APPENDIX

Edit Publications

by Danny Snelson



APPENDIX

Tan Lin

to

Seven Controlled Vocabularies

and Obituary 2004. The Joy of Cooking

Introduction by Danny Snelson

Afterword by Charles Bernstein

Bibliography by Lawrence Giffin and Danny Snelson

Indexes by Ashley Leavitt, Danny Snelson, and Lawrence Giffin Interviews by Chris Alexander, Kristen Gallagher, Asher Penn, Danny Snelson, Gordon Tapper

COLOPHON

Appendix by Tan Lin. Arranged by Danny Snelson in NeoOffice 3.1.1 and Microsoft Word 2008. Design consultants Ellen Quinn and Danielle Aubert. Introduction written by Tan Lin and approved by Danny Snelson. Afterword written by Charles Bernstein.

Edit Publications, 2010 Series Editor: Danny Snelson

Developed as part of "Edit: Processing Network Publishing," held on April 21st, 2010, through a Kelly Writers House event series at the University of Pennsylvania organized by Danny Snelson. Book launched at Printed Matter on July 29th, 2010.

For more, see Edit Wiki: http://aphasic-letters.com/editwiki/index.php?title=Network_Publishing_with_Tan_Lin

Printed on demand by lulu.com: http://www.lulu.com/content/xxxxxx

Title Page Colophon Contents The Expanded Preface Introduction by Danny Snelson WUP Web Version Table of Contents A Short History of a Limited Edition Critical Inquiry: a footnote by Lydia H. Liu PR 2 Google Analytics Graphs Post-It Markov chain Interview with Chris Alexander, Kristen Gallagher, Danny Snelson & Gordon Tapper Interview with Asher Penn (Unpublished Version)

Primary Cover Spread by Clare Churchouse

4 or 5 Indexes by various hands

Contract

Readers' Reports

Afterword by Charles Bernstein

Bibliography

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The Expanded Preface

The expanded preface is linked by circumstances mostly material and mechanical to a book begun in 2001, and it reflects changes to what was written more generally, subsequently revised, and later removed. Sometime in July 2001 and possibly in the fall or a preceding spring, I woke with water dripping onto my face from the tin ceiling in my apartment at 98 Bowery in Chinatown, in New York City. That summer I had become obsessed with bar codes and cigarette burn marks on the wooden floor of our apartment, and I remember recording the season often, at various points in the summer, or on a single protracted morning of running up and down the stairs (to leave complaints with the landlord), with two or three dozen PostIt notes, which had been affixed to various locations in an apartment. On any particular morning, I became accustomed to reading the wall, newspapers (the *Times, WSf*) and also the floor, to which I stuck PostIts like a diagram or index to the apartment's leaks. The more it rained, the more PostIts I learned to put down. At the time I remember reading the newspapers daily.

On any given PostIt, I drew and then hashed in circles of varying circumference to indicate faster drips that might require a bucket or a pot from our kitchen. That summer I sanded the paint off the floors and this revealed a series of burn marks. Because the burn marks flowed outwards from the wall in perfectly straight lines, I assumed they were statistical: correspondences to partitions that once separated resident cots. One morning, during a heavy thunderstorm, I ran to put buckets on the floor and then promptly forgot what I was doing. A *Times* was lying on the landing five flights down. I picked it up, scribbled "Seven Controlled Vocabularies" on a PostIt and ran into a rain. The rain resembled a partition to something I was holding. I was carrying a laptop. Sometime in July I bought an IBM Thinkpad, the first laptop I owned, and it made it finally impossible to keep writing from the things it was not, whether written earlier or later, on PostIts or not.

With the IBM, I became accustomed to tracking changes and creating endless versions of the same document. As I revised, I felt free or at least OK to never look back. I kept finances together, poetry together, scholarly writing together, housed in desktop icons that were easy to move around. In July 2001, the regularity of the leaks (I counted 18) was likely and improbable vis a vis the motion of PostIts on the floor. When it rained, there were too many PostIts on places where it was not dripping. And yet I knew any given PostIt was likeness and affect: the like-measure of intensity of any rain falling. That morning, as a kind of given, it rained hard. I ran down the stairs. I forgot the letter. I was carrying a laptop. I was falling in love with Clare. I had been dreaming before awakening but probably because of this, there did not seem to be anything either present or inside in my dream, was not about barcodes, it was a barcode. Or a season, or the general accuracy of a season for human behavior.

Thus, I was exuberant for no reason. I was in love in a season I found myself. I was more than merely soaking wet. I climbed up the stairs and phoned Mitchy Uno, a graphic designer, to design and lay out the ms. Water dripped onto my computer, and probably ruined it. I sat down near the water dripping into the pots and pans. What was exuberance or its probability? I heard a grinding noise from a computer. The noise of a hard drive crashing had the motion of expedience or emotion. I ripped the headline portion of the *Times* and taped it, improbably, to my computer. I believe the hard drive was under warranty, though it probably expired 5 days before. I ran down the stairs with a damaged laptop and no warranty. I had just come back from something that reminded me of "stairs" in a flop house. I was holding the *Times*. On it was scrawled "seven controlled vocabularies" and next to it, on a PostIt was "stairs." I looked at the

floor. The newspaper in my hand said July 27, 2001.

2

In terms of a hard drive collapsing, I was probably thinking of Wabaso, TX. And there, more or less, was the summer I had. I had written a series of prefaces about the Laura Riding estate, for whom "grateful acknowledgments to use portions of *Rational Meaning*" were given, as well as to the Rectors of the University of Virginia, who granted permission to reproduce a photographic facscimile of Laura Riding's entire 1962 foreword to the book in question (see p. 165). Because of these various prefaces and forewords, the book like its feelings has been read by a few or many people over time, a time when I am told no one reads anymore but only skims material or jumps from link to link or checks email 40 times an hour. And yet (in other words), something inside my head changed like an event, and the book for me—like an illness experienced when younger but not exactly "young." It is hard to remember exactly when one is writing. One lives and lives and one writes and writes and what one wrote subtracts what one ends up with, in the actual present.

But in actuality I remember having a bad cold when the book was first published, without legal title, as a lulu edition for \$12.95 and free PDF download at Christmas 2005. This was subsequent to writing and designing, so I gave the book an obituary in a title, and then gave an obituary a date, and as a publication date, a death. Approximately 70 copies were sold, and an unknown number distributed at no cost, much like rumors of a love affair, a book "accepted" for publication, or hopes for a marriage to come. I gave the book, along with some cookies I made that morning of the PostIts, to a girlfriend, and then my mother and sister, and her family. I did not think to insert an acceptance, preface, or an expanded version of them both, perhaps for illicit reasons, as the prefaces and the use of materials from the Riding estate were clearly in some form of copyright violation, and I was unsure of whether I liked the writing in it. This could thus be the second part of an inaction.

At that time, I believed only in inaction could be an inside and an outside to a life. There, I also believed that the initial preface or foreword was a photocopy, not a partition, but I have been told that this is not correct, that it was scanned (by my wife, Clare), here, in an apartment at 98 Bowery, in New York City, where I live. The windows to that apartment face out towards the Bowery, and the scanner faces out as well, near the curtains she made (they were not calico but this is what I remember) because she did not like to be seen by artists in the building across the street and because in the morning the sun in the windows was something I could (not) have ignored.

It rained more that summer than in a summer that came after. And I went up and down stairs to complain to the landlord about leaks. I went down to buy PostIts. And so it was that I started a novel *Our Feelings Were Made by Hand* because a preface is what comes after something. Sometime in 2004 I moved houses and the book moved with me, as a ms., in a series of Stor-All boxes that kept xeroxes and graduate student papers. At the same time, the ms. was to be published by Faux Press but the book was long, I had not written a preface, and there was no money to publish a book unless a few thousand additional dollars were supplied. This I declined, so the ms. was put away, and as a result I hardly thought about it except as a preface to what would come next.

Here in the office I am sitting in, the ms. had been removed from a white box, with zero revision and submitted to Wesleyan University Press, which published

the ms. under a different title, in April 2010.

Two pervasive features characterize the present edition and these are reflected in the *Appendix's* chronology: it reflects the impact of the new technology on the entire editing and publishing process, and it spells out, in greater detail and with many more examples, the procedures with which it deals. It is, in short, more of a "how-to" book for authors and editors than was its predecessor. Like most books with multiple publishers and authors, this later one owes many debts to many individuals, chief of whom in this instance are the wives referred to by the "11.07" on the physical front cover and given the significance of "authorship," in tandem with a dedication. Here, acknowledgments are never plentiful when someone has been ignored. One book in particular, *Reification*, by Timothy Bewes, must be cited. A few of the pages are dutifully inscribed by authors. This preface is cribbed from the 13th Edition of *A Manual of Style Revised and Expanded* (1982), and is thus for Clare, with much love and multiple attributions, in 2010 and beyond.

New York City, May 18, 2010, June 3, 2010, July 12, 2010

Introduction by Danny Snelson

Philadelphia, July 10, 2010

WUP Web Version Table of Contents

- A Dedication

- A Dedication
 Some Acknowledgments
 A Field Guide to American Painting
 A Field Guide to the American Landscape
- American Architecture Meta Data Containers
- 2 Identical Novels

- A Dictionary of Systems Theory
 Various Library Standards
 A Field Guide to American Cinema
 Two Colophons

A Short History of the Limited Edition

What is a family's history of a cross-generational cookbook like *The Joy of Cooking*? The co-authoring of the "All Purpose Cookbook," Fifth Edition, Fourth Revision is an utterly unkempt set of trajectories. In this instance it involves Irma S. Rombauer, her daughter Marion Rombauer Becker, and Marion's husband, John. The 1963 edition was the first paperback edition of the cookbook, and it was the first that Irma's daughter, Marion, revised without being able to consult her mother, who had had a series of strokes beginning in 1955. When the book first went to press (in 1962), it went without the family knowing it and without a contract. The publisher, Bobbs-Merrill had "instructed Alice Richardson 'to edit the Becker's edited galleys, but the Beckers are not to know about this.'" Marion did not learn that it was in stores until she was told by someone attending her mother's wake.

This edition was filled with typos that made it impossible to execute, though not imagine, a number of the recipes, which transpired both indoors and out and offered instructions as if no difference existed between amateurs and professional chefs. Thus *Joy* is notable not just for recipes but detailed physical instructions in how *anyone* can learn to "grind their own peanut butter, purify drinking water, build and cook on a campfire, roll out a pie crust with a Coke bottle, use vinegar as a bleaching agent, and clean a whole octopus." And so the corrupt edition of this book is an imaginative how-to exercise and a collector's item. The *Joy* is a porous and experimental text, and its organizational structure is fulfilled by a simple instruction: "In using the Index look for a noun rather than an adjective." So the *Joy* tells you how to read, and thus to cook. Barbeque or "Pit Cooking" is absorbed in a long methodological section entitled "The Foods We Heat." I remember one summer coating the underside of a pot with liquid Dove to make the soot slide off. Like the heat section in *Joy*, a work of literature ought to tell you how to make the wind blow thru the V-shape in a barbeque pit.

Marion officially disowned the 1962 edition, so mistake-filled was it in its instructions and ingredients. A book that goes through multiple and garbled editions has all sorts of unfulfilled lives in it and attached to it, and most beautiful books come to resemble the inaccurate recipes, unacknowledged rhubarb stains, and foliage pressed between those pages that a reader is forced, by the historical circumstances of cooking in America, to read. Many of the unfinished dishes in the *Joy* are simply unimaginable. For my family in the late 50s, imagine this: the noun "Chinese" is followed by only seven adjectives: celery, chestnuts, dressing, egg rolls, meatballs, rice (fried), and sauce (sweet-sour).

And yet every book I have come to read since *Joy* bears a family resemblance to the 1963 and 1975 and 1987 versions, whose endlessly interchangeable modular arrangements and rearrangements of recipes, like so many leafs on a tree or rooms in a house are held together by something like the false appearance of sunlight through a window. A book will not boil the ocean or make Chinese cooking appear in one's childhood. What does the idea of cooking from a cook book come from? A few people writing down recipes and talking about a room or a relative who no longer exists. John, Marion's husband, had a significant role in the book, but he inhabits the sidelines, like many people, often wives, who help produce books and are forgotten. But the writing of a book never ends with a life. In this case, it is John, Marion's husband, who is unacknowledged on the front cover.

Joy has what marketers might call "extreme relevance" for me. I grew up Chinese American in SE Ohio: it was I think the only cook book (although now, come to think of it, there was also a Betty Crocker cookbook with a red plaid cover), in our

house, and so it was a culinary Bible of things that are eaten in America. I mean my mother did not know how to cook *at all* when she first got to America from Shanghai in 1947 (I think her family had a cook, as was common at the time for a family with some means) and my father, who cooked very well, could *only* cook Chinese food from Fuzhou. But of course we lived in southeastern Ohio in the 60s and were thus American, and to be American, well you have to eat American, and to eat American you have to cook it from time to time. 95% of the food we ate in our house from that era was originally Chinese, in intent and presentation. The other 4% (we shopped at Kroger and A&P) was what fell under the category of "exotic:" American food that came out of boxes: Rice-A-Roni, Noodles Romanov, Sloppy Joes etc.—basically snack-like foods that looked like an American home-cooked dinner if you added hot water. So convenience food was a misnomer really; it was not really the food that was becoming more convenient; it was us, who slowly became a family of convenience starting around 1962 with a corrupt edition of a cookbook. Certainly, one (and only one) cook book taught my mother how to read in American English. And you have to remember that my mother at the time was finishing her doctoral dissertation at the University of Washington as she was learning to cook. The dissertation, completed in 1965, was titled: Tradition and Innovation in Modern Chinese Poetry.

Any food that did not come from a box (i.e. the remaining 1%) came from the *Joy* of Cooking, so it was an extremely important manual for our family in terms of reverse engineering. As an applicance like the kitchen hood my father installed to take the smells of (mostly Chinese) cooking and put them outside our (mostly American) house, the *loy* and its use was technologically limited because my mother and father did not really know what American food "was?" and so did not really know whether they "liked" it. I mean really, what "was" American food in 1965? Was it even "likable?" So it was mainly my sister and I who ended up with our hands on the cook book, and now find ourselves reading ourselves in a protracted and desultory love affair with it. We used the cook book to make popovers, muffins and brandied cakes—mainly because Chinese cuisine does not have an extensive repertoire of desserts or alcohol. So the *Joy of Cooking* is a household document that chronicles the split between eastern first course and western dessert, between wet steam and dry heat, olives and tea leaves, and English breakfast and Oriental dinner, and the book that I have photographed in the Wesleyan University Press edition (p. 90) is I am pretty sure *exactly* the book in our house circa 1975. I made my first apple pie with that book. For some unknown reason, everytime I look at the book I think of daylight savings time in Athens, Ohio, where I grew up.

So the *Jop* is a cross-pollinated ecosystem, an agrarian system with a very beautiful table of contents and pen and ink drawings of foods and the hands that make those foods. It reminds me of the 103-acre farm my family once owned and the pots my father used to make in his studio. It is a classic example of a book that gets revised by the lives that are in turn revised around and by it, and I think that it, like all books, is beautiful only in regard the decompressions it has been put to. What is a book but a form of chronos itself, removed from the lives a family once had? I have told this story, at greater length, and probably with somewhat more remorse, in *Our Feelings Were Made by Hand*. In the life of a book, there is no real distinction between what I am writing now and what I will be writing afterwards. This anecdote about the *Joy* is the untimed apparatus of a novel, which will appear "shortly."

Footnote 34 (addition to front cover)

^{34.} The conspiracy of silence on the issue of who invented movable type is nothing short of astounding when we consider that the invention of movable type in China is well documented and readily available in English. Movable type was invented in 1041–1048 by Bi Sheng (or Pi Sheng, c.990–1051), who adopted movable types made of earthenware. Documented wooden movable types appeared in 1297–1298, and bronze and metal movable types became widespread in China and Korea in the fifteenth century. For a detailed study of the growth and refinements of early woodcut printing to the spread of printing from movable type as well as Gutenberg's exposure to this technology before 1456, see Tsien Tsuen-Hsuin, *Paper and Printing*, vol. 5, pt. 1 of *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. Joseph Needham (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 201–22, 313–19.

Seven Controlled Vocabularies and Obituary 2004. The Joy of Cooking is Tan Lin's latest book, or rather, it's three or four books in one, linked by a Google search, a dilemma, and a tourist's itinerary. Lin provides a provocative answer to our reading conundrum in a post-book world of Web 2.0: he makes everything into a book.

In a book filled with photos from flea markets, bar codes, and meta data tags, Lin traces the movement from reading books to reading everything everywhere: text messages, RSS feeds, your status updates on Facebook, the Company blog, tapas recipes, Yelp and Netflix user reviews, scribbles on electonic Post-It notes, tags on Flickr, fluttering balloons, and aisle signs.

What used to be called non-reading is the new reading. Lin—an intellectual trickster of a very high order—has written a book that defies categorization. It traps beauty in a bar code, on the back of a moist towelette, and in recipes for moo goo gai pan.

ON APRIL 21st 2010, as part of "EDIT: Processing Network Publishing," organized by Danny Snelson at the Kelly Writers House in Philadelphia, the EDIT staff will accompany Tan Lin in the reauthoring and republication of SCV on the spot in multiple formats.

The event will begin at 1pm and conclude at 7pm. A reception and Q&A is scheduled for 6pm. The works to be published include

Handmade book, PDF, lulu.com Appendix, Powerpoint, Kanban Board/Post-Its, Blurbs, Dual Language (Chinese/English) Edition, micro lecture, Selectric II interview, wine/cheese reception, Q&A (xerox) and a film.

"Edit: Strategizing Writing Technologies," organized by Danny Snelson, focuses on editorial strategies and textual conditions in contemporary writing. It is a roving events series pairing innovative performances with focused critical responses toward an exploration of editorial strategies in contemporary writing and the arts. From reframing techniques in conceptual writing to live processing in new media performance, editorial issues of mediated composition seem increasingly pressing.

The events series is distributed in diverse locations around Philadelphia—from institutions such as Slought and the Kelly Writer's House to smaller venues and galleries throughout the city. An extended argument of editorial theory will relate these diverse locations, with each event expanded online and occasionally drawn together in print or other media.

Google Analytics

http://analytics.blogspot.com/2010/03/new-in-adwordssearchfunnels.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed& utm_campaign=Feed%3A+blogspot%2FtRaA+%28Google+ Analytics+Blog%29

How is this useful?

Search Funnels data gives you more data to help you gauge the true value of your keyword and ads in AdWords. By showing whether an ad was shown prior to a conversion and whether it was clicked or not, they help you analyze *assist* relationships. For instance, find out whether generic keywords actually contributed to conversions occurring from a branded keyword search, and vice versa. You're no longer limited to a last-click perspective in AdWords.

Take a look at the <u>AdWords help center</u> for a complete description of the new reports and metrics. These reports are currently in beta, and again, they'll be available in your AdWords account over the next few weeks. Bravo AdWords!

Posted by Jeff Gillis, Google Analytics Team

Email Post

New In AdWords: Search Funnels

Wednesday, March 24, 2010 | 8:53 AM

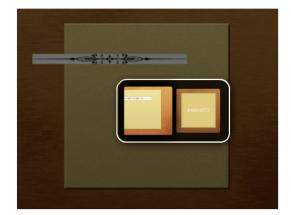
<u>Yesterday, AdWords announced</u> the launch of <u>Search Funnels</u>, a new set of reports available only in AdWords that describe the Google search ad click and impression behavior leading up to a conversion. They are rolling out over the next few weeks and work if you are using AdWords Conversion Tracking or <u>importing your Google Analytics goals</u> into AdWords.

What are Search Funnels?

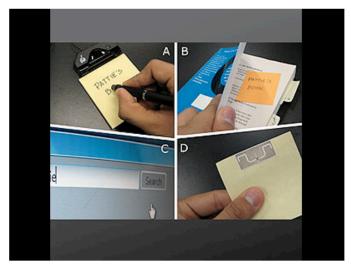
Currently, conversions in AdWords are attributed to the last ad clicked before the conversion happened. However, it's likely that customers perform multiple searches prior to finally converting.

These reports provide data on how "upper-funnel" keywords behave on the conversion path prior to the last ad click. These funnels are not to be confused with funnels in Google Analytics, which are on-site funnels. These are the paths users take when seeing and clicking on your ads after doing a search on google.com, on the way to converting. They look back 30 days prior to the conversion.





It definitely resembles the note taking products that were previously introduced with the ability of uploading handwritten notes to your computer, but this seems to be something that would be used a lot more often.



Instead of having to carry different post-its in your pocket, or writing down notes on a pad and then retyping in your calendar...this format would save the redundancy.

Markov Chain

RANDOM WALK EDITING PROCEDURES

A Markov chain is collection of random variables (where the index runs through 0, 1, ...) having the property that, given the present, the future is conditionally independent of the past.

In other words,

 $\mathsf{P}(\mathsf{X}_t=j|\mathsf{X}_0=i_0,\mathsf{X}_1=i_1,\ldots,\mathsf{X}_{(t-1)}=i_{(t-1)})=\mathsf{P}(\mathsf{X}_t=j|\mathsf{X}_{(t-1)}=i_{(t-1)}).$

Interview

The following interview with Tan Lin about 7 Controlled Vocabularies and Obituary 2004. The Joy of Cooking was conducted via email during March and April, 2010, by Chris Alexander, Kristen Gallagher, Danny Snelson, and Gordon Tapper. The interview was edited by Gordon Tapper. A final interview question by Asher Penn, which addresses the April 21, 2010, EDIT event at Kelly Writers House, is appended to the end of this interview.

CA: I want to pose a genealogical question of sorts. From the early nineties to the present, we've seen vast changes in global "conditions of production" and communication. Although the American conversation tends to separate these spheres, it's true that in both labor and social practice (whatever that is) networked communications technologies stand out as the signal difference. So in the industrial sector, we have Toyotization and the rise of "productive communication" models that institute continuous interaction between production and consumption (c.f. Coriot, Hardt + Negri) with similar models taking hold in the service sector (point-of-service software, rfid, fleet management services or, for the professoriate, the rise of the assessment regime with its emphasis on "outcomes" assessment and student consumer feedback). In terms of social practice, we have an intensification of contact thru networked technologies leading to faster and more mobile feedback loops-email to text messaging etc.—which, as Kittler would say, is not a matter of more and faster communication between persons but a proliferation of global links between computers, "necessarily leading to masses of words." Here's my question: What constitutes "the literary work" under these conditions? I'm thinking particularly here of your presence on Blogspot <u>http://ambientreading.blogspot.com/</u> and Tumblr <u>http://controlledvocabularies.tumblr.com/</u>, where if I'm not mistaken material from both Heath/Plagiarism and Seven Controlled Vocabularies exists in an alternate state, and also your use of publish-on-demand services like Lulu.com, thru which you generated an early edition (variant? pre-release? working copy?) of Seven Controlled Vocabularies. And more recently, through the agency of Wesleyan University Press, this:

Received using: anti.godzilla.xxx@gmail.com Message Status: Opened To: Me! From: lstarr.xxx@wesleyan.edu New RSS pages from Tan Lin's new book Mar 1, 2010 10:56 AM

Starting TODAY --

Daily RŠS feeds of pages from Tan Lin's new poetry book, "Seven Controlled Vocabularies and Obituary 2004. The Joy of Cooking: [AIRPORT NOVEL MUSICAL POEM PAINTING THEORY FILM PHOTO HALLUCINATION LANDSCAPE]." New pages will be posted daily thru April 19th, and may be viewed or downloaded.

<http://img.jangomail.com/clients/251406/images/Lin%20-%207%20-%204inch.jpg>

To sign up for the feeds, or to see the pages posted on the new Wesleyan University Press blog, click:

http://wespress.blogs.wesleyan.edu/category/subjects/poetry/tan_lin/ Then click on the orange icons on the left to sign up for the feeds that interest you. (If you have trouble understanding how to sign up, please reply to this email and let us know. We're happy to help!) We will announce all our new books on the blog, post reviews, and break the news about books that win awards. We hope you will sign up for these RSS feeds in any categories that are of interest to you. Click here <http://x.jtrk54.net/forward.asp?j=244695400&m=F7A549DCBE1F4D639F2 B3A192AC9D9C5> to forward this e-mail to a friend!

You are receiving this e-mail because one of our authors provided us with your contact information, or you have used one of our books, published a book with us, placed an order, or subscribed through our web site. If you do not wish to receive e-mail from us, please reply to this message and let us know -- you WILL reach a real human being. We never, EVER rent, sell, or share our email list. Your address is safe with us.

This e-mail was sent by Wesleyan University, located at 215 Long Lane, Middletown, CT 06459 (USA). To receive no further e-mails, please click here <http://x.jtrk54.net/u.z?j=244695400&m=F7A549DCBE1F4D639F2B3A192A

<http://x.jtrk54.net/u.z?j=244695400&m=F7A549DCBE1F4D639F2B3A192A C9D9C5>

or reply to this e-mail with "unlist" in the Subject line.

<http://x.jtrk54.net/o.z?j=244695400&mid=46&g=224379724&m =

23098F7B4267407E88B3325DBB556628>

Or since the overall paradigm suggests a bi- or multi-directional flow of information and materials, I could ask the question the other way, noting the inclusion of "plagiarized," "disposable," or "ambient" materials in *Seven Controlled Vocabularies*. Is the concept of a "book" or a "work" still operant in *Seven Controlled Vocabularies*? If so, how does that concept differ from the book as it would have existed circa 1989?

TL: As a general examination of different reading practices, 7CV is book as controlled vocabulary system, mathematical structure, engineering project, and bibliographic "collection" whose general subject is reading and its objects, where an "object" may denote a book, a table, a recipe, a tea pot, Jacques Tati, CD, map, index etc. It's relaxed reading in that sense. Likewise, we read a title or caption or front cover differently than we read the "interior" of a book. We "read" a novel differently than we read a cookbook, and more specifically, a recipe in a cookbook, and I wanted to suggest well that maybe we could read a novel like recipes in a cookbook or an episode of a reality TV series, or a controlled vocabulary system, or a restaurant review on Yelp. I mean cookbooks almost always have pictures of food in them, so why shouldn't a poetry book, which traffics in imagery, have photos of books in it, like a kind of self-reproducing floralegia or plant? There are a lot of vestigial organicist metaphors in the book! In 7CV printed matter (both text and image) has been captured/reproduced in numerous ways, with CCD (flatbed) scanning, digital photography of printed book pages, retyping of printed matter, reading and re-reading, bibliographic citation, footnoting, indexing, and self-plagiarism of earlier sources. Machine reading involves parsing alpha numeric systems and meta data layers, OCR technology, word processing, data tagging, etc. 7CV is a massive act of self plagiarism of the lulu edition. Images have been enhanced and edited in Photoshop. Some material in 7CV is blogged or user-generated content. This material needs to be organized, which explains the controlled vocabulary system, which I suppose is the book itself as a generalized function of its own organizational, i.e. data structures. Google Books resituates a system of reading. It is not optimized for lengthy reading, scanning or copying. It is anti-novelistic

in that sense, and favors short-form reading. It's a reading system that makes owning the book irrelevant. Once a book is scanned into a database and crossreferenced with other titles, what does one have? Is it even a book? Or is it just information linked to other information? Reading a book today feels a lot like the latter to me, and 7CV reflects that migration.

Thus in 7CV, the concept of the book is mildly operant, but generally and among other functionally differentiated reading platforms, so the book is an image created by a controlled vocabulary system. What is a book? something that categorizes and controls data and organizes specific reading formats i.e. the book is a generalized reading environment, what Luhmann terms a "loosely coupled medium," coupled to various publishing mechanisms, printed- and nonprinted formats, people, meta data tags, wives, genres, TV, the "spectral" cinema, scanners, Chinese people, etc. One might call this "poetry," but one could just as easily call it "literary studies," "fiction," "obit," or "family." So in 7CV you have various and conflictual reading practices across genres, regarded as social agreements, and hardware/software platforms, and a lot of this is not reading in the sense of what most people think about as "reading a book of literature by a poet in a book published by a university press." There are visual images, meta data tags, bits of programming languages, bar codes, poems, subtitles, editorial notes, found photographs, post cards (from the Swiss Institute), advertisements, scanned images and printed book pages, annotations, typos, computer generated handwriting, text translations by Google Translate, and indexes, acknowledgments and forewords by other writers. Given this, what is peripheral in or to reading? a bar code? Chinese characters? the Wesleyan Poetry series? 7CV focuses on elements that codify reading in specific, rigid, and/or standardized, ways. These processes are tied as much to publishing, marketing, distribution, layout, inclusion on syllabi, etc. as they are to writing or composing, which I think are relatively weak forms of "authorship" or text production. Hence my fondness for anecdotes, weak narratives, Library of Congress Classification (LCC), Course Paks, MS Word, and other digital media as they impact the book's operations (versions, editions, RSS serialization, etc.) in a communication field.

7CV is a printed book, but it was/is also a pre- and post-publication RSS feed, PDF downloads of the first, unrevised edition on the lulu site (now "direct access"), an animated version (executed in Director and streamed from the Penn site as a Flash video) of the first chapter available on the Penn Sound site (*Eleven Minute Painting*) and as a stand alone video. There will, I hope, be a series of revisions to the text as post-publication RSS feeds, correcting and altering what will officially appear, on April 1, 2010. So the book, like all books really, exists in multiple states of revision/publication; this interview is inseparable from its overall publication history: reception within an academic setting and within a number of online poetry publications/forums. I am planning a dual-language edition of the book, in English and Chinese, and this in turn will be translated back into English. A new cover has been designed. A book of blurbs about the book will appear as a separate publication, which is really an extension of the present publication. Some unattributed blurbs are on the Amazon web site. The book will be reeditioned at Edit, an event curated by Danny Snelson. Finally, I am assembling an online appendix that will include such things as high school yearbook items, dental x rays, drug prescriptions, and other fleeting encounters with the book's publishing history and the autobiographical. At any rate, the book as storage/distribution/composition/publication medium is a little hard to pin down; this is not surprising: people generally store things in a host of different places/sites, and this applies to the digital world—so why not with reading/composing/publishing, which is highly ephemeral as a practice, and where boundaries between the three are considerably blurred in a digital environment. It used to be that publishing was seen to stabilize what de Certeau notes as the highly ephemeral practices of reading, which I think of as a form of

forgetting, but publishing is now, in some ways, just as transitory as the act of composition or reading, where reading is a left over procedure.

Of course printed photos and hard copy books are defined by contexts and notes on those contexts: handwritten annotations in book pages or backs of photos, appended dates, highlighting or penciling, post-its, etc. These occur in a digital environment. The "2004" in the title is a "handwritten" notation inserted into a title, and the book's use of photographs is consonant with changes in photo sharing sites etc., and thus the contours of memory. Some of the photos look accidental, dated, possibly corrupted. There are tons of nearly identical or generic digital photos on Flickr, a site whose photo archives are marked by nominal editing or pruning of large photo collections, minimal metadata, reduced resolution, and, in general, personal text/image archives that are not looked at very often or are not perceived to have life expectancies greater than the person who generated them etc. This is also true of people's photo albums, but now access to other peoples' albums has increased exponentially. We inhabit the era of the short archive, and this suits me as a specific kind of reader: a reader with a bad memory. 7CV is no less autobiographical in a generic, unedited, ephemeral way, where the "identity" of a person or file sharing system is not fixed but context sensitive e.g. multiple identifiers or tags exist for a "singular" object. This mirrors the increasing segmentation and interactivity within a socially networked environment, i.e. multiple email addresses, social network profiles, versions or copy states of document changes, status updates, etc. Finally, 7CV raises issues common to personal archives and libraries trying to organize, store and access large amounts of mixed material. How are photos searched, indexed, or identified in 7CV? How are specific photos brought into relation to specific text elements? Typically texts and images are parsed differently, using either text or image attributes. There seems to be very shallow parsing taking place. How are things, like memories or images of loved ones, saved and in how many formats? How are changes in copies and lineage noted in metadata layers? A number of the book's prefaces recycle content from earlier prefaces, and the book as a whole makes use of appropriated materials, much as a human life does. Is 7CV edited? If so, by whom? Is it a scrapbook? Does it have a narrative or history or dissemination logic? Does it embody what libraries term LOCKSS (lots of copies keeps stuff safe)? Of course, 7CV is notable for absences, typos, memory lapses, errors, TV formats. There are clearly voice and data holes: most notably, where is the "China—Poetry" of the first LC subject heading? To get some of this book you have to go outside it, to other web sites, films, etc. How can these things, not unlike memories, be located again?

Meta data tags can be embedded in more than one way (e.g. in web pages, within files), or externalized (card catalogs, databases, online table of contents, concordances, etc.). This raises issues about the relation between so-called content and its "essence," or content and various descriptive systems, all of which involve reading of one sort or another, or as you say the displacement of a book beyond its physical location, but of course a meta data tag has a particular site of inscription, and I was interested in the materialities of various reading formats where the distinction between formal and forensic materiality, as Matthew Kirschenbaum has pointed out, is operant. Or to put it otherwise, meta data is *always* incomplete i.e. context sensitive. Which of the two or multiple locations -content vs essence-is the more "permanent," or "unchanging/ eternal," and how are errors detected in meta data systems more generally as they reflect or reference "objects?" There are a lot of typos in 7CV! Are these missing objects or subjects? And what is the status of captions in the book, in relation to text blocks, images, and meta data tags? Is the book self-describing and how does it reference its migration across platforms? A web copy of an "object" might look the same as the object but it usually has different resolutions, is augmented with additional information etc. One might say the same of 7CV.

For no real or pre-mediated reason, the book had various "published," selfpublished and distributed states/files. It was written in MSWord in 2003, accepted for publication (2004) with a small press but did not appear until 12/2005 as a lulu self-published paperback (\$12.95) and PDF download. It was revised 2008- 2009 for Wesleyan UP, with new cover, publishing data, and addition/excision of numerous photos, tags, and captions, and revisions to Systems Theory. Much of the lulu data is unchanged and many self-publishing (author-as-seller) elements surface in the WUP editions/RSS feeds. The physical front and back covers were altered—i.e. it has become a legal format, which includes a machine-readable bar code, Library of Congress Control Number (LCCN), ISBN, dated (archived) WUP logo, Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), "handwritten" (using MS Word's drawing function) title that differs from the "title" of the lulu edition (which strictly speaking didn't have a front cover title), subtitles that are a meta tag of the book's contents (in lieu of a table of contents), and a record of licensing/copyright arrangements. So the framing of the book is very different. Mainly, it has metadata layers for bibliographic control. The LCSH is an old-fashioned thesaurus, and 7CV references dictionaries and other classification/reading systems. Subject headings are conflict-prone near ethnicity/identity issues, and I tried to highlight that with "China-Poetry" as a disappearing first term. The cinema section was revised with Portable Network Graphics instructions. PNG is a format for bitmapped images. Like a GIF, it utilizes lossless data compression but is license free. (Unisys). But the main change involves the title. The lulu book didn't have a functioning title and functioning bar code, only a symbolic one. It floated into a reading space more readily. But what would it mean, really, for a book to have a non-functioning bar code in a self-published book? The entire WUP front cover (physical back cover) and back cover area is a controlled vocabulary system; it alludes to a host of other title/author systems, including Laura Riding Jackson's Rational Meaning, and Irma S. Rombauer, et al. i.e. The Joy of Cooking. Authors are joined to printed matter by publishing. Why give it three titles or the semblance of three titles? Perhaps to maximize hits and links on Google. The book is a geography of a publishing landscape: what is that landscape? Something like the statistical vocabulary field that Claude Shannon called Printed English.

KG: I know from hearing you talk, and also from your last few books, that you're interested in ephemeral language and use it to generate writing. For example, more recently we've had the experience (which is a clear concern of yours in *Heath*) of all the kinds of writing happening on the web, which I suspect many people don't yet think of as writing, like product reviews or little spur of the moment notes to friends that then some other person copies onto their blog or cuts and pastes into a poetry project, etc.—those bits of text that are probably the most common form of writing happening now. 7CV seems to be constructed entirely out of that, though I think a good bit of it is not from the web, but instead I imagine it being from brochures, reviews, little product labels and tags. I sense that some of the images in the book are among your sources, whether a painting you've used for description, a used postcard, or a little slip of paper like a receipt that is mostly flooded with product codes one wouldn't even know how to decipher. I especially like that it seems the numbers from these kinds of codes get recycled into your text. There's something pleasurable about seeing and knowing as I'm reading that these things I'm reading might be from this kind of ephemera—a poorly paid cashier mechanically hands over this odd slip of paper full of numbers and says "have a nice day." You've put it in the book and in reading it my brain is having a response like "things as they are are really part of the world and I forgot." How nice to just feel them roll over the brain! It's like a brain massage!

As I read 7CV I keep thinking, in terms of your writing process, of that old surrealist strategy/game "Directions for Use" where a source text—the directions for anything from how to open champagne, to how to take your prozac, to how to put out a fire with baking soda-gets remixed with words and phrases from whatever big metaphysical concept the writer chooses-like death, the universe, love, whatever. The results can be both/either nonsensical and revelatory. Your process seems similar in 7CV, though your process and source texts yield greater complexity than the results typically found in "directions for use" because, first of all, you're mixing more types of source text—lots of ephemeral language and coding get mixed with discussions of painting, writing, architecture, falling in love, memory (which are all also codes and this book consistently makes that a pleasurable revelation)—and second of all, because those kinds of source texts when mixed as you mix them actually begin to suggest real theories of art, writing, and space emerging through a consideration of ephemera. I know from the title that you are thinking through "controlled vocabularies"—the language of indexing and categorizing in the first place. So readers can know you're thinking through these categories of writing, painting, architecture, etc., yet through the sense of surrealism I also know not to read too closely, too intensely. It's not Adorno! You could just as well ignore what it "means." It is both serious and light, not only sensitive, beautiful, but nonsensical at the same time. I'd like you to talk about this effect but I'd also like to hear about the process of your writing 7CV. For example, did you plan this project or did it emerge out of play? Were the poems written over a long period as you found good ephemera, or were they written after a period of purposeful collecting? Were there specific source texts that appealed to you in terms of conceiving the project as a relaxed theorizing of aesthetic categories and everyday life/objects/writing? Did you think of surrealist writing strategy as you were writing this book? I feel like I'm seeing little signs of surrealism everywhere here.

TL: Breton's *Nadja* has been hugely important for 7CV and even more so for the novel I've recently finished, Our Feelings Were Made by Hand. 7CV book was written in 2002, rather quickly, like almost all of my books, and I had been reading and teaching Breton and Ernst's overpaintings and *frottages*. I generally, and I don't know why this is so, write books in a three or four month period, then spend years "repairing" them. I think this perhaps has to do with a certain impatience followed by obsessiveness with one form, but it is also directly related to publication history. This was true of *Lotion Bullwhip Giraffe* and BlipSoakoi, and Heath, and now 7CV, which is earlier than Heath, as it was written 2002-3. Like all those books, 7CV is written under a formal system, in which I make certain personal and mostly informal notations or emendations. Here I think the work diverges from the avant garde or neo avant garde in that it dispenses with more strict notions of aesthetic autonomy; I think that it is simply not reflective of the alterations that individuals make over time, here the time of revision, to the structures of everyday life. But unlike de Certeau, I do not think this originates in the unconscious as something distinct from the conscious.

For me, Breton's *Nadja* is a theory about, to rephrase T.S. Eliot, the use and generation of poetic materials. In it, Nadja the character, whatever in the end she may be, floats thru the structure or apparatus of a novel as if she doesn't really belong there, i.e. she is something of a cinematic image superimposed upon a novel or text. Breton makes the repeated point that he meets her unexpectedly and randomly in the course of his wanderings/writings. Who is Nadja? She may have been a real-life prostitute that Breton befriended. Or not. She is a visual effect in a novel, an *objet trouve*, an analogue for objective chance, a staged function of the novel's ability to punctuate certain "realist" landscapes—Parisian cafes, streets and storefronts—with something ineffable. Like an image in a mirror—and more importantly for Breton and Dali—in celluloid, she is real and

unreal. In such a world it is hard tell which is more real, the mundane settings or the magical (cinematic) appearance/apparatus of Nadja. The reader has trouble differentiating between descriptions of Nadja and what was only her effect. In the end Nadja *is* the apparatus of the novel and of its writing, a novel or a character that one can no longer term a narrative, at least in the conventional novelistic sense. She evinces what Werner Spies terms "new modalities of narration" but it might be simpler to say that she is not really in herself visible except as the means by which the text is held together—men with beards, clumsy waiters, cafes, signs, illuminated windows, etc. Amidst urban emptiness and a host of aura-less items, Nadja endows the scene with the marvelous. She makes the random disjecta membra of contemporary life-evinced most clearly in the desultory photos that populate the work—seem connected and meaningful. The mundane photographs of Paris are not mere photochemical traces (lost love) of the real world but sites through which something marvelous had once passed. Nadja is thus a haunting of the 'real' or objective and ordinary world by unpredictable and unconscious desires, an example of convulsive beauty. One could say that the idea or system of poetry functions like Nadja in 7CV, its own blind spot, nowhere to be found, hallucinated everywhere, and linked to haptic writing procedures! Breton poses the question: could chance be said to humanize the individual and make her life distinctly her own, as textual production? For Breton the answer I think would be yes. But I'd probably say no. And the poetry, if it is visible, is not convulsive.

Thus the emphasis on a psychic system linked to the ineffable or the unconscious is something I tried to avoid. 7CV is writing as meta data container. I was not interested in chance encounters, and anyway I read Breton's encounters with Nadja as anything but random; they are dictated by the psychic apparatuses (Freud's omnipotence of thought) responsible for the work itself, and also, by extension, the narrator's bivalent identity (lover/father/friend). With regards Breton, the novel plays the analogous fiction/non-fiction line. So, I do not pretend there is a difference between poetry and everything else, or that a meta data tag/caption or eruption of an anecdote is prompted by unconscious desire—it is *already* written into the literary system! It is the opposite of surprising. I mean it is a dead space in the text, something that will not be processed as part of a conscious reading process or related consciously to the narrative content of the section at hand. One skips over it. The stories that I tell are a bit inert, inconsequential, minor, absorbed more or less by the everyday structures of reading and generic spaces of the city. It doesn't really matter if they happen to me or to you, the reader—these are the same functions of text. I am no more individual or responsible or emotionally captivating than you, the reader, are. In most blog writing "you" = "me." Most of our reading spaces today are dead or interchangeable, what Koolhaas terms junk spaces, generic spaces, what I call controlled vocabulary systems etc., linked in a larger system of meaning production. The book reflects this communication: modular, schematic and blandly visual in its presentation of textual and visual matter *as a single* operation, and its layout encourages scanning rather than continuous reading for plot. In other words, reading is a coherent, self-contained, mechanical process, a conceptual armature, and all visualizations of identity produced within it are illusions of identity. How does a "narrator" appear in SCV? There are no photos of me in SCV. There are quite a few "other" authors. Different reading systems within the books produce different authors/individuals. Who am I? A shadow of an apparatus, a necessary illusion inserted *after* the mechanics of reading. Why does one or a few subjects appear? In order to assure the system that something registers in the meaning that has already transpired. I think it is also important to keep in mind that issues of identity are being linked to online reading practices, where there is a notable drop off in retention and comprehension, mainly because the movement of material into working memory and then into long term memory is harder to facilitate with rapid skimming of material. And yet this is the way we read.

Thus scenes and photos (they are the same) in SCV are from other sources, but the narrator has tried to inhabit, weakly, these scenarios, genres of writing and formats of reading: how would one go about living in or imagining oneself in an article about smart mobs from Salon, or a restaurant review of WD50 on Yelp, or an academic book on the economic implications of WalMart? I get involved in these kinds of reading materials all the time. I mean I read a huge amount of minor, anecdotal, and fluff journalism ALL the time. I love reading the *Post* and the Daily News. Are they lousy papers? Well, maybe, but I certainly enjoy reading them. I could spend the day reading the wedding pages, restaurant reviews and obits. The above genres can be lived in, not only as a writer but also a reader, and this is suggestive of and ushers from the vast amounts of user-generated content and the blurring of the writing/reading boundary in web-based and social networking sites. Is one writing or reading? It's kind of hard to tell. So SCV reflects this prevailing read/write mode in our contemporary moment. Is this surreal? Is it surreal how we read newspapers today on the web? I don't think so. I think it is just the way most people read online, by half participating in our own vaguely spectatorial reading practices. There is no need to convert my psyche into Najda or something that it is not. Most of our reading spaces like our lives are shallow and I see no reason to create a deep space known as the novel. I mean the minute I read a story or start a novel if it smells like fiction I immediately put it down. I've been doing this since I was a teenager so you can imagine how many books I've done this to. Most people on the planet do not write lengthy novels. They are more likely to write themselves in a restaurant review or note to a loved on, or some other short form mode of writing like a text message. These formats for writing constitute a way of living inside one's own life, they are the reading formats we actually live our lives in. So SCV is really about not some magical moment of textual crystallization or surrealist frisson; it is about the banality and ordinariness that inheres in our read/write lives. I wrote most of the book in that manner. I tried to entertain myself. I lied. I told the truth a little. I chose things from the newspaper that pleased me and inserted myself into it my reading of them. Isn't this really what most of us do when reading or participating in reading? It's a low grade pleasure. It's easy. I tell my students this all the time, reading is easy, just like watching TV. So is writing. And now, thanks to the internet, so is publishing.

GT: I'd like you to talk about book design and its connection to the multitude of framing devices that suffuse *Seven Controlled Vocabularies* from start to finish. In the fourth section of the book, "2 Identical Novels," we find one of many prescriptive declarations that function simultaneously as descriptions of the book: "literature like everything else should just be a form of packaging" (102). Of course, two of the most noticeable instances of this packaging are the very playful front and back covers. The title and author are, as usual, printed on the front cover, but the typeface is so small that most readers will have to squint, and the first thing most readers will notice instead is what appears to be the cataloguing information that customarily appears on the copyright page, complete with ISBN numbers, Library of Congress subject headings, and the library call number. We have in a sense been programmed to recognize the visual format of this cataloguing information, but if we take the time to actually read the subject headings, we will realize that these categories have not been generated by the Library of Congress, but have been invented by the author. Yet it would be wrong to call these categories imaginary or completely ironic, since they in fact amount to a more or less accurate summation of Seven Controlled Vocabularies. We will encounter discourse on "mass media and language," anecdotes about "wives—familial relationships," and references to the ethnic content implied by the first subject heading, "China—poetry." Why did you appropriate and distort this utilitarian form, drawn from the realm of what was once quaintly known as "library science," to frame our reading of the book? How

does this opening gesture live up to the idea that literature is "just" a form of packaging?

TL: The cover was designed to be read. Paradoxically, most book covers are graphic, i.e. have visual oomph because they are the front door announcing content "inside." But I didn't want the title to be graphic, a sign outside the book. I wanted the sign to be *inside* the book pointing out to things that are not in the book, so the inside is more graphic than the physical back cover, which is the book's conceptual front cover. The book interior points lackadaisically to itself, like the grid of Manhattan. We tried to make the covers not pretty or graphic, and inefficient at rapidly communicating the book's idea. It is a poor cover. It is in my good friend Charles' words, "non-absorptive." By making the print, in Scala Sans, tiny, you force people (people are designed by reading practices) to turn the cover into something that *isn't* looked at—if you want to make sense of it you have to get out a magnifying glass and read it! And ditto with the hand-drawn title in on the physical back. The LC info is not something most readers read, but here it tells you, as you note, a lot. It functions in lieu of a table of contents, or it shades into that functionality. Needless to say the front cover is important to reading the particulars of this book. The LC matter may be more expressive, compositionally speaking, or just as expressive, bibliographically speaking, as anything else. Certainly it's meant to be amusing and anecdotal, but that goes with the territory of subject headers, as any librarian can tell you. Subject headers are very biased! I wanted to address controversy as it relates to poetry and cooking. These do not seem separate categories. The cover is robin's egg blue, which is spring like. It reminds me of Easter egg shells. I am not a practicing Christian but Easter is the most pleasing of religious holidays. It has not been utterly commodified except perhaps by the color of plastic eggs and the foils wrapped around chocolates. Easter Eggs and Chinese fortune cookies go together in the book. Blue is a decorative fondant or confection! The cover is almost lickable.

The physical front matter contains the legal, registered title, whereas the physical back has the title in a hand drawn version done without the hand. It was done in MS Word, using a line draw software function and a mouse. Everything about a book is about its mediation. There is no packaging "for" a book. The book is its packaging, its system of reproduction, visualization, dissemination, etc. There is no inside/outside, paratext/text distinction. They are all integrated, like software, or micro-ideologies, in the book "proper." The book is co-extensive with layout, editing, bibliography and distribution. The book is a timed function of simultaneous and delayed reading events in your life. There are only two options: it can be read or it can be unread. You read and don't read a book over generations or years and I wanted to position reading in this extended time frame by making it a fast read, *almost* non-reading. A controlled vocabulary system lets you in and out quickly. What is the difference between a reader and a design element? No difference. The book is (printed) in Scala Sans. The book was written on a PC but transferred to and laid out on a Mac. Scala Sans was one of the first fonts for the Mac. It was developed in 1988 in Holland, and released in the FontFont Library in 1993 in a sans serif version, one that included elements like small caps and ligatures, which were missing from the early Mac fonts. SS is used in the Chicago Manual of Style, so it seemed appropriate that it be used in SCV, regarded as a field guide of reading as a series of highly punctuated/differentiated but regulated practices. These practices are all "codified" as the reading of a book. What is a book "title"? A title appears on the physical front and back covers of the book, on the half title and full title page. So you have four divergent titles, i.e. they serve different purposes in or on or around the book. A title can stop you from reading a book.

GT: Let's zero in on how you incorporate visual images into 7CV, since this is one of the book's design elements that immediately drew my attention. In almost every section, you conjoin image and text according to what starts out as a fairly consistent recto-verso scheme, with text on left, image on right, though in some sections the visual space of the page appears to be organized into quadrants, with the text and image floating onto different regions of the page. Beyond this element of graphic design, however, I detect an engagement with some of the most ancient debates in poetics about the relationship between text and image, about how to define "the image," and about whether painting or poetry possesses superior mimetic capacities, a theoretical question that has grown vastly more complex since the advent of photography, cinema, and digitized information. You play with the image-text relationship on a dizzying number of levels. For instance, in the first section of the book, you signal that images will be seen with the textual markers, "Plate 1," "Plate 2," etc., only to leave the recto page blank except for these textual markers. Then in the second section, our expectations for images are satisfied, with images appearing on the recto, but now the "Plate" markers appear on the verso, above not an image, but a module of text that sometimes appears to refer obliquely to the image on the recto. In other cases, though, one can find hardly any reference at all to the images, which are hard to identify, though readers will probably infer a relationship because the structure of the book seems to demand it. In "A Field Guide to the American Landscape," we encounter a rather lyrical statement that seems to guide us, as any good field guide should, as to how we should approach these enigmatic, always quirky, sometimes quite amusing images of things like the back of a package of moist towelettes: "If my eyes were like a newspaper, the photographs appear to revolve around the words like a series of imaginary facts" (48). In what sense can we conceive of the photos in 7CV as "imaginary facts," whatever that oxymoron might mean? How does 7CV ask us to think about the relationship between image and text?

TL: Well a number of things are at work. The most basic is that inserting photos in SCV book changes how it's read. Eliminating images (or their mildly correspondent blank spaces with a text) would make reading more straightforward and linear, and for me, unrelenting. But it would have its payoff in increased retention. It is hard for me to read a book straight through, which is probably why I like Musil, Brautigan, Acker, Barthelme, or Alexander Kluge. These books kind of do my reading for me, and I feel no desire to finish them. The photos in SCV are an aid to a reading of a more general kind, one grounded in skimming, skipping, leafing through, muteness, overlooking, thinking back about books one has read but doesn't have anymore. Books seem to propagate themselves. Thus, the book has certain self-replicating structures within it. Like a scrapbook, it is comprised of almost personal photos and mildly irrelevant texts, reading headers, software, and places/blanks where images are statistically indicated by textual pointers or captions. This is not meant to be difficult or evasive. When one reads, one connects with the things one reads in a personal way. Otherwise, one would stop reading. And I stop reading a lot when I read. There is a lot of muteness and blindness in the text or reading system, the generic and in the controlled vocabulary system. So in contrast to this notion that in today's environment nearly everything has an image or text posted to it, there is quite a bit of blank or mute space in SCV, and so the interior of the book, fully administered and commodified by various systems of reading and textual production, has blanks, hypnagogic lulls, and spa-like areas where eyeballs might rest. I wanted the text to be relaxed, yogic, anecdotal, easily consumed. The selfreflexive images—mostly from the flea market—are vaguely generic and generically comforting! They don't corroborate the text clearly; they remain loosely or generically relevant, like scaffolding to the reading processes and feelings that underlie or circulate in and through the reading system regarded in the most general of terms, as a medium that generates meanings of the most

diffuse and pleasurable sorts and makes the reader possible. So the photos are the mood or environment for reading text, but the text is mood-based as well, and it's hard to separate (reading) a book (or architecture or other non-printed forms of reading matter) from the ambience of reading. The book is just the environment of the reading system. There is really no such thing as a book from the perspective of a reading system, and SCV is about this ambience or mood of reading, regarded as system. And it is mostly silent i.e. it is not a phonemic system (no slips of the tongue) but a statistical one marked by typos, stray punctuation, irregular type/fonts, graphic redundancies, etc. The first section exists as voice only to the extent that it is a computer-generated voice program named Dorothy [DS: See Lin's "Eleven Minute Painting" video, available on the PennSound website: http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Lin-Video.html].

Within this system, I relate to most of the photos in a distracted, personal way. I didn't take most of them. This defines what Goffman calls rules of irrelevance. The photographs are almost textual in this reading space, and vice versa. There is no sequestration. In this sense, the book is a statistical landscape or minor encounter with text in general, what linguists terms "word shapes" as a medium for meaning, a quasi-architectural space, a generic feeling, an inner blank spot in a system of affects and photographs that might be affects. The landscape images, which mirror something once called subjectivity, are found photographs bought at the flea market, which I then either rephotographed digitally or scanned in to something that might once have been referred to as consciousness. And it's strange about that consciousness but I think of those photos as mine. I remember them. I even remember having them, which happened when I rephotographed or scanned them. So the book is about reuse, remembering and re-remembering of imagery from other sources and people. Many stories are sampled with the narrator's subjectivity introjected i.e. I like to read stories from the newspaper and then re-narrate them as if they had happened to me. This is self-reflexive, artificial and book like. The book is a strange interface between analog and digital, from painting and cinema and photography and architecture (and their notions of authorship) to new digital mediums associated with meta data containers, information architecture, and tags, which function as non-readable captions to text and images. The title's "handwriting" is digital. A mode of remembering/reading/organizing/cataloging material is replaced by another. The reader is an internal self-condition of a reading system where it's hard to distinguish between an image as a sign (to textual matter), a text that functions graphically as reading module, and a meta data tag that functions as a textual title, photographic caption. Like an embedded meta data tag, which are relevant less to content than its processing, the book is about things not seen, patterns of non-reading and non-retention, statistical systems of reading and memory rather than reading and memory "itself." Guess work prevails, but 7CV is not a zero-order approximation. I cannot remember what the captions or some content signifies. Much has passed through me. Some of this lies in the historical field: the field guide concept has dates attached. The first *Baedeker* guides appear in 1839 and document visitations to the Rhine. There may be pictures of the Rhine in the book. Photographs were added to guidebooks at the same time, evinced in Daguerre and Fox Talbot's production, in France and England, respectively, regarded as photographic countries. The anecdotal evidence collected in the Identical Novel section is textual and graphic in orientation, in its textual and extra-textual locations or shapes.

Because of its high redundancy and low poetry, SCV may not be poetry at all. There is, however, parsing of things that might be poetic, like empty spaces in the cinema section. But these spaces are just typographic, the product of tab stops! This is a double-entry system of accounting. Information is getting lost. Accidents and typos are admitted from the get go. And the system can be seen "in" chapter divisions and paratextual divisions "in" the text, regarded as a sophisticated, self-organizing system. Where are these stories found? In what local structures (photographic close up) or patterns (macro view) are they momentarily glimpsed? This might have been contained in an (identical) novel once, but now it's a database. The (identical) novel cannot imagine itself! This can only be done from the system of poetry! All we have are a bunch of pedagogical scenes: street scenes, classrooms, professors in classrooms, landscapes, photographs, textual matter—regarded as a bildungsroman. At some points one thinks one can "see" a story, a recognition scene that Aristotle termed *anagnorisis*, but which is a highly temporalized phenomenon and mostly just an anonymous murmur: it is a function of a self-organizing system and not any individual consciousness or transaction, which becomes marked by signs and especially numbers, plate numbers, cross references, software codes, tags, indexes, footnotes, appendixes, etc. The space of secrecy or interiority has been externalized. What do those "interior" structures (of reading/seeing/feeling) look like from the perspective of a book, which is always the starting point of a book that is constantly defining its boundaries? Something is turned inside out. It is highly probable in this system, like the microfilm system during the Cold War, that someone will emerge as a reader. Is the reader a narrative that describes a temporal process (event) that ebbs away after "seeing" something? That's the bet

KG: I was curious in my last question for more direct address of recognizable numeric codes. There are a lot of numbers in 7CV. And heck, at your instigation, Tan, we keep referring to it as 7CV, a kind of conversion of title into a numeric code. There are also a lot of barcodes from the back of objects scanned into in 7CV as images. You're talking about genre as code, as affects as results of engaging particular codes, but then when I see barcodes I also think of tracking. Many people have a Foucauldian reading of the barcode as the ultimate surveillance technique. How do you feel about that? And in terms of your interest in kinds of reading--relaxed, half-attentive, scanning--I am also compelled to note that barcodes are "read" and "scanned" though in a much more purely machinic sense. Are you trying to get at something about machinic reading/writing?

TL: I was interested in reading as a function of various and measured efficiencies. We think of reading in terms of what it gives us, i.e. content, but I was interested in speeds of reading regarded as information delivery. The title of the book is unwieldy and so an abbreviation, as you've noted, is necessary to reference the book. The bar code is one way to process, i.e. read, data efficiently, but so is a LC subject heading, or the ISBN number, which is, in turn, converted into two barcodes on the book's back cover, one indicating book/publisher information and the second five digit code indicating currency and pricing data. The UPC code, used for groceries, was first used at Kroger in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kroger was where our family did most of our grocery shopping when I was growing up, so I have a fondness for barcode history, southeastern Ohio, and buying charcoal briquettes and city chicken at Kroger! Buying groceries felt very American when my family came to the US from China in the late 50s. I don't think my parents went to huge grocery stores until they moved to Athens, Ohio in 1959, where my father was offered a job teaching ceramics. At any rate, barcode symbols probably outnumber all other symbols in the book, and they have a weak autobiographical function with the book's historical time frame. Barcodes are standardized. WUP, for example, gives up a dollar for each book sold, if the bar code in question is improperly placed or sized, and thereby creates an error reading at the cash register. So barcodes are a fitting symbol for 7CV; I like it when reading has a definite structure or time frame to it. They decorate the reading and they are the reading.

Barcodes are data instantiated as image, one that can be read quickly, efficiently, with little chance of error by any number of optical scanners or readers. 7CV reflects reading in the sense of highly efficient, fast, universal, and, well superficial readings. Thus the references to times of reading and George Muller's theories in the Paintings section, a section which is filled with seasonal and temporal references and rondelays, along with a missing series of paintings. The paintings have been erased because the mass-produced book, historically, is not very good at reproducing images, and is incapable of producing moving images. When I want to see images, I go to a web site. Books have been supplanted, recently, by cinema and television and the internet, and the Painting section makes a vague historical reference to something executed in Director: a multimedia authoring platform "built on a movie metaphor." So what is presented is not a film but an animation in language, which is what all text becomes *when* you read it. Macromedia was acquired by Adobe in 2005, and Director is now, like painting, an anachronism, having been eclipsed by After Effects. So there are different kinds of images and image production. The last section of American Painting is about how different kinds of images in a homogeneous space, and this brings us to poetry, which is a medium traditionally used for the production and reproduction of *images*. Poetry is intertwined with other arts, including drama and prose poetry, theories of poetry (poesis) and now digital poetry. 7CV was born digital: written in MS Word, laid out in Quark and InDesign, retouched in Photoshop, photographed with a Nikon digital and a flatbed scanner. These strands constitute a complex composite image, but it might be called an alphanumeric text, or digital object with a license.

In plate 12, historical/temporal sequences are off amidst multiple media references: it is summer but it's snowing; I am making a TV set (or myself into a TV set) while waiting for dinner guests. There is much inexactitude when making dinner for guests and wondering when they are going to walk through a door! Making oneself into a medium like television, well, that's also unpredictable. In the end, it's hard to tell *when* this is taking place but none of this matters in the frame or sequencing of the book, which sends out data regularly and in a relaxed and modular fashion. This is post-broadcast era, maybe it's narrowcasting or a TIVO distribution model. What does one do with information that is just information? One takes it in. Ditto with reading. I don't have to understand to be able to read the things I am reading. In fact, I like to read fast and make lots of mistakes while scanning material. One can do anything once one gets into or inside a book; in this sense it's like watching television. One makes up most of what one sees. Part of the reason for photographing the backs of books is that that is where most barcodes are found, and back covers are more likely to be ignored, though WUP and Amazon reproduced the back cover even though text on both front and back covers is too small to be read in most online images.

GT: Well, let's say we take your bet, become one of those reader-narratives who rarely finish a book, and examine what happens to affect in 7CV. As we loll about in the ambient environment, wondering whether we're reading *Seven Controlled Vocabularies, Obituary 2004,* or *The Joy of Cooking,* remaining untroubled by the distinctions, we come to rest in one of those spa-like mute spaces, but it isn't long before our eyes stray toward text, which you say are just as mood-based as the photos. So let's say, for instance, that we've read the short text about logos on page 70, received a mild kick of pleasure from glancing downward and recognizing the back of a metrocard, then sat becalmed for a few moments as our eyes shift right to one of those nearly mute spaces, here defined by an almost but not quite recognizable surface bearing date stamps and some kind of code. And if we turn the page, we find the story about how you met your wife Clare at Macy's (or was it the Bulgarian Bar?), and so receive another pleasant dose of emotion. But mood, or affect, surfaces and disappears in very contradictory ways in different sections of 7CV. In the apparently "personal"

anecdotes from "Two Identical Novels," like the ones about driving your father's old Mercedes, or the reading habits of Tom Newlin, the Russian literature professor at Oberlin, the lazy reader-narrative takes pleasure in the pathos and humor of these stories. And yet, in the academic-sounding texts in "A Dictionary of Systems of Theory," affect seems to play no role at all, and if our reader-narrative meanders through the ambience to the fourth preface (which may very well have been the first thing we read in the book, or the fifth, or the twenty-seventh) we encounter an assertion that frames human emotion, in the context of its representation in cinema, as something deeply mechanical: "It is hard to experience an emotion that is a diagram but of course all emotions are diagrams. Lars von Trier said that" (144). The notion of ambience and yogic relaxation that you've invoked seems far from the kind of emotional discomfort that we are typically subjected to in a von Trier film. I'd like you to talk about whether, like von Trier, 7CV is also engaged in a kind of diagramming that treats emotion as a mechanical outcome of the reading process.

DS: You write: "SCV may not be poetry at all" and "This can only be done from the system of poetry!" I'm curious about the location of 7CV among the arts referenced by metadata on the cover, literary and non-literary-architecture, photography, cinema, music, painting, fiction—all of which come packed with historical contexts and user expectations. You note that "the novel cannot imagine itself" as a way to locate the heterogeneous writing styles comprising 7CV within a necessarily poetic system. However, Ron Silliman, on receiving the book, places it firmly in the "Books (Other)" category. I'm not sure I agree and hope you can tell us a bit about why and how (if?) 7CV is poetry. Aside from its material location in the Wesleyan Poetry series, and the wonderful self-cataloging identifications on the cover ("China—poetry," "Poetry—therapeutic use," "Poetry—social aspects"), the book can surely be read within other systems. We've recently discussed, for example, how the book need be different from the art-design publication studies of Dexter Sinister or Dispatch Bureau and similar art-world conceptual activity (where a startling number of artists are now creating "poems"). Similarly, while we've discussed Koolhaas's essay "Junkspace" in relation to ambient stylistics, the more experimental OMA book projects raise a number of questions related to the work in 7CV. Is it, following Luhmann, a systemic process of "irritation" that you are initiating with poetry cataloging (the contextual strategies Goldsmith, among others, are engaged in)? Or, as I've a hunch, something closer to your conception of "poetry" proper? Anyhow, I'm interested in how "Tan Lin" is plugged into various sites in art, architecture, the academy and poetry. I'm interested in how you navigate these fields. Do you imagine the disciplines listed in your tags reading the book?

TL: Hmm, as I am thinking of one question I am being distracted by another, so I think this will answer Danny's question, like my last response to Kristen!

I was trying to think of what happens when I read and what are feelings in the moments before they become feelings? I would say that the whole book is an affective and highly generalized/generic reading environment i.e. the system is mildly affective (as it is being read) but it also images or represents reading as a process or system that is affective in its couplings (irritations or attunements) with consciousness. Affective logic is a logic of putting things next to each other, pictures and texts, newspapers and novels, Taco Bell and Macy's. When we read anything—menus, literature, shop signs, architecture, airport monitors—we are in a state of waiting as it were, to form some emotional connection, or feeling, in relation to something, and that something, that structure of feeling is ourself in relation to the environment. So in this sense, the affects in 7CV are oblique, passive, influenced by things like Chinese cookbooks, childhood (memories), the foods I eat at WD 50, and, since I am a professor, things I read. In other words, they are *almost always not* there or they seem to belong to other people in a room. They don't have a pronounced developmental arc (narrative) or a recognizable shape like "anger" or "love." They are not very Freudian and have not been much cognitivized. But this is the nature of the affects, as opposed to the "drives." There is a Luhmannesque system of feelings here, linked to Daniel N. Stern's affective attunement. I was trying to align the reading practice with questions like why and how we read, and it made sense to link reading to what Antonio Damasio calls "background feelings" or what Heidegger terms *Stimmung* or mood, that *prior*, often pre-cognitive and even pre-perceptual "atmosphere in which intentions are formed, projects pursued, and particular affects can be attached to specific objects." (Jonathan Flatley) Reading is an ambient or quasi-architectural awareness of (our own and other people's) feelings before they become feelings. It is loosely coupled to textual and nontextual, visual and tactile, printed and non-printed matter. It creates things (like books) to read (inside our heads) within a general environment or medium of perceptions and affects. Reading as system images or mirrors a range of emotions (dramatic, cathartic, academic, mild, drugstore-like, cinematic) that are ostensibly "outside of itself"; a few of these are gut wrenching, most are fleeting and minor, and they emerge from a mood or atmosphere I associate with poetry. Maybe we read to self-reflexively create a system for what babies, children and adults do 24 hours a day.

Lars von Trier uses specific genres, specifically melodrama, represented by the flowchart/storyboard diagrams in *Dogville*, to produce, directly and bluntly, emotions of extra-ordinary phenomenological intensity. The beauty of his work is that such emotions are made to feel so intensely real and cinematic. Affects are generated "artificially" via "low" genres like melodrama and musical and then paired with a medium ("high" cinema) that is perceived to distort them, i.e. render them larger than life. The emotions of melodrama are customarily overscaled. In 7CV, I approached the problem from the other side: highlight not the artificiality/conventions and thus the specific forms/genres (art) used to produce affects, but the standard, non-descript, generic everydayness of the production of the most minor, amodal, and least intense of our passing moods. The idea was to create a book of theory/novel/artists book somehow contained in a poetry series, in a poetry medium about everyday (prose) reading practices. Or to be more blunt, I wanted the poetry system to effectively neutralize the artist book, just as it would neutralize the overly emotive, ineffable "poetic" elements. Poetry, like the affective system, is a medium punctuated by couplings and a few meta data tags. I wanted something that would, unlike many artists books, actually be read and subject the reader to everyday, durational, absorptive reading, and that would, unlike a novel, be read in a discursive, factual, standardized way. Or to put it more simply, poetry that would read like nonfiction. The reading environment constitutes a system of perceptions wherein the feelings inside of us come to be reflected back to us.

Asher Penn Interview (Unpublished Version)

AP: The title of the event held at UPENN on the 21st of April was: *Handmade* book, PDF, <u>lulu.com</u> Appendix, *Powerpoint, Kanban Board/Post-Its, Blurbs, Dual* Language (Chinese/English) Edition, micro lecture, Selectric II interview, wine/cheese reception, Q@A (xerox) and a film. I have the feeling that this title arrived at the last minute. How did the project start? How did it change up until the date of the event?

TL: Yes, and I'm not even sure the titling has arrived yet. What you have in the list is a flexible pre- or post-titling apparatus that never quite caught up with the event itself, or a set of bibliographic controls for books that do not exist (yet). As of this interview, nearly a month out, everything is still in social process (I like to think of it as a kind of bibliographic picnic!) on wikis, in unedited PDF formats, etc. Maybe it's useful to think of that social process as a medium. At any rate, medium (say language) and channel (say computer) are mixed together. By June 24th, at the Printed Matter launch, we'll have quasi-finished PDF downloads, Powerpoint pieces, films, a few POD books entitled "Selected Essays" and "Blerb," Object Inventories, Chinese language editions, Critical Readers, Indexes, Bibliographies, etc. Rachel Malik's notion of a publishing horizon (see her essay in Selected Essays) as opposed to a book is a useful construct and here that concept is rendered as a social gathering replete with emotions (more later!) So, I was not interested in a publication that crowns or documents the event but in Braudel's *longue duree*, a horizontal frame in which publishing *continually* takes place and which slowly and dully sanctions publication and editorial events along the way. Writing, particularly literary writing, generates interest over time. I was interested in generating less interest or nominal data over time. Writing is subsumed by editing, which is subsumed by publishing practices, and the latter is a subset of computer-mediated communications (CMC). CMC are not homogeneous but platform-specific, although they are marked in general by frequent modification of short form entries in reverse chronological order, as in a blog, SMS, or discussion thread. Given this, the above titles list is a kind of inventory in reverse chronological order, or publishing as a titling or bibliographic or marketing (i.e. text and image) event *prior* to the event—much like a PR agency. At any rate, distinctions between pre and post-reading, writing and editing, and text and paratext are rather fluid. Reading and publishing are processed by CMC today, and this is heightened by "value-added" e-book platforms, where visual components of textual processing are packaged with a "book." The Penn event explores that mode of book processing (reading/writing/editing/disseminating) from a systems (publishing/social network) perspective. Another way to think of this mode of editorial control is via Foucault's genealogy, which "maintains passing events in their proper dispersion." What was dispersed, like a retweet, at UPENN was wine and cheese, seminar, blurbs, scholarly editing and bibliography, minor canonization, accrual of cultural capital, and Powerpoint—as well as a host of software applications and technological apparati. So here the two principal actors that work to author material are the social context and computer-based media—both of these facilitate the transfer of data. So yes, information is a little like wine and cheese!

Despite the haphazard appearance of the titling, the project was neatly circumscribed by the nomenclature of *Edit: Processing Writing Technologies*. Within this conceptual apparatus, there were things I couldn't in good conscience want: people writing novels or poems or doing "performance editing" in the buff. Mild editing is good enough. Writing is too much. The practices that day were not meant to be aesthetic, by which I mean they were intended to mirror rather than diverge from content production today. For example, most user-posted videos comprise an archive *not* designed for revisiting or reminiscing in, and it's hard to imagine re-reading Facebook status

updates! Within a web-based reading environment, a lot of material is written (once), reviewed later that day with a cup of tea, and then forgotten. It doesn't need to be edited because it was already written in edit mode or in a wiki modifications mode. I would say Facebook as a genre is still, thank goodness, only mildly aestheticized i.e. edited. We don't write so much anymore as manipulate existing content. Editing, as discourse, applies not just to texts but to menus, my internet dating trajectory, posting details on Facebook's News Feed, tweets, Obama's highly mediated presidential campaign, Flickr group albums, interactive news, reality TV, other people's playlists, Goodreads reviews, and "personal" or attribute-keyed music recommendations on Pandora Radio. We live in an era of endless and communal cross- and self-editing, like retweeting (RT) at Twitter! Likewise, instead of filtering and preservation, the chief aim in much blog writing (and the Penn event) is not (bibliographic/editorial) control of content for future access (i.e. a library's use of controlled vocabularies) but instantaneous personal expression around ephemeral content creation and informal classification structures (folksonomies) and uncontrolled vocabulary systems. This is especially true of things like LiveJournal but it's also true of filter blogs and knowledge or k-blogs, which are "authoritatively" marked by outbound links. Self-publishing in particular has gravitated towards less authoritative and more ephemeral, event-, self- or platform-based forms where the line between "primary" i.e. authorial content and "secondary" i.e. user-generated content (forums, comments, and internal blogs) is eroded, and where multiple authors contribute posts and links in both synchronous and asynchronous formats and with increasing anonymity. As of this interview little of the Penn event is finished except the Chinese-English language version, which lacks photos. You can get that book here: It's unclear if these books will ever be "finished"— the editors can emend, revise, and republish the "titles" on their respective wikis.

So to return to your questions, the titles are flat containers, what information specialists might call namespaces, meta data fields or vocabulary systems, used to catalog an event that has yet to transpire. What does the word "publish" mean today? Danny is managing "content" and assigning editors. Editors are designing covers. In this context 7CV is less an object with an author than data to be edited, organized, tagged, reformulated, republished, blurbed, annotated, indexed, resold—by others. And that is what I think reading should be—taking hold of another text, customizing it, disposing of it. Benjamin Disraeli said when he wanted to read a good book, he wrote one. But today, why read or write a book when you can edit it? Editing is the new writing. The Penn Event aligns itself with such discursive practices—nominally self expressive writing and/or knowledge *sorting* within self-publishing. Editing and self-publishing are weak genres, or social agreements.

For this reason, I see a direct correlation between self-publishing books and Facebook, Twitter Lulu or Flicker. Facebook and Twitter are theatrical spaces for self-publishing and editing one's evolving social coordinates. We are so immersed in ostensibly free form and unrehearsed sites that it is hard to see them as highly scripted social spaces or theatres. Of course most people don't think of editing/publishing as theatre but as something boring or parasitical (vis a vis a "source" text), a textual backwater populated by people with glasses. But I think publishing a book today is theatre, socially networked theatre, and the Edit event exemplifies publishing as everyday performance. Facebook and Flickr are our era's administered and generic version of 60's happenings! Flickr albums mostly look all the same, and this is true of most of the images in 7CV-they could belong to anybody, and many of the images were taken from discarded photo albums or are the backs of books, I suppose a marketing director's nightmare. So in that sense, the event at Penn that day translated the reeditioning of 7CV into a bibliographic happening, underwritten by affective modes of reuse, editing, archiving, MP3 background music, and library science. We had pizza! We drank wine and chatted! I wanted people to have a good time.

Status updates on Facebook constitute a continuous and communal editing (and conversational diffusion) of a life's impersonal events rather than a diaristic recording or writing of the feelings as a "published author." Ditto with 7CV and its extensions. What search engine developers term filtering (i.e. self-reflexiveness about the medium itself, as manifested in meta data containers) is more granular in a conventionally published memoir or poem than in a blog or its hard-copy cousin: a self-published lulu edition, but I think this is changing.

Another way of saying this is that the titles of the event are pragmatic and context sensitive i.e. they are a fantasia of classification. The (editing) vocabulary system is a generalized medium or generic (table of) contents. Like a rudimentary tablature for string music or a playbill for a play, they guide, like a kanban board, the general flow of production but don't proscribe it. We live in an age of weak authors and strong communications networks and high sensitivity to labels, and I do not think this is a bad thing! After all, if networks and captions are strong, authors do not have to be. Authors can disappear into a search engine, reading/reviewing network like Goodreads, blurb, or Google books, where a book evolves from a stand-alone object into an information entity classed with other entities. Editing makes authors disappear rather than show up as guests on Oprah! Books without authors are more pleasing (and easily digested) than books with authors. 7CV is about fast reading and ease of ingestion of written and reprocessed material. We live in a text based rather than image-based moment, which is one reason I find the most interesting cultural activity in textual rather than visual arts, and why if I had a choice I'd probably get a degree in information science rather than English or in painting!

Primary Cover Spread by Clare Churchouse



A&P, 66

actors, 125; soap opera, 122

addiction, 40, 112, 113, 135, 142; to Xanax, 62; versus drunkeness, 135

Adorno, Theodor, 129

agoric systems, 145

aggressive hospitality (Wal-Mart), 128

airports, CMH, 85; LAX, 85

Alain Ducasse (author), Provencal Leg of Lamb with Fennel and Scallion, 106

ambience, and drapes, 26; and silverware, 26; and streets, 78; in restaurants, 94

American Idol, 124

anecdotes, blurriness of, 72; and t-shirts, 78; and Van Halen, 100

animals, images of, 104, 114; and reading, 70, 103; worms, 132

aphrodisiac, 142; Chanel #5, 124; symmetry of, 70

The Apprentice (TV show), 222

architecture, airport, 85; and amphetamines, 142; central air conditioning, 40; by celebrity architects, 62; in seasonal display windows (Marshall Fields), 84; and the generic, 127; strip malls, 78, 85; voids, 62

art, annoyance caused by, 26; books caused by, 78, 132

authorship, joint, 9, 10, 150-61, passim; and IBM Selectric, 111

backwards, reading, 64

barcode (European Article Number), 32, 85, 144; as building, 130; as simultude in inventory control, 126

Barthes, Roland, and index, 150-3

bathtubs, and letter writing, 134

beauty, Botox, 127; as function of décor, 40; and screen tests (Warhol), 141, 142; and ugliness, 36;

bill, credit card, 67

Bolotov, Andrei Timofeevich (Russian writer), and Philadelphia, 103

books, 162; back covers, 78; in Chinese (translation), see http://www.lulu.com/browse/search.p hp?fListingClass=o&fSearch=seven+co ntrolled+vocabularies; collecting of, 104; cookbooks, 118; dated nature of, 114; deregulation of, 113; distribution of, 168; duration of, 102; erasure of, 88; errata slips in, 113; intensity of, as genre, 118; read in graduate school, 113; theft of,112; without authors, 118

boredom, freedom of, 129; programmable nature of, 162

buttons, packaging of (Vivienne Westwood), 102

car wash (menu-driven) nature of, 87

cataloging, physical front cover (back cover); and namespaces, 172

childhood, and disease, 92; as repetition,132

China, idea of, physical front cover (back cover); in Chinatown (New York),

Chinese food, 182; language of, 114; in Taipei, 111

chronology, 11.07, physical front cover; 1680, 73; 1900, 124; 1902, 124; 1954, 113, 130; 1981, 111; 1986, 159; 1997, 126; 2001, 103; 2002 (November 7), 72; 2004, physical back cover; date stamp, 71; as logo, 78; as non-reading, 78; and posthumous fame, 70

color, 138; in Donald Judd's objects, 137; hot (neon), 70; Platonic nature of, 116; processed by retina, 139; trademarked, 139 Columbia University (New York), 113 conversation, on cellphone (breaking up), 182; transcribed in MS Word, 182

controlled vocabularies: namespaces, passim; related terms (RT), 142; tags, passim

cookbooks, the *Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*, 113; cheap British Penguin, 114; and collecting, 132; *How to Cook and Eat in Chinese*, 118; James Beard's *Theory and Practice of Good Cooking*, 112; and loneliness, 132

copyright (western), 102

death, 64, and décor, 26;

definition (DTD), 160

Delacroix, and Warhol, 141

delay, and cigarettes, 68; and reading, *see* Index.

Director, software application (Macromedia), 18

disco (medium), 22; (genre), 36, 38, 90

distraction (linguistics), 7

doors, revolving 72

drugs (SSRI's) as art, 118-119; as lifestyle, 92; LSD, 126

DVDs, and sex, 160

EAN, see barcode

English (written), coercion in, 62; slowness of, 24

errors, as interval, 38; as novel,

existentialism, and girlfriends, 50, 54

eye, and falling in love, 142; and *kindergarten*, 137; during reading, 139; source of after

family life, 134, 148; dedications to, 5; and FSH, 175; for fortune, *see* photograph, 104; joy of, 6, 110-114

food: fondants and icing, 92; edible

sculpture, 132; hashish fudge, 113; hoagie, 111; jalapeno ketchup, 88; natural, 90; steak, 112; Peas a la francaise, 113; Pepsi, 73; quesadillas, 73; in restaurants, 94; soup in dumpling, 114

forgetting, and architecture, 85; and central air conditioning, 40

format, aid to reading, 162; lecture, 46; speed, 163

fortune cookie, 87

Foucault, and epigraphs, 149

generic; see information; writing.

genre rules, 118

golf, 44, 123; as pattern (leisure),160; as relationship to landscape, 85

grade inflation (Oberlin College), 105

graphomania, and Russian literature, 103

guidebooks, *Michelin*, (see Lulu edition); *Zagat*, (see appendix)

Haiku, 162, 170*n*.

handwriting, examples of, front cover, 7, 114, 161; in Manhattan, 72; as software, 4-5

Hello Kitty (underwear), 36

history, inexactitude of, 40; photographic nature of, 48; repression of, 176; suppression of, 7-12

Home Depot, 126

Huebler, Douglas (V*ariable Piece No.* 5), 64

hypnosis, 26

hypotyposis, 135

indices (narrative units), 97-8

index, 62, and significance, 144

information, generic nature of, 102; as pattern (LSD), 126

internet (Usenet), 124; dating/marriage,161; traffic spike, 160

Jackson, Laura Riding, 15, 154-9

Jacobs, Marc (chemise), 66

James Beard's Theory and Practice of Good Cooking, and John Ashbery (Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror), 113; on cooking a steak, 112

Johnson, Samuel (indignation), 78

knowledge, moribund, 119; working class sports, 118

language: American Written English, 62; of book titles, 70; captions, 58; Chinese, 11; in cookbooks,114; and depression, 114; logos, 70; of paint, 138; Pascal, 129

Large Glass, (1915-23), 132

labor, of non-reading, 10; and the MTA, 70; and reality TV,

Las Vegas, as landscape, 78

Latino, 206

Lexus, 190

licensing (VLSC), 124

limo, courtesy, 206

literature: pastoral forms, and college life, 105; Russian, 103; taxonomies of, 133

logo, physical back cover (front cover), 70, 73; furniture, 70

love, 48; as delay, 68; and DVD rentals, 160; on greeting cards, 40; as open source code, 70 passim; of pets for their owners, 70; for wife, 142, physical front cover

Macy's (department store), 72

Margiela, Martin, labels of, 66

marriage, and flash mobs, 72; and typos, 72, physical front cover

Mekons (band), 62

Mercedes-Benz, 100

Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig, 85

Muzak, 82; as absence of music, 32; see Pantytec

narrative, Jules Verne, 104; as leak, 100; signs of reader in, 110-13

nature: as lifestyle, 90; as disease, 92; as second nature, 128

notes, 83; as "manual scripts" (Riding Jackson), 11

novel, as anecdote, 70; as design object, 16; as film, 174-219 passim; as namespace, 172; opposition to Franco-American literary works, 22; as sequencing, 22, as shopping, 72

objects, specific (Judd), 85

outline (drawing), 69

page turning, and best sellers, 80; flaglike, 78; and Plato, 207

patent system, 78

Peking Opera, 102

Pepsi, and Athens, Ohio, 73

photographs, bit mapping of, 48; flea market sources of, passim; interchangeability of, passim; and nostalgia, 44; one-hour, 127; time lapse, 18; violence of, 170

Pantone (color chart), 40

Pickwick Arms Hotel (51st Street),110

photographs: head shots, 142; meaninglessness of, 48; repetition of, 48

Pinto (car), 209

plagiarism, and absorption, 22; versus omissions, 10

poetry, and architecture, 78, 80, 85, 134; and eradication of the feelings, 24; and forgetfulness, 22

Posey, Parker, (Party Girl),142

Postlt, 116, 135

potted plants, and cats, 103; and childhood, 103; relation to farming, 103; and reading, 103

Prada, 118

Prince, Richard, 36

printing, camouflaged, 128; diary entries, 72; fortune cookies,104; labels, 62, 87; Postlts, 116; postmarks, 71; mass market paperbacks, 104; signage, 107; tags, 93, 107; translation systems, 4-5, 11, 24

reading, texts/practices: background nature of, 135; bi-directional, 70, 162; as chart, 118-19, 134, 145, 163; as data conversion,120; distractions of, 113; loneliness of, 108; and menus, 94, 144; and place, 135 and *passim*; and packaging, passim; and faces, 141; and sadism, 78; and scanning, 102; serial nature of, 103; *see* grid, system, mood, paratext, suburbia, backwards (format)

reality TV, wage slavery, and the *Apprentice*, 122-3, 125, 222

restaurant: 90, 94; Alice Waters, 106; Blimpies, 110; Chinese take-out, 111; Greek coffee shop, 108; Jean Georges, 106; Kleine Konditorei, 110; and menus, 94, 144; Old Town, 111; Per Se, 132; 108; and reading, 94; Taco Bell, 144; WD-50, 88

rooms (Stein), seasons of, 38; temperature of, 22, 54

Saks Fifth Avenue (store), 84

Schrodinger, Ernst, 102

seating charts, airlines, 32, 62

Secane (Pennsylvania), 103

Sevigny, Chloe, 36

sex, (animals), 82; (humans), 62; in movie theatres, 160, 206

shopping, and line extension, 86; as meta data, 86; in relation to nature, 90

signatures, electronic, 62

sleep, as snooze function, 90; and work (reality TV), 122

Smithson, Robert, 162; see also architecture, voids.

space (public), passim; versus private, passim

standardization, in reading, 90

statistical material, indexing of, *see* passing references, trivial

subtitle, and design, physical back cover (front cover)

suburbia, and reading, 103

synonym rings, 172

systems: alphanumeric, 18,150-3, architectural, 134; feedback (thermostat) in, 22; flowcharts, 34; recursive, 118

tag, meta data, 105

texts, circulation of, 150-3, 165-6; distribution of, 104; typewritten, 72; violence of, 174, 175

thesaurus (Roget), 140

ticket stubs, 40

"To Thee, O Grass Setee," (Bolotov), 103

tourism, guidebooks, 30, 32; Niagra Falls, 30, 32; and photography (landscapes), 43-59

translation, and Google, 11, 24, 32; *see* also Books, Chinese versions.

trivial passing references, *see* Index

Trump, Donald (*The Apprentice*), 122-3

typo, 52; as form of weak information gathering, 105

TV: ambient, 84; Discovery Channel, 139

unhappiness, and homelessness, 181

Virginia (Charlottesville), 100

voice, computer generated (Dorothy hi quality), 34	White's Mill, photo facsimile, (Athens, OH), 55
Vuitton, Louis (handbag), 67	wives, physical front cover, 4-5,
wallpaper, and book covers, labels, 71; poetry, 16; strip malls,	work, fantasies of, 122. <i>See</i> also Donald Trump
Warhol, Andy, 32	WTC, bombing (1983), 174-218 passim
WD-50 (restaurant), 88	yoga, 22; and absorption, 40
weight loss, 123	

7CV Index 1 by Ashley Leavitt

Α

Adorno, Theodor W (11 Sep. 1903-6 Aug. 1969), German-born international sociologist, philosopher & musicologist, 129

Antiochus -the king of Comagène see Racine

appear, 124,126

architecture, 22,74,76,85,92,118,124,127,129,131-2,135,142-3,162,164-5

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC), Greek philosopher, student of Plato, teacher of Alexander the Great, 82

art, 3,9,16,26,84,132,135,138,140,142,161,165

Ashbery, John (28 July 1927), American poet, 112

auditory, 137,138 inaudible, 136 listening, 129 muteness, 129 noise, 84 sound, 16,26

author, 10,78,89,102,118,150-1,153,161-2,166,168,155 see also Tan Lin

В

bar code, 85-6,125-6,129-30,144,163 see also Sub Index bar code

Barthes, Roland (12 Nov. 1915-25 Mar. 1980), French literary theorist, philosopher & critic, 106,108

Baudelaire, Charles Pierre (9 Apr. 1821-31 Aug. 1867), <u>French poet</u>, <u>critic</u>, & <u>translator</u> who was a controversial figure in his lifetime, 135

beautiful, 20,22,24,32,40,48,66,73,78,80,82,85,87,88,105-6,110,113,116,123,127,129, 132,136-8,140,143-4,160,162,165 *see also* Sevigny Chloe -"Ugly beautiful," 36

Bergson, Henri-Louis (18 Oct. 1859-4 Jan. 1941), major French philosopher - disorder, 80

bible, 70 Christ, 9 gospel, 119 Jesus, 54 See also Davidians, Zephaniah

Blau, Herbert (1926), Director and theoretician of performance, professor in the Humanities at the <u>University of Washington</u>, 138

Bolotov, Andrei Timofeevich (7 Oct. 1738-3 Oct. 1833), prolific Russian author,

103,161

book, CF,3,9,36,40,62,66,70,72,78,80,88-90,100,102-6,108,112,114,116,118,124, 126, 129-30, 132, 136, 138, 140, 143, 154-8, 160, 165-6, 168, 213, 220, CB cookbook, 108,113-4 see Joy of cooking boring, 80,129,138-40,144,164 bracket. 10 see also Sub Index bracket [], [X] brand, 73,86,106,122,125,133,141,163 insignia, 78,171 label, 66,70,78 logo, 62,70,73,86,102,131,136,138,144,163-4 Braque, Georges (13 May 1882-31 Aug. 1963), French painter & sculpture who helped develop Cubism, 106 building, 48,62,68,73,78,85,90,105,108,126,128-30,132-3,162,199 see also architecture С Chinese, CF,73,104,111,114,118 Chinatown, 88,182 see also Sub Index character cinema, 54,144,150-1,164,169,212 movie, 72-3,102,139-40,142,144,160,164,168,178,206,210 film, 2-3,54,73,131,139-40,141,143,150-2,160,162-4 4 millimeter, 178 video. 210 see also theater code, 20,24,44,64,69,70,80,92,102-3,124,127,130,136,138,152 color, 26,38,40,68,70,82,92,112,116,126-7,131,135-8,140,168,213 commodity, 38,84-5,123,126,222 see also reality TV cook, 73,106,111-12,114 steak. 112 cookbook, 90,112-3,132 Beard, James. Theory and Practice of Good Cooking, 112 Chinese cookbook, 114 pig carcass, 114 How to Cook Chinese, 118 Tolka's, Alice B. The Alice B. Tokas Cookbook, 113 see also The Joy of Cooking corporation, 85,126,130,136-7

Davidians or The Branch: Protestant sect that originated in 1955 from a schism in the Davidian Seventh Day Adventists, 155

Debord, Guy Ernest (28 Dec. 1931-30 Nov. 1994), French <u>Marxist</u> theorist, writer, <u>filmmaker</u>, <u>hypergraphist</u> and founding member of the groups <u>Lettrist</u> <u>International</u> & <u>Situationist International</u> (SI), 160

Delacroix, Ferdinand Victor Eugène (26 Apr. 1798-13 Aug. 1863), <u>French Romantic</u> artist & leader of the French Romantic school, 141

delay, 68

department store, 126 Bonwit Teller, 84 Macy's 34th Street, 72-3,160 Marshall Fields, 84 Sacks Fifth Avenue, 84

D&G or Domenico Dolce & Stefano Gabbana: Italian designers in Milan, IT, 108

design, CF,16,22,24,34,40,64,68,86,90,133,138,143,161

designer labels by: Louis Vuitton, 66 Marc Jacobs, 66 Martin Margiela, 66 Prada, 66,118

diagram, 26,34,40,44,62,68,70,72,78,108,116,124,135,138,144,213

disco, 20,22,38,62,90,168 The Last Days of Disco, 36

Deleuze, Gilles (18 Jan. 1925-4 Nov. 1995), French <u>philosopher</u> who wrote on <u>philosophy</u>, <u>literature</u>, <u>film</u>, & <u>fine art</u>, 132

Dew-champ or Duchamp, Marcel (28 July 1887-2 Oct. 1968), French American artist anchored in the Dadaist & Surrealist movement, 16,26,129 *see also* non-retinal

Е

Einstein, Albert (14 Mar. 1879-18 Apr. 1955), <u>theoretical physicist</u>, <u>philosopher</u>, author & <u>Nobel Prize recipient for Physics</u>, 151 space-time, 152

Eliot, Thomas Stearns or T. S. Eliot (26 Sep. 1888-4 Jan. 1965), Anglo-American poet, 100

emotion, 40,64,73,85,106,125,132,135,138-41,144,164,213,222 feeling, 24,26,38,54,100,106,112,122,130,132,138-9,142,144,154-6,160 mood, 90,92,138 comfort zone, 34 depression, 92 desire, 48,70,85-6,108,123,126-7,129,131,136,142 excitement, 32,131 pleasure, 18,38,64,96,153,159-60,164 relaxation, 24,62,73,100,105,138,140,162 soothing, 18,24 sublime, 26

erase, 22,48,82,85-6

Etch A Sketch (writing), 4-5

F

face, 141-2,144,174

fact see truth

false, 159 artificial, 26 deceitful, 157 evil, 159,222 fake, 182 fictional, CF,92,125 imaginary, 48,64 invalid, 171 lie, 157,159,160 synthetic, 26,92,124,138 unreal, 122,123

family, CF,127 Walmart, 128 see also Tan Lin family of

feeling see emotion

film see cinema

flag, 40,48,64,84,160

food, 88,90,94,106,108,111,113,124,131-2,135 fast food, 144,163

forgotten see memory

Four-on-the-floor: a musical rhythm pattern used in disco and electronic dance music, 22

Fukuyama, Shulsky A (27 Oct. 1952), American, author of, The "Virtual Corporation" and Army Organization (1997), 124

future see time (future)

G

Garbo, Greta (18 Sep. 1905-15 Apr. 1990), Swedish film actress primarily known for her work in the United States during Hollywood's silent films, 141,164

Gaussian curve: In <u>probability theory</u> and <u>statistics</u>, the normal distribution is an <u>absolutely continuous</u> probability distribution with zero <u>cumulates</u> of all orders higher than two, 136

Gehry, Frank Owen (28 Feb. 1929), Canadian-American Pulitzer Prize-

winning architect based in Los Angeles, California, 162

Gober, Robert (12 Sep. 1954), American sculptor, 132

grid, 28,85,127,131,137,176

н

hallucination, 3,10,88,96,106,116,126,135-8,162,164,CB

history, CF,9,40,85,108,116,124,133,139,154,160,213 see also time (past)

Huebler, Douglas (27 Oct. 1924-12 July 1997), American conceptual artist, 64

Husserl, Edmund Gustav Albrecht (8 Apr. 1859-26 Apr. 1938), German <u>philosopher</u> who is deemed the founder of <u>phenomenology</u>, 129

L

```
image, 26,84,136,140,150-1,153,164-5,210
pictorial representation, 130
see also Sub Index image IMG
```

imagine, 64,66,105,129,137-8,162

index, 108,127,138,144,150-3

J

Jackson, Laura Riding (16 Jan. 1901-2 Sep. 1991), American poet, critic, novelist, essayist & short story writer, 15,140,165 forward by, 2,7,165,CB

Johnson, Dr. Samuel (18 Sep. 1709-13 Dec. 1784), British author, linguist & lexicographer, 78

Judd, Donald Clarence (3 June 1928-12 Feb. 1994), American minimalist sculptor, 85,135-7

Κ

Keller, Helen Adams (27 June 1880-1 June 1968), American author, political activist and lecturer who was also blind and deaf, 141

Koolhaas, Remment Lucas (17 Nov. 1944), Dutch <u>architect, architectural</u> <u>theorist, urbanist</u> & "Professor in Practice of Architecture and Urban Design" at the Graduate School of Design at <u>Harvard University</u>, 162

L

landscape, 2-3,6,48,62,73,80,84-5,130,137,139,143,160,164,CB

Laurent, Yves Saint (1 Aug. 1936-1 June 2008), <u>Algerian-born French fashion</u> <u>designer</u>, 36 *see also* Sevigny

Lin, Tan (1957), Chinese-American poet, essayist, professor of English, CF,2,5, 6,220,SP,CB

Athens, Ohio home town of, 73,110,144 author, 220 family of, 9 father, 100,110,182 mother, 110,134,161 nonsense, 114 sister, 110 wife, 72,139,140-2 Churchouse, Clare, maiden name of, 72 looks like Parker Posey, 142 photo by, 182

literature, 9,16,66,74,76,100,102,105 literary, CF,10,108,151,159,162

logo see brand

love, 36,48,68,73,78,92,100,103,108,113,125,129,139,140-2,144,159-60,162,176,180, 222

М

married, 62,160

Mekons (1970), British punk-rock band, 62,204

memory, 20,22,40,44,48,64,82,85,88,114,118,127,138,143,159,160 amnesia, 131 disorder, 114 see Bergson forgotten, 22,44,48,62,85,88,106,143,160 remember, 72,87-8,112,125,140

Mies van der Rohe, Ludwig (27 Mar. 1886-17 Aug. 1969), German-American architect, 85

Miller, George A, cognitive psychologist at Princeton Uni., "The Magic Number Seven, Pulse or Minus Two" (1956), 24 attention span, 80 *see also* seven, *sub Index* date & measurement

movie see cinema

music, 2-3,6,22,84,137,144,150-1,176,CB rock opera, 132 see also Muzak

Muzak: An LLC that transmits recorded music via wire & radio per subscription to business for background ambiance, 82,125,138

Ν

nature, 78,84,90,92,128,136,155,162,164

New York, 10-11,72,84,101,108,111,114,122,132 Manhattan, 88,123

New York Times, 48,110

Niagara Falls, 30,32

non-retinal, 16,26 see also Dew-champ

novel, 2-3,6,16,22,44,48,78,82,96,99,102,114,125,131-2,143-4,163,165

Ρ

Paint, 2-3,6,13,20,22,24,26,30,32,38,40,44,72-3,106-7,111,116,124,129,131,135-8,152,160,163-4,174,210 A Field Guide to American Painting ES 13 plates

past see time (past)

photograph, 2-3,6,32,40,44,48,62,85,91,116,136,150-3,163,210,CB photography, 18,80,84 picture, 50 see Tan Lin photo by see also Sub Index image IMG

Pialat, Maurice (21 Aug.1925-11 Jan. 2003), <u>French film director</u>, <u>screenwriter</u> and <u>actor</u> noted for the rigorous & unsentimental style of his films, 139

Picasso, Pablo Ruiz (25 Oct. 1881-8 Apr. 1973), Spanish painter who helped to create Cubism, 106,129

plagiarism, 10,220

plate:

A Field Guide to American Painting ES 13 plates, 13: plates 1-13/pages 13-41: 15;First/17;1/19;2/21;/23;4/25;5/27;6/29;7/31;8/33;9/35;10/37;11/39;12/41;13

A Field Guide to The American Landscape 8 plates, 43: plates 1-8/pages 43-59: 44;1/46;2/48;3/50;4/52;5/54;6/56;7/58,74;8

Plato (428/427 BC-348/347 BC), <u>Classical Greek philosopher</u> & <u>mathematician</u>, 116,207

Poem, 20,22,24,26,32,38,40,73,80,103,106,111-12,131-2,134,144,160,164 Haiku, 151 poet, CF,16 poetics, 161,168 poetry, CF,16,22,24,26,73,116,118,143,163-4,168,210,220 title, 2,3,6,CB

Posey, Parker Christian (8 Nov. 1968), American film actress, 142

present see time (present)

R

<u>Racine</u>, Jean, author of *Bérénice* (1670), a five-act <u>tragedy</u> where the character, Antiochus, is the king of Comagène, 164

reading, 9-10,16,18,20,22,24,32,36,38,40,62,64,66,68,69,72-3,78,80,82,87-8,90,96,100,102-5,108,112-3,114,116,118,124,131,133,135,139-40,143-4,150-1,153,155,157-8,160-,168,171,210,213 voice, 18,153 Reinhardt, Adolph Fredrick (24 Dec. 1913-30 Aug. 1967), American abstract painter, 26

retinal, 16,32,36,135,139,140,142 gaze, 32,105 look, 16,20,26,32,34,36,40,68-9,84,104,112,114,123,137-8,140-1,190,194 optical, 128,129,135 see, 18,24,26,34,68,114,119,127-8,134,136,139,140-1,144,156-7,164 see Bergson & disorder, 80,114 stare, 87,139 view, 24,26,151,154-5,158 visible, 128,130,136,139 visual, 18,44,102 watch, 20,54,125,139,140

Roget, Peter Mark (18 Jan. 1779-12 Sep. 1869), <u>British physician, natural</u> <u>theologian</u> & <u>lexicographer</u> best known for publishing the, <u>Thesaurus</u> of English Words and Phrases (<u>Roget's Thesaurus</u> [1852]), a classified collection of related words, 140

Rot, Dieter or Dieter Rot & Diter Rot (21 Apr. 1930-5 June 1998), Swiss-German artist best known for his artist books, sculptures, & pictures made with rotting food stuffs, 132

Ruscha, Edward (16 Dec. 1937), American artist, 22

S

Schrödinger equation: The fundamental equation of physics for describing quantum mechanical behavior, 102 quantum mechanics, 103

sequence, 18,20,22,24,26,44,140,152 again & again, 144 error after error, 38 interval, 24,38,96 modulation, 92 one word after another, 116 over & over, 32,108,140 pattern, 66,70,105-6,138,140 permutation, 18 rehearsal, 73 repeat, 26,32,44,48,73,78,104,106,124,127,132,135,139,140-1,155,164 revolving seasons, 38 series, 10,48,62,84,103,136

seven, 24,162,170 title: CF,2,3,6,CB *see also* Miller, *Sub Index* date & measurement

Sevigny, Chloe Stevens (18 Nov. 1974), American fashion designer, film actress & former model, 36 see also beautiful -"ugly beautiful"

shopping, 73,85-6,90,129,139,141,143,164

shopping mall, 73,84,126,128-30,132,160

Smithson, Robert (2 Jan. 1938-20 July 1973), American artist famous for his land art, 162

sports teams various, 130

Stein, Gertrude (3 Feb. 1874-27 July 1946), American writer, 78

symbol, 40 see also Sub Index

т

Tati, Jacques (9 Oct. 1907-5 Nov. 1982), French <u>filmmaker</u>, comedic actor & director, 139

television (TV), 26,38,62,82,84,125,140,160,164,204,222 Couric, Kati. *Today* show, 122 laugh track, 124 prime time, 122 reality TV, 122-5,143 American Idol, 124 Montage, Heidi, 122 reality TV programs list of, 125 Riises, Jacob & Kwame, 12 Stallworth, Omarosa Manigault, 122,222 Trump, Donald. The Apprentice, 122,222 text, 10,16,68,70,96,144,150-2,158 intartextual. 11 see also Sub Index Chinese character theater, 92,126,128-9,153,164 Epic theater, 150 Noh drama, Kathakali, Peking Opera, 102 The Joy of Cooking (1975), 166 title contained in, CF,3,4-6,CB,SP see cooking time, 18,24,38,72-3,78,80,82,84,88,100,102-4,108,126,131-2,139-40,152,154,158-9,222 prime time see television see also time -past, present, future, Sub Index date & measurement time (future), 10,62,86,94,108,122-3,138,153,160 anticipated, 44,138 heretofore, 24 hope, 10,24 intended tomorrow, 62 time (past), 10,64,108,138 dead, 26,139 expire, 40 gone, 24 happened, 48,127 historical, 40 once, 10,44,48,135 see also memory

time (present), 10,86,87,103,138,139 become, 44 being, 125 consciousness, 73 constantly, 50 die, 32 live (TV), 124,126 living, 26 moment, 22,24,36,80,100,102,121,138 non-forms, 16 place, 18 real time, 18 today, 24,62,92,131,133,138,140,143,160,164

Tolstoy, Leo, or Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (9 Sep. 1828-20 Nov. 1910), Russian novelist, essayist, dramatist, & <u>educational reformer</u>, 143

Trier, Lars von (30 Apr. 1956) Danish film director & screenwriter, 144

truth, 10,64,85,114,130,139,155,159 fact, 48,72,96,142 freedom, 129 good, 128,157 non fiction, 92 real, 24,44,92,123-5,129,156-7 right, 157

۷

Van Halen (1972), American heavy metal/hard rock band, 100

Verne, Jules Gabriel (8 Feb. 1828-24 Mar. 1905), French author who helped pioneer the science-fiction genre, 104

Vertov, Dziga (2 Jan. 1896-12 Feb. 1954), <u>Soviet documentary film</u>, <u>newsreel</u> director & cinema theorist, 139

view see retinal

W

wage-slave, 122,125

Wagner, Richard (22 May 1813-13 Feb. 1883), German dramatic composer, 62

wall, 26,32,105,124,128,131,134

wallpaper, 16,20,140,144,168

WalMart, 2,126-9,214

Walter, Pater Horatio (4 Aug. 1839-30 July 1894), <u>English essayist</u>, art and literature <u>critic</u>, & writer of fiction, 116

Warhol, Andy (6 Aug. 1928-22 Feb. 1987), American artist -Pop art, 32,84,123,141,142,165

Weyl, Hermann Klaus Hugo (9 Nov. 1885-8 Dec. 1955), <u>German mathematician</u>, 68

WD-50, 88,165-6

wife, CF,70,112,125,148 see also Tan Lin family of

Wittgenstein, Ludwig Josef Johann (26 Apr. 1889-29 Apr. 1951), <u>Austrian-British</u> <u>philosopher</u> who worked primarily in the areas of <u>logic</u>, <u>philosophy of</u> <u>mathematics</u>, mind & language, 162

word, 24,32,38,40,62,68-9,82,88

writing, 9-10,24,48,62,68,103,106,111-13,132,152-5,157-8,164,168,171,220 see also text

Ζ

Zephaniah: The ninth of the twelve Minor Prophets of the Canon of the Old Testament who preached & wrote in the second half of the seventh century BC, 157 **7CV Sub-Index** by Ashley Leavitt

Key: • Bp [] [X] CB CF	arrow bar code symbol								p#/S	question mark quotation mark double quotation mark single									
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СВ		Х			Х								2004/09
SP													2004

Seven Controlled Vocabularies First Line Index to the Wesleyan Poetry Series Edition, 2010 by Danny Snelson

, [desire is about waiting for nothing].	108
'NIAGARA FALLS IS JUST A KIND OF	32
"Architecture as Shelter with Decoration on It"	74, 76
"I strung parts with piano" wire	175
"NIAGRA FALLS IS JUST A KIND OF	30
"Russian sailor" with the caption	56
" Seeing & Writing is absolutely brilliant, a	89
"The present situation in quantum mechanics" in	103
(11/7/03)	62
(drawing a)	44
(nostalgia)	44
(shopping carts, re-stocking of shelves, bar-code scanners	129
(ym) in the background	52
[Family Vacation, Infancy, Little League, Childhood, Preparatory	127
[FLOURESCENT OPEN WEATHER	133
[program exit]	119
[Schrodinger, E.]	102
[Today] [?] Something is [wrong] with this	140
[Today] a work of architecture [or film]	131
[Today] architecture, film, poetry etc. should aspire	164
[Today]: This is a preface about time	139
[Yesterday] I was reading a book called	140
a diagram of a golf course	44
A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO SOME SCENES	95
A recipe by a celebrity cook or	106
ACTION BRAND CLOTHING DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS	97
Airports are the slowest of typologies or	131
Alice B. Toklas's cookbook, The Alice B.	113
All reading shall be fully warrantied or	103
all she wants is love	65
AMERICA'S FAVORITE COOKBOOK	90
and not much later (11:51), out pops	54
and some of them when they got	187
andor misunderstand the lyrics of popular songs	94
Any Warhol understood this and he repeated	32
AREA 51	78

As the mathematician Hermann Weyl noted	68
As with their precursor the shopping mall,	128
AWE BUILDNIGS = READING MACHINES	62
Because certain books function as labels rather	78
Because each of these flowers, in April	48
Because the retina is [weak], the [universe]	139
Being on reality TV is the newest	122
Bewes, 105	129
BILLIE JOE ARMSTRONG / CARRIE BROWNSTEIN / KRISTIN CHAMBERS /	105
By the same author	80
Caterpillar 8/9	113
Corona Corona Light	173
Courtesy limo was an artichoke vinaigrette salad	206
Culture tends to repeat itself ad nauseum	164
DIRECTIONS FOR USE: !	72
E	44
each other occasionally during intercourse	204
Each sequence or sentence, i.e., word set	24
Every era attempts to return to its	90
Every era manufactures the most beautiful and	129
Everything is a form of longing if	100
exit]	218
Far from any idea of 'exhaustiveness' or	150
FISH BONES OR OTHER ACCIDENTAL	101
fk 3	202
FLIRT (#3522 RED)	46
For many months, when I lived at	110
For this reason, any anecdote will tend	78
For this reason, poetry (like a beautiful	26
For this reason, the most powerful texts	70
Foreword to Rational Meaning: A New Foundation	165
Fowls are variable [] commercial structures such	133
from a book is the best way	78
Front / Back	106
Fruits that lose their smell when burned	211
FUSE	78
had not fallen in love ; None	180
hair	56
HAIR CUT	184
HAWAII OLFACTORY	216
Here is your Moist Towelette.	75

I like to stare at things that	87
I was at the Macy's on 34 th	72
I was dining at Per Se, Thomas	132
I was reading a story about the	36
I was reading Plato all summer they	207
I wrote this book while I was	9
In any given landscape, B, like this	48
In such a bureaucracy of form, there	78
In such a world of identity branding	125
In the future shopping will signify increasingly	86
In the future, the most beautiful golf	160
In the mind of Judd or a	137
In this way, all emotions like commodities	132
In Warhol's 3-minute screen tests, everyday people	141
Indexes of significant moments:	144
Information About Your Account	67
INSERT PAGE 2A	32
insert photos	85
Instead of a photograph, A, that merely	48
It is a well-known (fact) that textual	96
It is best to write about nothing	113
It is important never to design a	68
It was 1969.	196
It was summer	197
It would be nice if the book	80
It would be preferable for a movie,	144
January 17 tab eclipse	54
Jever Jever Jever	86
JOHN PAULETTE'S	183
L: Cinema should aspire to the most	212
Later that year or early in the	114
Laura Riding, Anarchism Is Not Enough	15
LAWRENCE WEINER	109
LECTURE (Panel 77/60)	46
Like a Diary of Someone I Know	106
Like a sudden spike in internet traffic	160
Like an index of meaningful moments (constraints	108
Like architectural experiences and most of our	135
Like form itself, color "begins" where it	136
Like most perishable products, reality TV "jobs"	122
Like our various selves, literature should function	66

looking kissing voting	194
Meets minimum Federal Government requirements for Recycled	116
Mies was wrong.	85
Miyuke kissed me (autism)	52
Mold multiplies on existing structures where abortive	84
Most Bar Code Buildings recirculate on the	130
mot pour mot yvon lambert paris word	80
Much of the work involved considerably less	10
My collaborative aim in the production of	10
my ex-girlfriend likes to listen to Wagner	62
My girlfriend thinks the world is constantly	50
My name is Dorothy.	34
NAIL SPA	177
New York, 2004	10
No data is free.	137
Nothing that is negative is simple.	26
Of course, in some novelistic vein, sequencing	22
Of course, only people who can afford	122
On rare occasions when I did not	112
On the front page of today's <i>New</i>	48
once did.	128
One evening after drinking, Tom confessed to	104
OPEN	191
or fucking him twice	185
OVERLOADED GRID	28
paintings like words can be read as	40
PLATE 1 Lumens.	44
Please refill and use this card until	70
Poems to be looked at vs. poems	20
Poetry Reading	210
Poetry, film, novel, architecture and landscape are	143
polio implants Wal-Mart	214
Power loves a vacuum because it is	129
Prada	118
R: A book should reflect the symbols	213
Reading should not be about something it	105
Restaurants of the future will be about	94
S M M	28
SLOW ITERATIVE/FUZZY FLAT	163
SMASHBOX TROP-EX FILTER 14 ETERNITY VINEFIT LIP	145
Some of them	209

Someone (I think) said the time for	24
Someone I love told me an anecdote	78
superflat ghost-like Jesus	54
Supply-chain monitoring and spikes in consumption within	127
surface.	44
SWISS INSTITUTE – CONTEMPORARY ART	77
SYNONYM	172
Tan Lin has published three books of	220
That I was in love with my	176
That is why books we read today	143
that summer	198
The activity of lovemaking, like film or	160
The author would also like to thank	166
The author would like to thank	161
The best books are the ones that	116
The best way to read a book	108
The brain is the great averager.	162
the building on top didn't collapse	199
The caption read 25 silhouettes.	58
The cover of issue 3 showed a	56
The first book Tom remembers having read,	104
The first run of reality TV programming	125
The forms of our quietude are various	62
The history of architecture, dining out, cosmetics	124
The history of reality TV boils down	124
The ideal novel would not be necessarily	82
The illustrations on the following pages appear	9
The most precious commodity in modern life	38
The oldest forms of seasonal Mold are	84
The page should turn before you got	40
The perfect poem or film would be	164
The photograph on p. 182 is by	9
The president of the Federation	91
The processes of information "aggregation, filtering, and	124
The promised life span or duration of	123
THE PUBLISHER'S IMPRINT AS IT APPEARS	115
The realm of eros is always a	106
The Ultimate lifestyle exercise for a home	38
There are no machines of freedom, by	149
there is minimal enclosure and negligent direction	78
There is nothing that can come between	10

This Foreword stands apart from the prefaces	154
this idea: contestants engage in the "work"	222
This is a preface about the infrastructure	138
Thus the most generic landscape is the	160
time of day, nationality, v.	82
to a kind of annulment or anomaly?	111
to take C++	200
Today most diseases are being transformed into	92
Uniforms.	89
Unlike a building, a bar code is	126
Unlike department stores and shopping malls, and	126
VARIABLE PIECE 4	79
verizon wireless	186
Verlga der Buchandung Walther König, Köln	117
Warhol understood that a film [every film	141
Warhol understood that waiting for a loved	142
Warhol's head shots are quasi-legal documents that	142
WD-50 is probably the only restaurant in	88
We believe expenditure takes place without meaningful	73
wearyellow.com	174
WEDGE SPL SINGLE	217
WET PAINT	107
What [] you are seeing is executed	18
What are emotions we are about to	138
What are the forms of American Written	62
What are the forms of non-painting and	26
What are the forms of non-reading and	16
What are the less than decisive frontiers	135
What is that thing known as indifference?	140
What is the "movement of an anecdote"	72
What is the difference between something hallucinated	136
What is the difference when a face	144
What is the opposite of truth?	64
What is the promise of work?	123
What is the relation between a fruit	88
What is the thing known as difference?	139, 140
What would it be like to look	32
When asked why they work for nothing	123
When I look at a landscape in	48
Whenever Gerhard Richter goes to Silo, he	79
which resembles	178

> c	40
© 1996	79
#pilsner is my favourite kind of #beer	128
+ =	38

Contract

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This Agreement specifies your responsibilities as authors and ours as publisher.

This Agreement is made as of the 14th day of January, 2009, between Tan Lin (the "Author"), and Wesleyan University Press (the "Publisher"), with reference to a work of poetry provisionally entitled 7 Controlled Vocabularies and Obituary. The Joy of Cooking. (the "Work").

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(b) Audio and visual adaptations of the Work or portions of the Work, by whatever means made or transmitted, including but not limited to microfilm; microfiche; information storage and retrieval systems; filmstrip; cassette, disk, tape, and wire recording; photocopying; transparencies; course packs; publication of condensations, abridgements, selections, and in anthologies; and public reading rights: Author's share, 10%, Publisher's share, 90%.

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Regardless of the place of its physical execution or performance, this Agreement shall be governed by and construed under the laws of the State of Connecticut, which shall be the forum for any lawsuits arising from or incident to this Agreement.

14. Notification

All notices which may be proper or necessary for fulfillment of this Agreement shall be served in writing either by personal delivery, nationally recognized overnight mail or by certified mail addressed to the lastknown post office address of either the Author or the Publisher.

15. Conflict of Interest

The Author has read and understands the Wesleyan University Conflict of Interest policy which can be found at <u>http://www.wesleyan.edu/generalcounsel/policies/conflict_interest.html</u>. The Author acknowledges and understands that neither the Publisher nor Wesleyan University offer any preference or differential treatment to authors or potential authors due to their work at the University and/or their publication or potential publication with the Publisher.

16. Complete Agreement and Modification

This Agreement constitutes the complete understanding of the parties and supersedes all prior oral or written agreements or understandings. No modification or waiver of any provision of this Agreement shall be valid unless in writing and signed by all parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Agreement has been duly executed as of the date first mentioned above.

l Director, Wesleyan University Press Author NY, NY 1001F Author's Home Address:

Author's Social Security Number:

Author's Citizenship: UCA

Author's Birth Date: 4/24 (57 (This information is needed for copyright purposes and royalty records.)

Initials: Author: Weslevan

Readers' Reports

From: "Tamminen, Suzanna" <<u>stamminen@wesleyan.edu</u>> Date: August 15, 2008 2:44:50 PM EDT To: Tan Lin <<u>tanalin@verizon.net</u>> Subject: Re: Readers

Dear Tan, No problem. I got one report (positive) and should have the second next week. Usually I hold them until I have both, but I'll copy the first report below.

Yours, Suzanna

7 Controlled Vocabularies is a book about book. I think that is as clearly as I can say it. A huge amount of it is appropriated (can I say "freed"?). I'm not sure if all of it appropriated or just some of it.

So to do a quick run down of the questions you ask...

What are its aims, subjects, techniques?

The manuscript is not paginated. But about 2/3 of the way through there is this: "My collaborative aim in the production of this work has been to offer a series of intertextual corrections in a typescript produced and renovated over several decades by more than one author."

There is a chance that those words were originally put together by Lin. By which I mean, I can't get a hit on them when I enter them into Google. But I think it describes the "aims, subjects, techniques" of the book. If I had to make a grand argument, or if I was writing a seminar paper for an undergraduate seminar, maybe a seminar called "Conceptual Writing," I might begin... 7 *Controlled Vocabularies* is a book about a book. It is a meta-study of the book. It is somewhat fascinating.

How is it organized?

As a book. As an academic book mainly. It has the titles and acknowledgements and plates and various editorial notes, etc. of scholarly books.

How does it work (or not)?

Can I just say that it works? Or does this work as an answer: It is Frankensteinian, in the Hollywood use of that term. It is a monster made out of the detritus of contemporary scholarship and brought to life and thus goes around lurching and limping and forcing those who encounter it to ponder a series of ethical questions about what it means to be such a thing.

What are its strengths and weaknesses?

It is a fascinating read. I read it first without asking many questions. Or I let my confusion sit there. I enjoyed it. I kept thinking what is up with gender in this thing? (One of those ethical questions that this book keeps asking—why so many wives thanked?) I went back and tried to figure out some of its source materials. I started to love it. As to weaknesses, not sure there are any. It is what it is.

2. How does the manuscript compare with similar books of poetry already in print? How does this manuscript compare with similar books of poetry on the Wesleyan list? There is a huge amount of thinking in poetry about appropriation recently. And I think this book will significantly contribute to that discussion. It compares with the work that gets called "Conceptual" by writers like Kenneth Goldsmith and Craig Dworkin and also with work that gets called "Flarf" by writers like Katie Degentesh and K. Silem Mohammad. If it was out now I would for sure be teaching it in my seminar next semester. Next to Nourbese Philip's *Zong!* Although it really isn't anything like *Zong!*

This manuscript does not compare that much with similar books on the Wesleyan list. I think it would be a good addition to their emphasis though on contemporary and experimental writing. It would add more than supplement, in other words.

3. If you have read the author's previous work will you compare this manuscript with it?

I have read much by Tan Lin. I try to read all I can find by him. I like his work. It tends to be very ambient. Or that is how I have thought of it. He thinks hard about "boring" (in the Sianne Ngai sense). But more recent work by him has been doing something with appropriation and autobiography. I don't yet have a theory or an easy term for it. It is unsettling and interesting work. I think it takes some of the concerns with appropriation that define conceptual and flarf to another level.

4. Do you have any suggestions for revision?

No.

5. What action do you recommend to the press?

Publish. Manuscript unusually important.

From: "Tamminen, Suzanna" <<u>stamminen@wesleyan.edu</u>> Date: September 3, 2008 1:46:44 PM EDT To: Tan Lin <<u>tanalin@verizon.net</u>> Subject: Re:

Hi Tan, Here it is (R2), and the questionnaire is at the bottom. Thanks—I look forward to working with you.

Yours, Suzanna

Report 2

I've been following Tan Lin's work for several years now, and have even been awaiting the publication of this book, which seems to be comprised of many of his quasi-poetic, quasi-essay writings over the years.

I don't think there is anyone doing work quite like Lin's. He's hit upon a basic idea, which is "ambient stylistics," that turns against much of the heavy-handed various postmodernisms while fitting in quite nicely with the idea that there has been a collapse between the poem and theory statement. That is, none of this writing in 7 Controlled Vocabularies is not in some ways a statement "about" art

or literature, but they all seem to reflect on his lived experience in a direct way. He seems simply to be describing his sensibility, and his sensibility is interesting and informed (perhaps a bit self-consciously provocative, if one can be so in life).

Why this seems so new to me is that it has a certain mildness, and accessibility, that is lacking in much modernist and postmodern poetry. It's similar to the turn Brian Eno took (following John Cage) to create works of art that somehow contributed to the environment of "modern life," with all of its whirring machines, trivial conveniences, broken toys, etc. Of course, he takes his word "ambient" from Eno, so this isn't surprising. So much poetry seems to be about how we have separated ourselves from some sort of organic wholeness -- even a lot of Language poetry seems to suggest that the world is broken to the degree that it has departed from "nature," though Language poets would mostly be loathe to say this. Lin seems to be quite accepting of many things in contemporary life -- from computers to TV celebrity to his always surprising celebration of "forgetting" which external memory (in the form of cell phones and whatnot) has enforced.

Any page of this book is full of such mild subversions. He valorizes "error" for example, and asks what it is like to "look at" rather than "read" a poem. He confidently talks about high end consumer products as if we were all quite drenched in them (I find some of these sections a little annoying since I hardly pay attention to brands and my most expensive household item is my bed). For Lin, Chloe Sevigny and Douglas Huebler are on the same plane of social and artistic significance. He finds meaning in a variety of places that artists either don't look, or feel quite self-conscious looking -- his anecdotes about cooking, for instance, fall right in with his conceptual scheme.

I think the book is constructed like a somewhat overblown gallery exhibition, in which the order is not immediately discernible but one is invited to wander. It's difficult for me to conceive of the book in these unbound pages because of this -- this book needs binding, so that their strange little corners are somehow secured in place. It is like a piece of Bauhaus architecture that has been brought down to earth by being filled with trivial detritus and the work of Jeff Koons. Lin's previous book, BlipSoakon, was itself a unique object that utilized the central margins in a way that I have never seen before -- i.e. the plethora of text strings (or "lines") that moved from the right page to the left, with no obvious "logic" behind them, was enlivening and, in that typical Lin way, suggestive and provocative. I don't doubt this book will have similar features.

I'd like to compare this book to similar books in print, but I don't think there are many, unless they are artist books that mostly circulate in artist book shops like Printed Matter (most of which are quite inaccessible, both as reading and even as objects). Poets like Charles Bernstein have published poems that seem like essays and vice versa, and numberless poets are doing work that seems "documentary" in nature, but the language that Lin has developed -- such simple sentences, such modest provocations -- is pretty unique to him. John Cage's various books might be similar, but I also think of the simple, yet subversive, essays that appeared in the back of Brian Eno's A Year of Swollen Appendices as another model, at least in tone. 7 Controlled Vocabularies builds on Lin's previous two books (the first of which was in a sort of late Language-poetry mode) by being less "avant garde" and yet less able to be ignored. It is like a bit of a rule book for how to read Lin's work, but it is hardly an advertisement for his own earlier poetry as the ideas are hardly solipsistic.

I can't think of any revisions that I would make. There is a looseness to some of the writing, but I think the sprawl aspect of the manuscript is key to Lin's ideas. I would certainly recommend publishing this book. Lin's readership is quite wide,

and he doesn't publish in book form very often, so I am sure there are plenty of readers out there who have been waiting for this book. It might even become quite "popular" to the degree that I already know many younger writers who feel that Lin's work is generative for their own creativity.

Afterword by Charles Bernstein

Thirteen Controllable Vocabularies in Historical Vacuum Adores a Poem

١.

Tan Lin's poetry is just way too cool. Lin's poems are as chic as they are sharp and ingenious. They slap you in the face like a blue cheese in a sheep market. Lin returns us to the most traditional ideals for reading. Words, so transitory today, are fundamental elements that constitute Orphic engagements, singular among the many technologies make up the shape of our rich semiotic landscape. You get the sense that Lin's words are meant to last forever. And they leave you feeling fresh and ready for a new day. By setting up a textual ecology – archiving and rejuvenating language – Lin makes us aware of something that is beyond both the material and ephemeral nature of words. Language is solid and palpable. Plunge the depths, close read, dwell, savor, project. Today these figments of eternity have come together between the covers of this book; tomorrow they'll be canonical. Also available in a wide selection of designer colors. This new book is a dazzling display of aesthetic élan and as charming as Magritte's pipe or Valezquez's Pope. In *Thirty-Three Uncontrolled Vocabularies in a Historical Vacuum Adores a Poem*, Lin makes language pop, sizzle, melt, careen, dodge, sparkle, and reform[ulate].

11.

HEATH (PLAGIARISM/OUTSOURCE), NOTES TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF CULTURE, UNTILTED HEATH LEDGER PROJECT, A HISTORY OF THE SEARCH ENGINE, DISCO OS (Tenerife: Zasterle, 2006)

nominated for 15 Purple Globe awards

Best 2009 book © 2006 Best original pageplay Best type designography Best performance by a supporting actor (Heath Ledger) Best typomancy Best pageplay adapted from another source Best concept Best concept Best book party Best book party Best book — Situation comedy Best book — drama series Best book — VVV Best book — color/image Best derivative effects

Special Jury Selection:

Islas Canarias Badge ("The Canary")
Quadrupple Con ("The Drupple") for Foreignness in a Domestic Production

The award ceremony was held on April 1, 2010, in the Make Believe Ballroom at nospace.no. *Heath* received the award for "Best Derivative Effects" and "Best 2009 book ©2006," widely considered among the bloggeoisie as the "it" award of the night. Lin accepted these two awards plus the "Canary" and "Drupple." The other awards went in a sweep to *Dancing with the Tsars* with the exception of "Best Book – drama series," which went to Larry David for *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. The notorious and widely shunned Lifetime Survival – "I'm famous and you're not" – Award went to Oyce Arol Oats.

Lin's acceptance speech was recorded from entirely found materials, with no intervention by editing, according to the best conceptual poetry practices (BCPP), and played back to the virtual mass audience on ambient Blues-Tooth micro-speakers attached to the listener's body at five of the main acupuncture points; the text-generated audio was interrupted (113 seconds for every 33 seconds of text-audio) by bird calls from the Audubon Society boxed cassette set, *Sound of the Wilde: The Warble of the Yellow Bellied Sapsucker (You Motherfucker!) and Other Aviary Songs.* The audio portion of Lin's acceptance speech –

"Tinkership today, Tanqueray tomorrow" – is not available at this time do to the sensitivity of its contents. When all personal and legal issues have been resolved, the speech will be available at HYPERLINK "http://lin-tan.com/" <u>http://lin-tan.com/</u>.

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Index

labor, of non-reading, 10,

reading, *see* grid, system, mood, paratext.

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