standard English, such as John Honey, depicts an over-reductive contest, fought to the death between absolute proprieties of 'good' usage and those who would accept all and sundry contributions to the English language, until the effective shape became utterly lost. But surely we need positions that acknowledge greater slippage between the seemingly intractable. Surely closure has a closer discourse with doubt than the stand-offs fostered by demarcating niche-market identities might allow; the survival of the one being implicated in the ongoing businesses of the other, to such an extent that blankly oppositional positions seem redundant? Who, upon entering the Club of All Persuasions,

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could resist admitting usage to a term such as ‘chopsy’, referring to someone who has become over ‘gabby’ with the old ‘north and south’? (7)

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Throughout ‘Assembling Alternatives’, I listened to each speaker with multiple states of attention. I heard them as positioned among the many voices in the rooms into which they were speaking. That is, I didn’t focus on dominant voices in exclusivity. I listened to them as multiple signals in a collaborative context. Furthermore, not a distant collaboration between discreet territories, but a close collaboration, involving intimacies that, at times, proved awkward to negotiate. In doing so, my attentions became partial subjects of distortion and distraction. I pursued listenings, orientated to the production of sound as an integral component of the production of meanings. Meanings, as a conversation between melody, rhythm and noise, with noise positively included, rather than edited out. Hearings, that struggled to retain the sense of paying attention to multiple voices and proliferating modes of address, in context, through time.

Both textual interpretations and their physical fixities are in various states of preservation and decay at any given time. I not suggesting anything so silly as that the tongue is the chief source of play in language. I’m using it as a conceit in order to make some hopefully generative provocations. You might well ask, what about the lips, the teeth, the lungs, the pulse; the tongue being just one partner in linguistic communication

(even if it's the silent tongue of a reader), why accord it so much privilege here? But the tongue is a more felicitously slippery and resonant term than the lips, the teeth and so forth. It is itself, for one thing, a sign for language. A tongue, can be rendered as a dancing organ in the mouth. It is indexical of the body of language which it produces and of the body which produces it. A tongue is an organic site for projective reintegration between mind and body, between speaking and writing. It is an instrument of conscious and non-conscious, glossolalic articulations. The proposal in writing 'giving tongue' is to stimulate a tongue which has a generosity towards the appropriateness of influence, and has the ability to change and in doing so make a positive contribution back to those events with which it is primarily engaged. I'm arguing for a flexible tongue, that resists arrival at standards through stasis; a tongue that is too busy moving, playing, learning, to fall into the mores of fixation. No more than that. Such a tongue has much to offer contemporary poetics and poetries. It can teach us much, both positive and negative, about current constraints and habits within practice. It can reveal the terms of the violence of influence as much as the workings of thetic economy. It is the application of tonguing to the articulation of assemblage, through libinal play.

Speech has discourse with choreography, through habitus of stance and gesture in the given space of an informal or formally framed performance. Speaking is simultaneously chewing on both the programmatic and the more abstract communicative aspects of musical composition. Acts of speaking therefore have interdisciplinary resonance. Cross-artform terrains of linguistic communication ought to be taken into consideration more often. They are axiomatic to 'live' writing. But the more usual way of

dealing with such evidences is to politely sideline their significance. Many writers still think of their work as that which only implicates the head, balanced in the position of the panopticon on the top of the body. Boundaries between writing and other artforms can be subjected to forms of censorship, through reductive social consensus, as repressive as those operated against unwanted influence. ⁽⁸⁾

Power no longer so clearly resides in autonomous, written traditions. Those aspects of knowledge, previously considered to be ephemeral, transient and of less value, which Foucault identifies as historically gendered female,⁽⁹⁾ are back playing their full part in poetic discourses and the performances of situated writing. The ephemeral is once again a site for strategic intervention; the familiarly carnivalesque everyday tongue, a metaphorical site of slippage and control, of mis/takes and mis/understandings - as with the tongue in the ear, brings the pleasure and the disturbance of mis/hearings. We speak of tongues' furls and slips and lashes in the seas of meaning production; we surf their catastrophic curves. My, often too-eager-to-please, tongue, sometimes begins to take on differing movements for subtly amending pronunciations in response to unfamiliar social contexts. It shapes, chameleonicly into a paradoxical soundscape, appropriating a range of tonal colours that remind me of myself, but don't exactly sound like me. My jaw begins to ache a little as a result.

It recalls those discomforts when hearing one's own voice recorded onto tape, or, issuing from the radio, from a distance, effectively disembodied from an aural mirror. Writing isn't an echo of speech, but more an older form of indirect testimony; an echo of

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an echo or the skimming of Brathwaite's stone across a pond. My voice leaves me and returns to me, as though no longer so familiarly 'mine'. I am mediated, witnessing a production of defamiliarising, through a process of phonographic inscription. This is an awkwardness of becoming estranged from one's own meanings and one's own pronunciations, one's habituated manufacturing, that I find fascinating.

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There's a cockney twang evidenced on recordings of my son's speech, when he was aged about five. We were living in East London then, and our neighbours from Pakistan, Turkey and Jamaica, all spoke broad versions of the 'local'. After moving to north Suffolk, since 1994, he's developed another local burr, along with curious phraseology. He'll say "now cummin!" in the place of "I'm just coming", bringing an additional urgency to the summoning of a present. But both his lilt and his vocabulary changes subtly, dependent on which friends he's playing with, his speech is context responsive. The translocal opportunities offered by the diverse sounds of those Englishes, as spoken, in Suffolk in the extremely late twentieth century in dialogect with that of the urban Punjabi Scot are mouth-watering; prospective tongues, dancing in an abundance of influences.

Not that a diversity of dialect and locally specific vocabulary and regional terminology, has been previously absent, simply that its presence has never before been

so foregrounded on such a translocal scale. There are though, no signs as yet of hybridity-fatigues. The fear is rather of yet another dumbed-down para-English being imposed as ‘standard’ to quell the incipient Babel, a meta-version for international diplomacy and all ordinary decent folk, leaving the routed rabble to chat amongst themselves on the multi-national sidelines. Poets need to be more proactive in their advocacy for living tongues, re-invigorated from over-conventionalised coinages, secreting cunning billingsgates otherwise palimpsested onto the deadening palettes of cocacolised business conference committee procedural utterances, policed street representations and inter-National news mediations; the debilitating standards taken so brilliantly to task by Tom Leonard:

‘I protest at this place
 with no people in it
 objects for reproducing images
 people not actually present
 from this wall to this wall
 and this wall to this wall’

(Leonard, T, *Reports From the Present*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1995: 118. From ‘Nora’s Place’)

or:

‘right inuf

ma language is disgraceful

ma maw tellt mi

ma teacher tellt mi

thi doactir tellt mi

thi priest tellt mi

ma boss tellt mi

ma landlady in carrington street tellt mi

thi lassie ah tried tay get aff way in 1969 tellt mi

sum wee smout thit thoat ah hudny read chomsky tellt mi

a calvinistic communist thit thoat ah wuz revisionist tellt mi

po-faced literati grimly kerryin thi burden a thi past tellt mi

po-faced literati grimly kerryin thi burden a thi future tellt mi

ma wife tellt mi jist-tay-get-inty-thi-poem tellt mi

ma wainz came hame fray school an tellt mi

jist about ivry book ah oapnd tellt mi

even thi introduction tay thi Scottish National Dictionary tellt mi

ach well

all livin language is sacred

fuck thi lohta thim'

(Leonard, T. *Ghostie Men*. Newcastle: Galloping Dog, 1980)

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Consensual linguistic realities can be both local and translocal now. Adherence to specific instances can mean that Someone, characterized as a flashing light with fixated response, in reducing the idea of control to a seemingly mechanical interaction, will say “Oh what a beautiful picture” when shown a ‘beautiful’ painting. ⁽⁸⁾ That is, that a given Someone’s taste will be an orderly arbitration. It is equally possible, though not so likely, that this self-same Someone, might rather say - or find a way to so imply - “flattening wave leak teleofelt, rude, drastic, mail hoot, longer, swollen, final, coined matt, fog” in response to that same stimulus, and that Someone might really mean it. Someone could be thereby tendering a critique of consensual redundancy, or simply speaking errant nonsense, depending on one’s energy and patience for engagement with the impact of messages whose syntactical density requires considerable efforts to de-code. Such efforts can be linked to ideas of rewards gained through reading, that are complicit with knowledge as a bankable asset. The argument goes something like this, on what basis might efforts to glean meaning that offer personal advancement be invested, if such

efforts are subsequently not found to have been worth it? In other words, why should I start trying to read something, or bother to listen to what Someone is saying, invest hope in finding something there, if I later discover that I have wasted my time? Such questions reveal an overwrought case of contracting the Protestant work ethic on the part of their posers. They overstate and reinforce values belonging to phallogocentric investiture.

Still, the pressure towards plain speech presides, particularly on the political left. This is a salutary admonition. To say what you mean and to mean what you say, is often interpreted as saying things simply, with simply meaning words of one syllable. This is harnessed to variously patronising opinions about what ‘people’ can and can’t understand. Apart from being despairingly orientated towards a lowest common denominator (itself a patronising term) this attitude mitigates, partially, against the performative pleasure, the sheer fun, ⁽¹¹⁾ of giving tongues full rein and suggests that there are only certain things worth saying and certain ways in which they can be said. I should censure my dad, for indoctrinating me, and at such a susceptible age too, with pernicious sound-sense.

So I wonder how far we become short-changed in our social relations by the exigencies of colloquial convention? With what frequencies do we converse, seeking approval along lines of least resistance, in the process revealing highly de-politicising mobilisations of attention away from the gritty specifics of local speech act engagements?

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If, and only if, languages evolved to facilitate bonding within social groupings, they did so by foregrounding the encouragement of exchanges of socially relevant information. The noise within conversation was consequently subordinated to proprieties and formalities of such exchange. But this noise is more important than we think. A given conversation is about 65-75% devoted to social topics, broadly characterisable as gossip. Gossip goes further into the workings of consensus intergral to human exchange than that which Aitchison after Malinovski's 'phatic communion' calls 'talking for the sake of talking'. (Aitchison, J. *The Seeds of Speech*. Cambridge UP, 1996: p21) (12) Communities of interest have context specific chit-chats. These often circumscribe the territories upon which consensus might operate in each given situation or social transaction. Gossip thus lays the groundwork upon which conventions are built.

In over-privileging the conventional, the majority of gossip acts not as a radical focus for local engagements but as an agency of repression or control. Gossip fears becoming its own subject in much the same way as a joker dislikes becoming the butt of their own jokes. The worry that 'tongues might wag' fosters cliquish agreement as to the dominant parameters of 'mature' or 'adult' or 'proper' (considered appropriate by others) work-outs for the tongue, policing culturally acceptable shapes, sounds and manners of speech; both the moulds made by the mouth through which breath is poured and vibrated as well as the content of what's said. The effect is to promote those subjects which are considered to be fit for discussion and the modes of discursiveness that are

considered proper. In such respects, gossip can be understood as a social fashioning, of language in the service of kinship formation and community-of-interest bonding. I wonder how much contemporary poetry then can also be seen to operate as gossip on these terms, fashionable subjects, fashionable cadences, fashionable methodologies? The adoption of modish movements of the tongue, can be likened to forms of imitation born out of a desire to fit in, as I described my own adaptive tendencies earlier. Gossip, or what passes for it in conversation, the chit-chat, is therefore a key site for strategic syntactical interventions, for reinvestment with linguistic, socio-sonic imagination. Poetics can have at least that social application.

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Better perhaps though to stick out one's tongue and openly display the transport of insult, than to try to ingratiate one's speech into its surroundings. For without doubt, the tongue has been treated through history as the root of insult, a dangerous weapon for the fermenting of social discord and an unreliable witness. Literatures are thick with admonitions to cut out an offender's tongue. Languages have been wiped from existence. But it's often struck me what a difficult thing that must be to do well. The awkwardness of opening the mouth and getting a decent grip on what is after all a slippery customer, inserting sharp instruments to hack at its poisonous base, or to edit its tip, to perform an injurious frenolotomy. Perhaps the most hideous of all hatreds is that which drives one to resort to biting Someone else's tongue out of their mouth. Well, how's that for live sampling!

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Consider then a tongue as a sophisticated piece of sampling equipment; a mimic, a sponge, playing messages back to the messengers. A surprisingly large body-mind organ with 5 connection points into the nervous system, it is used in medicinal systems worldwide, for diagnosing the health of its host. The movements of the tongue during speech 'act naturally', as a means to extricate body-mind balance. Balance is approached through an interfusing series of intimately specific positions and through concomitant adjustments from position to position to position. Balance requires attention being paid to the details of the small dance, of the organs within the body; the tongue among them. Add the volubilities of the moments between those moments of closure, the pauses - the silences - and the spaces between the notes can be heard as being just as articulate as the notes themselves.

Silences born of declining to say, of withholding, differ significantly from the gaps that are parts of the saying in generative speech. These are the findings out of what one is trying to say whilst one is saying it; speaking as commentaries in the events of the speaking. The performances of language in a specific context, interpreted through our senses, constructed as an event. Each event and each staging of event, its tense, its process and its production, entangle. Process and product form a coil, mapping the slips of a giving tongue; during which, in a process of learning to speak, through constructions that deal up hot mouthfuls of birds, there comes a twittering, rapid interchange between previously held to be binary functions of receiver and transmitter. As one's skin on the

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palms of one's hands becomes heated when playing a drum; questioning whether it's one who is playing the drum or the drum playing the one. Apparent nonsense, such as this, embraced by critical curiosities, without fear, can be productive of interaction, further conversation. As much writing and reading is versional mulch . . . the mucusalities of which, in a bordering onto hilarious exegesis . . . one lump . . . threw stale reasonings out. And kept what, the precious pieces in the attic, in a dusty box? No, rather sought the less easy comforts of writing as socially dispersive conversation.

The suggestion here is that the sounds of our languages and of our discourses can and do change radically, through a paying of attentions to the specific details of this buoyant twittering blur of the birds on the trees amongst us, or of the high-pitched chatter of microbes in mountain rockpools. That the tongue and the ear of a mimic is ever present in this process. That the sounds of a voice, dances in the bodies of both transmitters and receivers and that artfully tongued elisions, can falsify the masquerading sounds of ownership and confound the everyday syntaxes of dull control. That such dull control is very different from the sharply defined spaces articulated by conscious constraint. I'm referring here to logistics of oration, which negotiate patterns of connectedness through the regimes of the pro-verberal (a coinage indebted to Joan Retallack's slip of her tongue during a reading of her poetry at the Assembling Alternatives Conference). A tongue acculturating its dances in a subtle acoustical chamber, the sonic architextures of our mouths, projects myriad moments of practiced closure. Perceptual pleasure, as dusk, the mouth of the cooking pot, is made available to both producer and consumer. Aural choreographies of discovery, through that tongue

unseen, ulleiling⁽¹³⁾ the veiled, by branching twists against skew. A process of ludic articulation, not intended as monument.

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Flourishing in a border wetland, drenched with saliva, a tongue is literally site of an embodiment of language, of the intercourse of a projection of a memory of a memory. These origins, these stains of plumage, ‘tunge’ - ‘tong’ - ‘tonga’, shaping breath, to enunciate vibrations of shared air. An excitation of molecules as sound; those molecules, or at least some of them, through conversation, taken into the body of another conversant on a following breath.

Giving tongue through discursion, as both a root and a source; both a one and an other. A site of seduction and persuasion and violation, of provocation and penetration. Where each and every shaping that a given tongue performs, impacts on that which follows that.

The speech of a giving tongue then, is here appreciated as a tool for a problematicized present of micro-political positionalities; engaging its readers and its listeners decisively, assemblage by assemblage. Its every articulation an intersection between dance and sonic composition and syntactical invention, in the service of a

revitalising social bond, based not around reductive consensus, but around that giving tongue. A platform through conclusion.

Footnotes

1. "...It's *rather* hard to understand!" (You see she didn't like to confess even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.) "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas - only I don't exactly know what they are! However, *somebody* killed *something* : that's clear, at any rate -" (Carroll, L. *Through the Looking-Glass*. London: MacMillan, 1962: 22)
2. Poly Syrene, born Marion Elliot, lead singer with the punk band 'X-Ray Spex'. Quoted by Jon Savage, she says 'it was about being in bondage to material life. In other words it was a call for liberation. It was saying: "Bondage? - forget it! I am not going to be bound by the laws of consumerism or bound by my own senses.' (Savage, J. *England's Dreaming*. London: Faber and Faber, 1992: 327)
3. Johnny Spate's satirical character Alf Garnett, various reprehensible characterisations by Vivian Stanshall (formerly of the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band) and the class-parodic modes of speaking mobilised from time to time by Monty Python.
4. There had, of note, been the Albert Hall Incarnation event in 1966, and various fringe activities organised by Michael Horowitz under the 'New Departures' banner, even some regional dialects taking the high ground. I'm thinking of Basil Bunting's sounding and writing of the sounding of 'Briggflatts', of Barry MacSweeney and Tom Pickard with their unabashed Newcastle and Durham intonations, even of Ted Hughes's thick Yorkshire drawl. Not a barren landscape, but a sparsely populated one.
5. Jean "Binta" Breeze, from 'Red Rebel Song', a version printed in the anthology 'The Popular Front of Contemporary Poetry', published by the London-based performance poetry promotion organisation 'Apples & Snakes' (Apples & Snakes, 1992).
6. Breeze's nimble confluences of sound with sense is demonstrated by this use of 'lang' to read as long, in long time, and lang, as language time in relation to poetry and song. What I read in this passage leans towards Kirsteva's espousal of 'oralization'. (Kirsteva, J. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York: Columbia UP, 1984: 153)
7. Someone who is 'chopsy', in the valleys of south Wales where people 'talk tidy', is somebody who talks a lot. If someone has the 'gift of the gab' they are skilful at putting their points across through speech, hence someone who is 'gabby' also talks a lot. 'North and South' is Cockney rhyming slang for 'mouth'.
8. One example is provided by the treatment at the hands of Welsh language activists by a Composer with whom I have collaborated for many years, Sianed Jones. Welsh is her mother tongue, her first language. She revisits Wales regularly, but doesn't live there now. About 8 years ago she was giving a performance in the mining caverns deep below Blaennau Festiniog in north Wales. She was singing settings of poems, written in Welsh by a Welsh poet, Gwyn Thomas who lives in Bangor, north Wales. Yet she was criticised by language activists for singing Welsh with an outsider ('blues') inflection.

Such are the thorny issues of influence on the tongues of nation languages. Such are the anxieties of those who would control language usage and development.

9. Foucault writes of the spoken word, through the taxonomic ambition of encyclopaedic projects around the turn of the of the late seventeenth century, as becoming downgraded and aligned with the passive intellect. Orality became associated with ‘the female part of language’, ephemerality, whilst writing was ensconced as the active male intellect, and the harbor of truth, longevity. (Foucault, M. *The Order of Things*. London: Routledge, 1974: 38)
10. I’m obviously using Someone to designate an example unknown here. I’ve invented Someone, for argument’s sake. They are as hypothetical as Anyone.
11. Barthes talks about this as ‘writing aloud’. But he still wants to separate ‘the articulation of the body, of the tongue’ from ‘that of meaning, of language.’ (Barthes, R. *The Pleasure of the Text*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1975: 66-67).
12. Who’s doing what, who’s doing what to who or doing what with who; what so and so says, this new such and such, that event and so forth.
13. The sounds produced by rhythmically singing the tip of the tongue against the front of the roof of the mouth. Used to signal joy or happiness, particularly produced by women under Muslim regimes, hiding the sight of the tongue moving in their mouths behind their veil and or their hand.

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