Homage to the Square: Ian Hamilton Finlay's *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*.

Abstract

Started by Ian Hamilton Finlay and Jessie McGuffie in 1962, the little magazine *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.* – along with the Wild Hawthorn Press which launched in 1961 – was an influential (and combative) presence within the small press milieu of the 1960s. Both magazine and press displayed a 'constructive' sensibility that encompassed geometric abstract painting, Russian constructivism, Op art, and concrete poetry. This constructive aesthetic often appeared in the context of relatively 'square 'themes – teapots and old tired horses – that in the countercultural climate of liberated mind and body, seemed quaint. 'Square' therefore denotes a tendency toward the orthogonal (as opposed the curvilinear) and a sense of propriety that is deliberately unhip. In both cases, the 'square' nature of *POTH* was a critical incitement aimed at the Dionysian excesses of contemporary poetry, art and the Mimeo Revolution that propagated them.

Keywords

Ian Hamilton Finlay; constructive art; poetry magazines; Nietzsche

> Just as a sailor sits in a boat trusting to his frail barque in a stormy sea, unbounded in every direction, rising and falling with the howling mountainous waves; so in the midst of a world of sorrows the individual man sits quietly, supported by and trusting to the *principium individuationis*, or the way in which the individual knows things as phenomena.
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> — Arthur Schopenhauer.[1]

Beginning in 1962 as a monthly poetry sheet, *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.* (hereafter *POTH*) ran to twentyfive issues until it folded in 1968. The magazine was published by the Wild Hawthorn Press which *POTH*'s editors, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Jessie McGuffie, launched in 1961. Although Finlay edited all twenty-five issues, the editorial team for the first *POTH* is credited as McGuffie and Paul Pond – a friend of McGuffie's who, as Paul Jones, achieved fame with the band Manfred Mann. For the duration of its run, the price of *POTH* remained 9d. Finlay managed this, as Simon Cutts suggests, 'by making use of inexpensive printing techniques, suited to seemingly elaborate illustrations and layout, often combining hand written poems and illustrations with offset lithography'.[2]

POTH's format may have been 'simple and delightful', as Cutts suggests, but it 'was formidable' in terms of its scope which looked 'beyond and before the compulsive modernism of the avant-garde propagated by the small press'.[3] 'Finlay himself has said that he was looking "for connections … apparently different categories"', Edwin Morgan writes, 'and he would therefore include not only representatives of what can only be called an avant-garde like Ad Reinhardt and Bridget Riley, or the Russian Constructivists of the 1920s, but also the traditional verses of Hamish MacLaren or John Gray'.[4] Such material complemented what was

POTH's mainstay: a broad spectrum of contemporary poetry that encompassed Objectivist poetry, the new American poetry, the British Poetry Revival and concrete poetry. Such a diversity of work, and the links that *POTH* made from it, would remain foundational for 'Finlay's own unformulated but formative view of the world of art'.[5]

The 'compulsive modernism', and the small presses that 'propagated' it, became problematic for Finlay who had initially embraced the small press to combat the Scottish Renaissance. Spearheaded by Hugh MacDiarmid in the 1920s, the Scottish Renaissance was a predominantly literary movement that sought to revitalize Scottish nationalism. The movement rose to dominance in the 1950s but, for Finlay, it failed to acknowledge new developments in the arts outside of Scotland.[6] *POTH* was instrumental in challenging the Renaissance's hegemony and, as Morgan suggests, helped Finlay 'keep certain lines of communication open, in particular those from country to country, but also between poet and artist, and those between past and present'.[7] However, for Finlay, these utopic possibilities would become entropic. Mired by a lack of critical discernment, the compulsions of small press publishers and magazine editors would not only contribute to the demise of the concrete poetry that Finlay gravitated toward in the early 1960s, but also the broader ideals that he believed its poetics exemplified.

Developing concurrently on several continents in the mid-1950s, concrete poetry, as Stephen Bann suggests, completed a 'cycle of linguistic experimentation which had begun in the early days of the Modern Movement'.[8] As the poet E. M. de Melo e Castro summarised in 1962, by foregrounding the non-abstract properties of words, concrete poetry had been 'slowly replacing the traditional descriptive method of communication by a visual, compact, ideogramatic way of bringing about and conveying complex and subtle relations among ideas, images, words, things.[9]'

Similarly, the Noigandres poets (Augusto and Haroldo de Campos and Décio Pignatari), in their 1958 manifesto, 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry', propose that the 'concrete poem is an object in and by itself, not an interpreter of exterior objects and/or more or less subjective feelings: its material: word (sound, visual form, semantical charge)'. [10] Thus, as a non-abstract 'object', the concrete poem 'communicates its own structure: structure-content' – not the experiences of the poet.[11]

Echoing the Noigandres poets, Finlay writes to the Scottish poet and publisher Gael Turnbull in 1963 that 'I feel that I have come – at least for the moment – to the end of poems that are *about*, and want to do poems that just are. poetry Concrete [12]' presented such an opportunity for Finlay who soon started publishing it in *POTH*. Moreover, when Finlay bemoans later manifestations of the style he does so on the grounds that concrete poetry's foundational principles – brevity, impersonality, autonomy, intelligibility – had been abandoned.

Thorny

Finlay met McGuffie in 1959 when she was reading Classics at the University of Edinburgh.[13] McGuffie possessed what Finlay considered a 'quiet grasp of ART 'and a clear 'understanding of poetry – in a curious way, because she never wanted to write it'.[14] Finlay had moved to Edinburgh following a period living in Perthshire – where he had started writing short stories and plays – and later, in Orkney, where he wrote his early poems. Finlay's first book, *The Sea-Bed and Other Stories* was published in 1958, followed by *The Dancers Inherit the Party*, a mimeographed chapbook of his poetry published by Turnbull's Migrant Press in 1960.[15] *The Dancers* was positively

received in the United States and established important contacts with several North American poets, including Robert Creeley and Lorine Niedecker.

As Finlay explains in his letter to Cid Corman (reprinted in the sixth number of Corman's magazine *Origin*), the contact he made with other poets confirmed what before he had only intuited in isolation. 'It was so much like what I had felt (when I was writing on my own up in Orkney, never knowing all this stuff existed) should be done', Finlay recalls: 'Not the same, but the same world or same relation to the world'. [16] Finlay's publishing became a sustaining nexus for these remote relationships. 'Though he does not travel at all in person', Jonathan Williams writes, 'his work influences poets everywhere at once': 'He is a real man of letters in the most exact and useful meaning of the term, and his publishing effort (The Wild Hawthorn Press) is uniquely valuable'.[17]

Wild Hawthorn Press took its name from a small tree (*Crataegus monogyna*) familiar to Scotland, the May blossom of which yields a 'pome' fruit known as 'haw'. *Crataegus* derives from the Greek words *kratos* 'strength' and *akis* 'sharp', while 'haw', an Old English word, means 'hedge' or 'fence'.[18] These etymologies are apposite for the press, which, like its namesake, maintained a prickly defense (particularly against MacDiarmid) despite its agreeable appearance. Moreover, the Wild Hawthorn Press was a means for its editors to not only fence-off and protect, but also cultivate, what they valued most dearly in poetry: 'BEAUTY TRADITION EXPERIMENT'.[19] Those values are reflected in the range of material that the press published (primarily between 1962 and 1966), including poetry collections by Lorine Niedecker, Louis Zukofksy, Robert Lax, and Gael Turnbull; Ronald Johnson's translations of Erik Satie's *Sports et Divertissements* (titled *Sports and Divertissments*); poster-poems and prints by, among others, Victor Vasarely, Pierre

Albert-Biro, and Franz Mon; and a folded broadside of Augusto de Campos's concrete poem 'cidade city cité'.

It was 'the Scottish hostility to the idea of a lyric poetry, foreign poetry & 'modern' literature 'which Finlay and McGuffie initially had to withstand.[20] Writing to Turnbull, McGuffie explains how she and Finlay want to 'counteract the terrible depressing kind of writing that always gets published here in Edinburgh these days'. 'I want the series to be non-provincial, but Scotch or American or Wherever-from art', McGuffie explains, 'looking all beautiful with lino cuts too'. [21] The 'terrible and depressing writing 'McGuffie refers to includes the poetry that Norman MacCaig included in his anthology *Honour'd Shade* (1959). Many younger Scottish poets, including Finlay, Duncan Glen recalls, regarded the anthology as 'showing a bias towards the "Rose Street" poets [named after the Edinburgh street where they gathered] that included MacCaig himself and Sydney Goodsir Smith, whose mentor was Hugh MacDiarmid'.[22] Believing that MacCaig was 'obstructing their recognition as new voices on the Scottish scene', Finlay and his allies decried the anthology and precipitated a series of 'flytings' in various publications including the *Scotsman.*[23] The situation peaked in 1962 with MacDiarmid's pamphlet *The Ugly Birds Without Wings*. Evoking the Wild Hawthorn poets, MacDiarmid questioned 'the impetus of a group of teddyboy poetasters who have [...] written little enough in justification of their own attitude'.[24] In an insert included in *POTH* 3 (1962), Finlay replies in kind, defending the merits of the poets published in *POTH*:

> We began with a feeling of warmth and open-ness. We are now going to return hate for hate, BECAUSE Hugh MacDiarmid, you called Mayakovsky

and Atilla József and Fyodor Tyutchev and Lorine Niedecker – and many more creators of beauty – 'fools'. [25]

The flytings tested the patience of those caught in the crossfire. Writing in the summer 1962 issue of the *New Saltire*, a beleaguered Giles Gordon, as editor, remarks that *POTH* 'would be much better received if the publishers let it speak for itself and did not rush around Edinburgh taking flying kicks at anyone not prepared to proclaim the merits of "POTH" in the columns of daily newspapers'.[26]

In this bellicose climate, the international scope of *POTH* became a tactical weapon in the editors' crusade against the Renaissance. The first *POTH* included Finlay's parody of MacDiarmid, 'Another Huge Poem for Hughie', alongside contributions from Finland (Anselm Hollo), the USA (Lorine Niedecker and an expatriated Gael Turnbull), England (Pete Brown), Scotland (Alan Riddell) and, by way of Morgan's English translation, Russia (Fyodor Tyutchev). *POTH* 1 set a template that subsequent issues would follow. By indicating the country of origin for each contribution (which invariably was undated) the magazine cultivated a timeless, 'non-provincial' mentality. Along with the inclusion of graphic art from *POTH* 6 onwards, these practices bolstered a nonpartisan approach to poetry that, while dissociating from any specific school, nationality or period, offered a compelling alternative to MacDiarmid's idea of an exclusively Scottish poetry.

The inclusive ethos of *POTH* is echoed in its title which derives from Robert Creeley's 'poem for everyone', 'Please': 'This is a poem about a horse that got tired. / Poor. Old. Tired. Horse'.[27] The poem – from Creeley's collection, *A Form of Women*, co-published in 1959 by two presses associated with the new American poetry, Jargon and Corinth Books – lends *POTH* an international, outward-looking attitude. 'When

will someone write about the Scotland and its literature, not as The Great Exception, but as a part of the world?' Finlay writes in the *New Saltire*: 'I don't have to quarantine myself from the rest of the world just because I am a Scots, Scottish, or Scotch writer'.[28] If lines were being drawn between the Renaissance establishment and a younger cosmopolitan generation of Scottish poets then, just by title alone, *POTH* affirmed on which side it stood.

Sorrow

POTH's title also bridges Finlay's own poetry with his earlier work. 'My great difficulty in writing stories & plays', Finlay recalls, 'was how to put words together so that the result was neither working nor middle class, but "human", like Chekov [sic]'.[29] Chekhov's 'human' quality pervades his short story 'Grief' (1886), which concludes with a cabman, Iona, confiding to his horse about his son's death.

> The little horse munches, listens, and breathes over his master's hand. . . .
>
> Iona's feelings are too much for him, and he tells the little horse the whole story.[30]

How to ease the burden of 'feeling' was a concern of Finlay's and partly explains why concrete poetry appealed to him. 'It is impossible to describe concrete poetry in a few sentences', he claims, 'but I feel it is relevant because it is concerned with intelligence & order, not the self, "thought", & fuss'.[31]

POTH's eponymous creature provided further means for dealing with strong 'human' emotion while obviating melodramatic 'fuss'. For readers familiar with Finlay's earlier work, *POTH*'s equine namesake might have recalled 'The Estate

Hunters', a play of Finlay's written in the late 1950s based on his earlier short story 'Straw '(1955). John, the play's young protagonist, witnesses a workhorse collapse in the street. It is not only the horse's fate that moves John but also the kindness its owner (a coalman) shows, putting straw under its head and stroking its nose, before it is shot. [32]

As much as the old horse in Finlay's play serves as a metaphor for John's pitiable father, it also anticipates the melancholy and nostalgia that Finlay subsequently cultivated in *POTH* and his own poetry. In both instance, Finlay displays what Robert Tait describes as 'a certain kind of openness to the unexpected values of lollipops, misguided oboes, jokes, tugs that sails and tugs that hurt'.[33] Like Schopenhauer's storm-tossed sailor (cited in the epigraph), such ingenuous subjects weather a sorrowful world while also defying the pretensions – the '"thought", & "fuss"' – of the period. Indeed, such 'simplified' subjects are not only, as Cutts proposes, 'a concession to the usual idea of poetry 'but also a provocation.[34] As Finlay tells Corman, he was conscious that his 'love of fishing, cows, oil lamps, etc.', made him appear 'reactionary' when other poets, taking a more Dionysian approach to life, appeared radical and liberal, if not liberated.[35]

Apollo and Dionysus

According to the San Francisco Renaissance poet William Everson, the new American poetry – particularly the Beats – was essentially 'Dionysian' due to its 'openness or vulnerability to sensation' and the 'certain quality of imprecision' it possessed. [36] Manifesting 'formally in heightened rhetoric and thematically in sexual and confessional subjects,' this Dionysian 'vulnerability before experience' and openness 'to the plenitude of feeling', as Michael Davidson suggests, was 'in

opposition to an Apollonian precisionism associated with high modernism'.[37] In addition to the new American poetry, the Dionysian spirit was also pervasive in the British Poetry Revival it influenced, particularly in the 'underground' poetry comprising Michael Horovitz's 1969 anthology, *Children of Albion: Poetry of the 'Underground' in Britain*. Indeed, although two of Finlay's poems from *The Dancers* were included in the anthology, they are an incongruous presence when compared to the Dionysian tone of Horovitz's essay and its claims regarding poetry's 'true voice of feeling' and its 'purpose of pain in self-knowledge'.[38]

The Dionysian spirit that imbued the new poetry on both sides of the Atlantic reaches back to Nietzsche, who popularised the term 'Dionysian' – along with the 'Apollonian' – in *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872) and *The Birth of Tragedy, Or Hellenism and Pessimism* (1886). The two gods constitute a 'duplexity 'of psychological experience that Nietzsche attributes to Attic tragedy.[39] '*Tragic myth*', Nietzsche contends, 'is to be understood only as a symbolisation of Dionysian wisdom by means of the expedients of Apollonian art'.[40] 'Where the Dionysian reached down into the chaotic forces of nature', Michael White summarises, 'which were both exhilarating and terrifying, the Apollonian rapturous vision provides the bearable, indeed beautiful form, through which this chaos would find expression'.[41]

The Dionysian observes' a God who would overcome the sorrows of existence by means only of continual changes and transformations' and for whom creative expression is 'an instinct' and 'an action of a dissatisfied being'.[42] This experience, 'the blissful ecstasy which rises from the innermost depths of man', invites 'the analogy of *drunkenness*':

> It is either under the influence of the narcotic draught, of which the hymns of all primitive men and peoples tell us, or by the powerful approach of spring penetrating all nature with joy, that those Dionysian emotions awake, in the augmentation of which the subjective vanishes to complete self-forgetfulness.[43]

Drunkenness makes it possible to achieve oneness with the 'Primordial Being itself, and feel its indomitable desire for being and joy in existence'.[44] To experience this joy one must suffer *becoming* and endure 'the struggle, the pain, the destruction of phenomena'.[45] Only then, Nietzsche writes, stressing the cathartic power of tragic drama, are we happy, 'not as individuals, but as the *one* living being, with whose procreative joy we are blended'.[46]

Whereas the Dionysian experience is instinctual, the Apollonian one – which, for Nietzsche, Schopenhauer's sailor epitomizes – is cerebral. Circumscribed by reason, the Apollonian's world is one 'of *beautiful appearance* designed as a deliverance from *becoming*'.[47] However, this 'artificially confined' world – 'built on appearance and moderation', 'boundaries and due proportions' – is easily undermined by the '*undueness*' of the Dionysian's 'transpiercing shriek'.[48] Nevertheless, without the counterbalance of the Dionysian, Apollonian artifice becomes too rational and priggish. Nietzsche's example is the 'supreme law' of '*aesthetic Socratism*' and its belief that '"to be beautiful everything must be intelligible"'.[49]

Echoing Nietzsche's ideas regarding the Dionysian, an 'aesthetic of spontaneity' dominated the postwar arts which, according to Daniel Belgrad, 'emphasized "honesty", "awareness", and "authenticity" over the mastery of traditional forms and techniques stressed by the established institutions of high

culture'.[50] For poets and artists adopting more instinctual methods of composition, Apollonian formalism was, as Nietzsche might say, too 'defiantly-prim', too rational to contain the chaotic forces of experience.[51] 'There is no logic but a sequence of feelings', Michael McClure writes, summarizing this spontaneous aesthetic: 'The emotions push me to discoveries that afterwards I recognize intellectively to be truths'.[52] Such intuitive methods of composition – of going on your nerve, as Frank O'Hara quips – became the primary means for plumbing Dionysian wisdom.[53] If McClure recalls Jackson Pollock's claim, 'When I'm painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing', this is because the new American poetry was closely 'allied' to Abstract Expressionism.[54] Indeed, Dionysian *being* and the postwar 'aesthetic of spontaneity' converge emphatically in the 'drip' or 'action' paintings that became synonymous with Pollock. According to Evelyn Toynton, 'there are few works of art that seem to illustrate Nietzsche's theory as well as the drip paintings' made by Pollock.[55] For Toynton, it is 'the sense of anarchic vitality being given form that lends the drip paintings their excitement', 'of going beyond an individual consciousness into something more universal and mysterious'.[56]

Retrogression

If, in the visual arts, Abstract Expressionism is the apogee of the Dionysian, its counterpart, the Apollonian, can be found in the 'constructive' art tradition which, as Alan Fowler summarises, 'runs through Russian Constructivism, De Stijl, the Bauhaus, Cercle et Carré and the geometric wing of Abstraction-Création'.[57] It also encompasses concrete art ('the direct ancestor of Concrete Poetry' according to Stephen Bann), Charles Biederman's 'structurism', British constructionist art, and Op art.[58] Utilising a 'vocabulary of generally geometric elements, based on some form of

underlying system', the constructive work 'is seen as standing for itself, not as an expression of the artist's personality', and is committed to 'rationality and structural principles'.[59] Such 'constructive ideas', Bann contends, represent 'a delayed reaction to romanticism' and 'its acceptance of spontaneity, "flow", and the "myth of life" to the exclusion of intellectualism and the axiom of conscious control'.[60]

That several constructive artists – Biederman, Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, Jeffrey Steele – were featured in *POTH* or published by the Wild Hawthorn Press indicates Finlay's sympathies for constructive art. Furthermore, as if to reiterate its orthogonal foundations, the constructive art included in *POTH* is frequently framed in the context of the magazine's old-fashioned sensibilities, thereby implicating the constructive as a corollary of the magazine's 'square' (i.e. old fashioned, sentimental) aesthetic.

Why *POTH* cultivated a square attitude is intimated in Finlay's perception of Paul Cézanne. After commenting to Ronald Johnson about how concrete poetry is frequently disparaged as 'regressive' ('why can't people see that there is nothing easier than putting down attitudes in words – I AM FOR LIFE – I AM A GOOD MAN – I AM WITH IT – and it has nothing to do with being those things'), Finlay writes:

> There was an artist called Paul Cezanne [sic]. He only painted pears and sometimes people, simple people. He stayed in the country and not only did he not know what was going on, he did not even CARE. He was not with it. He was an escapist. He did not paint the Franco-Prussian war. He was a funny man. He was retrogressive.[61]

Who or what Cézanne was is immaterial. His art – which laid the foundations for Cubism – speaks for itself. Moreover, when he evokes Cézanne, Finlay reiterates his own attitudes towards art *and* life, which he considered distinctly separate.

The idea that delving 'into the terrors of individual existence' begets more authentic art was anathema to Finlay, even if it made him appear 'escapist' and 'retrogressive'. For Finlay, 'the arts should be attempting to create a vision of *ordinariness* to fit man, not of the nightmare, the violent, the strange, etc. which have become the *clichés*'.[62] These clichés were not restricted to poetry but extended to the magazines and presses publishing it. 'I don't <u>like</u> many little magazines', Finlay writes in *Tarasque*, 'most of them are so ugly as to make one wonder what sort of people poets are that they can bear to produce more ugliness than there really is'.[63] Cavan McCarthy's 'grubby little mimeod *Tlaloc*' was culpable of such crudity, as was Marvin Malone's *Wormwood Review*, both in content and design.[64] 'HOW he likes, or wants to print, all that stuff I can't imagine', Finlay writes Johnson: 'Also it is such an ugly magazine, and so many mags now are'.[65] For Finlay, such magazines lacked a 'framework of common values' and showed 'no genuine concern with establishing points of real contact' with wider historical or intellectual contexts.[66] As he writes in a letter to Bann, Finlay found the new wave of concrete poets especially problematic in this regard:

> Honestly Stephen, all those ignorant young ones are getting out of hand – they are like a blight with their 'Zen 'and all that nonsense.. They seem to appear like mushrooms now, and the first thing they do is, edit an anthology – or start a magazine ... [67]

According to Ron Loewinsohn, the 'abundance & speed' with which magazines were published in the 1960s was 'a healthy condition' and 'more important than the quality of their contents'.[68] This condition also encouraged hastily produced publications by editors who didn't always understand the poetry. 'I get the feeling that too many people are too uneducated' Finlay writes; 'not in any snob way (I left school at 13 myself) ... but there are libraries; and the past and standards are important'.[69]

The concrete poetry anthology edited by Eugene Wildman, published as an issue of the *Chicago Review* in 1967, was symptomatic of such ignorance. Confusing *Chicago Review* for *Poetry*, and believing Alain Arias-Misson to be its editor (when in fact he was Wildman's adviser), Finlay writes Johnson:

> I HEAR that the concrete Poetry Chic is out, and that Decio P's famous 'LIFE' poem, is printed WRONGLY, and marked 'origin unknown'. [...] Misson, who apparently edited the number, has been rejected by POTH ten times, and really, words fail me, that such a person (ignorant illiterate untalented) should GET to do that number… Anyone who hasn't seen Decio's LIFE poem, at least fifteen times, with his name on it, should NOT have been editing concrete for Poetry Chic. It is a damn bloody shame that no-one DOES ANYTHING to stop all these stupid events.[70]

Wildman's failure to acknowledge Pignatari's foundational concrete poem 'LIFE' reveals how the movement's origins were being forgotten as the concrete bandwagon gained momentum. Moreover, that Finlay had rejected Misson's numerous submissions to *POTH* not only reiterates his own standards, but it also reflects how committed Finlay remained to an early concrete aesthetic that, as one reviewer put it,

was, by the late 1960s, considered 'embarrassingly dull in invention' compared to the new wave of experimentation.[71]

Tea-total

Despite his skepticism about Zen and being *hep*, Finlay had, in the early 1960s, briefly fashioned himself as a 'beatnik in the kailyard' of the Scottish Renaissance.[72] Finlay's flirtation with the counterculture, Alec Finlay suggests, 'was a useful way of placing his poems within a new popular movement and separating himself from the curmudgeonly Renaissance'.[73] *POTH* also touched on the Beats by publishing Lawrence Ferlinghetti (*POTH* 3) and sympathetic poets such as Anselm Hollo and Robert Creeley. Nevertheless, considering the contributions by Pete Brown, Spike Hawkins and Libby Houston, the countercultural vibe of *POTH* was more 'Liverpool scene' than it was San Francisco Renaissance.[74] Moreover, as Tait suggests, the increasing rigour and exactitude of Finlay's concrete poetry was proportionate to his 'loss of faith in [the] neo-romantic and beat mystique of the individual as the feeling-suffering unit'.[75]

Finlay may not have been one of Ginsberg's 'angelheaded hipsters' but he was a 'teahead' of the caffeinated kind.[76] Devoted to the beverage, 1967's 'teapoth' issue (*POTH* 23) proposes a teetotal alternative to Dionysus's 'narcotic draught'. Indeed, Dionysian inebriation seems a far cry from the 'Parties, Pots [and] Cozys' that Johnson catalogues in his 'T Poem'.[77]

Punning on 'brewed' and 'brood', Turnbull's contribution to 'teapoth' undercuts the 'cosy' connotations of tea with a Finlay-like tinge of disquiet:

Brewed

snug

in a cosy,

it broods[78]

Notwithstanding the pensive suggestion in ‘broods’, the poem’s ‘snug’ tone proposes a panacea for insobriety by affirming the social properties of tea. So they don’t ‘brood’, problems are commonly shared over ‘a brew’, and families (another kind of ‘brood’) might bond around a pot of tea. Moreover, with John Furnival’s design framing ‘Brewed’, his use of Typhoo Tea logos (the name of which derives from the Mandarin word for ‘doctor’) recalls Turnbull’s medical profession. A cup of tea, it seems, can indeed sort one out and put the world to right.

Finlay’s desire to allay the ‘terrors of individual existence’ was driven by the ‘nervous anxietey’ he suffered from. ‘It was, and is, unpleasant’, he claims, ‘but no more interesting, really, than toothache’.[79] This anxiety made Finlay receptive to T. S. Eliot’s claim in ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’: ‘Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality’.[80] Writing to the Austrian poet Ernst Jandl in 1965, Finlay invokes Eliot:

> You know what T. S. Eliot said about poetry being an escape from the self – and then he added: but only those who <u>have</u> a self and personal emotions know what it is to want to escape from them….

…and he might have added that all the others want to write 'uncomplacent' angry real etc. etc. (formless, messy, stupid) poems.[81]

Whereas other poets were writing out of disaffection ('uncomplacency'), Finlay proposed, albeit with a wry edge, an Apollonian measure of calm and conciliation.[82] With its homely connotations and evocations of teapots and caddies 'teapoth' is a prime example of such complacency. Moreover, if, the Apollonian experience finds its purest expression in sculpture – 'vanquish[ing] the suffering of the individual by the radiant glorification of the *eternity of the phenomenon*' in plastic form – then the teapot might be Finlay's humble equivalent. It is, however, not so much the 'well-wrought urn,' as favoured by those other Apollonians, the New Critics, which contains the ashes of a dead tradition, as it is the catering-kind that serves a refreshing and restorative brew.[83]

Right Angles

To temper the loosed emotions of his contemporaries, Finlay turned not only to tea but also the orthogonal rule of the T-square. Suggesting a Cubist landscape, Finlay's poem 'Scene' – published in *POTH* 16 (1965) – anticipates the subject of 'teapoth' via geometric abstraction. The scene recalls the idyllic fishing envisioned in 'The Estate Hunters'. A fir tree 'angles / On the hill, for green Triangles' while –

Stewing in its billy there,
The tea is strong, and brown, and Square

The rain is Slant. Soaked fishers sup

Sad Ellipses from a cup.[84]

With ‘angles ’suggesting orthogonal lines and the sport of the ‘fishers’ (anglers), the geometric qualities of Square, Triangle and Ellipse make this ‘scene’ more oblique (‘Slant’) than bleak. Indeed, the ‘Ellipses’ are sad and the ‘stewing’ tea, anguished, not the ‘fishers’.

However, being 'Square’, the tea in ‘Scene’ is also stoutly resolute.[85] Indeed, ‘Scene’ diplays a stoic quality wherein Finlay’s preferred beverage intersects his favourite shape. Finlay embraced the square for the same reason that Ronald Johnson mistrusted it – because unlike the circle, it does not occur naturally in the landscape.[86] Finlay’s regard for the perpendicular is evident in *POTH* 5 (1962). Parodying popular music magazines, *POTH* 5 came with an ‘AMAZING FREE GIFT’ – ‘an illustrated poster of ‘The Famous Tay Whale’, a poem by William Topaz McGonagall (1825-1902).[87] According to Alec Finlay, many younger Scottish writers, including Finlay, ‘used the spectre of McGonagall to tease or goad MacDiarmid’ who publicly disparaged the verse as artless doggerel.[88]

As much as *POTH*’s free gift was such a goad, McGonagall also appealed to Finlay because of his similarities with Cubism. ‘McGonagall used RHYME much as the cubist painters used the RIGHT-ANGLE’, Finlay claims, ‘as an important element of construction and as a way of separating ART from LIFE’.[89] McGonagall’s awkward rhymes and metaphors essentially foreground the crude mechanics of his doggerel, making the reader less aware of what the poem ‘means’ than how it is constructed. In ‘The Famous Tay Whale’, for example, McGonagall’s repetition of ‘so’ and ‘fail’ is conspicuous and therefore distracting: ‘So they resolved to tow it ashore without fail. // So they got a rope from each boat tied around his tail, / And

landed their burden at Stonehaven without fail'.[90] The poem jars in the way that Cubism, according to Gertrude Stein, jars with the landscape. Cubism, she proposes, 'cuts the lines of the landscape' like its architecture does: 'the work of man is not in harmony with the landscape, it opposes it and it is just that that is the basis of cubism'.[91] Like McGonagall's verse, the incongruities of a Cubist landscape detract from its subject to focus attention on the painting itself. Artifice is accentuated, not concealed.

Attempting to define concrete poetry to Pierre Garnier in 1963, Finlay proposes a similar separation of 'ART from LIFE':

> I should say – however hard I would find it to justify this in theory – that 'concrete 'by its very limitations offers a tangible image of goodness and sanity; it is very far from the now-fashionable poetry of anguish and self. . . . It is a model, of order, even if set in a space which is full of doubt.[92]

Holding against chaos and ambiguity – like Schopenhauer's 'frail barque' – the 'model' that Finlay proposes is essentially an Apollonian one. Not only does Finlay's 'model of order' recall Apollo's 'measured limitation' and 'philosophical calmness', but his rebuke of 'anguish and self 'echoes the Apollonian's mistrust of 'wilder emotions'. [93]

Finlay's 'model' recalls Kasimir Malevich's *Black Square* (c. 1915), a painting which the Russian painter conceived in similar terms as Finlay: 'The square = feeling, the white field = the void beyond this feeling'.[94] This distinction between the delimited object and the space it occupies is the crux of Malevich's 'Suprematism'. 'To the Suprematist the visual phenomena of the objective world are,

in themselves, meaningless', he claims: 'the significant thing is feeling, as such quite apart from the environment in which it is called forth'.[95]

Finlay cites Malevich to Garnier:

> I approve of Malevich's statement, 'Man distinguished himself as a thinking being and removed himself from the perfection of God's creation. Having left the non-thinking state, he strives by means of his perfected objects, to be again embodied in the perfection of absolute, nonthinking life....' That is, this seems to me, to describe, approximately, my own need to make poems . . . though I don't know what is meant by 'God'. And it also raises the question that, though the objects might 'make it', possibly, into a state of perfection, the poet and painter will not.[96]

Finlay broaches similar ideas in his poem, 'Homage to Malevich', which was also published in 1963: in *POTH* 8 (the Russian avant-garde number) and in *Rapel: 10 Fauve and Suprematist Poems* (Wild Hawthorn Press). The poem forms a *black block* made by the repetition of those two words arranged over eleven lines into a justified block of text.[97] The unbroken repetition of 'black' and 'block', two words that evoke Malevich's *Black Square*, also yields 'lack 'and 'lock'. 'The black (figure) and block (ground) balances with lock (stability) against lack (instability)', Susan Howe suggests: 'Something open versus something closed'.[98] As a verb, 'block' is also what Finlay's poem does: impeding any reading *into* the poem. Moreover, Finlay's poem *lacks* Dionysian depth and *locks* the reader's attention at the surface. What remains 'open', however, is the relationship between the poem (as object) and

the reader; how, without the poet's intercession, the reader's eyes and mind work in response to the object before them.

Blocks are also what children play (and make) with. In this respect, the word 'lock 'in 'Homage to Malevich adumbrates E. H. Gombrich's 1951 essay 'Mediations on a Hobby Horse'. According to Gombrich, not only do 'the more solemn overtones of metaphysical power disappear when we leave art for toys', but art is seen as a constructive rather than mimetic act.[99] 'The child', Gombrich suggests, '"makes" a train either of a few blocks or with pencil on paper', but does not try and mimic one.[100] The same applies for a hobbyhorse which, fashioned from a stick and fabric, stands in for a real horse: 'By its capacity to serve as a "substitute" the stick becomes a horse in its own right'.[101] 'As' substitutes', the child's constructions 'fulfill certain demands of the organism': 'They are keys which happen to fit into biological or psychological locks'.[102] 'The form of the key', Gombrich adds, 'depends on the material out of which it is fashioned, and on the lock'.[103] *Black Square* is likewise 'an image in its own right – 'and, as its 'substitute', Finlay's poem achieves an equivalent autonomy.

However, if 'substitutes', as Gombrich suggests, 'are keys which happen to fit into biological or psychological locks', then, we might ask what key is needed to unlock *Black Square*. Or, indeed, whether *Black Square* 'lack[s]' the 'lock' that Gombrich proposes. Donald Kuspit suggests that 'Suprematism cuts the Gordian knot that ties the recognizable to the habitually objective':

> Unlike Cubism, Suprematism is concerned neither with the painting's objecthood nor the vestige or phantom of reality remembered in it, but rather,

> communicates straightforwardly a primordial objective content – geometrical forms – meant to imply primordial subjectivity.[104]

There is nothing to unlock because Suprematism, Malevich proposes, 'reaches a "desert" in which nothing can be perceived but feeling': 'Everything which determined the objective-ideal structure of life and of "art" — ideas, concepts, and images — all this the artist has cast aside in order to heed pure feeling'. [105]

This emphasis on 'feeling' might presume the 'emotion' that Finlay allays. However, the geometric forms underpinning Suprematism are more Apollonian than Dionysian. Indeed, Suprematism recalls the Socratism that, for Nietzsche, destroyed Attic tragedy and Malevich's 'feeling' adumbrates 'the beauty of shape' – 'a straight line or a circle and resultant planes and solids produced on a lathe or with ruler and square' – that Socrates extols in the *Philebus*: 'these things are not, as other things are, beautiful in a relative way, but are always beautiful in themselves, and yield their own special pleasures'.[106] Such beauty negates the need to 'put down attitudes in words' and proposes instead more impersonal means of yielding 'pure feeling'.

Ajar

The confluence of Apollonian measure and the autotelic geometric 'beauty' is evident in the constructive art of the former Bauhaus student and teacher, Josef Albers. In 1950, Albers began his series *Homage to the Square* which, over a period of 25 years, amounted to hundreds of paintings that utilised the same format of nestled squares painted in limited colour combinations. Albers wanted to explore the interaction of colour and its effects on the viewer. 'What I want is to play staccato and legato', he claims by way of musical analogy, 'but not for the purpose of expressing myself'.[107]

Moreover, like Finlay, Albers drew a line between art and life: 'I think art parallels life', he claims, 'it is not a report on nature or an intimate disclosure of inner secrets'.[108]

Possibly due to the Black Mountain connection, Finlay hoped that Johnson's then-partner Jonathan Williams (a former student of the college) might facilitate an introduction with Albers. 'Heh, please – please – tell me what you know of Albers', Finlay asks Johnson:

> What books of his are available? I have one in German, which a girl read me bits of on Sunday and it is awfully good – I mean, his pictures are, and the things said about them FIT exactly what I feel about poetry now…[109]

Inspired by Albers's perceptual abstraction – 'the purely perceptual effect of lines, areas, and colors' as they 'operate autonomously' of reference – Finlay wanted to collaborate with Albers on 'a wee leaflet thing' based on one of his own 'optical poems' ('ajar'), which uses words in a similar perceptual manner.[110]

The collaboration with Albers never happened, but Finlay realised a similar project with the Welsh painter, Jeffrey Steele. A pioneer of Op art, Steele had developed a geometric abstract style of painting in response to Abstract Expressionism which, as 'a quasi-heroic confrontation with the universally felt *Angst* through the use of Dionysiac gesture and pigment on a large scale', he doubted.[111] 'I mistrusted the deliberate by-passing of the thinking part of the mind which gestural painting entail', Steele explains, and sought instead 'a more rational and austere form'.[112] Influenced by Suprematism and Albers, Steele's 'systematic approach to painting', committed to control and 'logical experimentation', resulted in

monochromatic paintings that mobilised ‘a battery of optical nuances or flickering overtones in the eye and mind of the spectator’ to explore the ‘intrinsically kinetic quality of the very act of seeing’.[113]

Finlay used several of Steele’s ‘optical designs’ in *POTH* 12 (1964). Among the poems included in the issue was Finlay’s ‘ajar’, which comprises two symmetrical columns of the word ‘ajar’ repeated sixteen times.[114] In both columns the word ‘ajar’ is just that. The eye’s inclination to read from left to right is frustrated by the text's leading which situates the letters ‘j’ and ‘r’ on slightly higher or lower lines than the two ‘a’s. Thus, the word ‘ajar’ ascends step-like from left to right. It descends in the same manner and, with the letter ‘j’ or ‘a’ forming an apex, also occurs in a series of right angle-like configurations. In this manner ‘ajar’ parallels Steele’s optical designs by bringing the reader’s ‘optical dynamics into play’ – the ‘involuntary movements in the perception mechanism’ – and accentuating the kinetic act of seeing/reading.[115]

Unlike Steele’s drawings, ‘ajar’ is not entirely free of reference. As Natalie Ferris suggests, the poem is ‘evocative of a door held ajar’.[116] Thus, ‘ajar’ might be read as a rejoinder to the popular idea of expanded consciousness and perception; such as Walt Whitman’s exhortation in ‘Song of Myself’ – cited on the title page of *Howl and Other Poems* (1956) – to ‘Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!’.[117] Likewise, ‘ajar’ tacitly parodies the psychedelic experiences that Aldous Huxley recounts in *Doors of Perception* (1954). ‘The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out’, Huxley writes:

> He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend.[118]

One cannot pass through a door that is ajar, only peer through it. If this is more suggestive of Blake's 'narrow chinks 'than his (and Huxley's) 'doors of perception', then to peep furtively through them not only satirises Huxley's experiences – which recalls the Dionysian's 'desire for being and joy in existence' – it also reiterates the restraint and prudishness of the Apollonian mindset.[119]

Finlay also undercuts any pretensions toward a visionary sublime in 'ajar' by emphasising the ordinary, not the extraordinary. Whereas mescaline opened Huxley's doors of perception, Finlay resorts to *a jar* – a quotidian object like the minnow's 'wee juar' in Finlay's *Glasgow Beasts, An a Bird* (1961), that distorts vision by refracting light.[120] If Wallace Stevens's jar arranges the 'slovenly 'world around it, then Finlay invites us to see, convexly, *through* his.[121] Moreover, as a jam jar there is not only the suggestion of door 'jambs', but also an iteration of the poem's optical dynamics that, without deranging the senses, 'jam' the eye's ability to resolve the poem's askew typography.

Grief

The askew letters in 'ajar' are different to the 'squint' typography that Finlay invariably bemoaned in various typesetters and publishers. 'Actually', Finlay writes Johnson, 'since I took up concrete poetry, "squint" is the word I use most of all, even MORE than PURE or FISH'.[122] Indeed, 'squint' was not only synonymous with the

careless aesthetics he denounced in *Tarasque*, but it also reflected the 'wilder stylistic tendencies' of the post-concrete poetry which bypassed constructive art in favour of 'dadaist and futurist ideas of expressive ambiguity, freedom, and excess'.[123] 'I have never seen type going in so many New and Squint Directions in all my Offset life', he remarks of Jean-François Bory's 'concrete' anthology *Once Again* (New Directions, 1968). [124]

The 'squint' state of things broke Finlay's heart. In November 1967 he was hospitalised after developing a blood clot near his heart. Convalescing in January 1968, Finlay informs Bann that he is 'giving up *POTH* and the Wild Hawthorn'.[125] While he continued the Wild Hawthorn Press (mainly as a platform for his own work) Finlay did retire *POTH*. Devoted to one-word poems, *POTH* 25 was the last number. Comprising one word and a title of any length, the one-word form aptly consolidated Finlay's constructive poetics. According to Finlay 'one should see the title and the word as being 2 straight lines, which come together forming a corner', but 'so constructed as to be open (opening) in all directions'.[126] Thus 90 degrees remained the *right* angle for *POTH* until the end.

Likewise, Apollo remained the *just* God. A legal dispute with Stuart Montgomery's Fulcrum Press in 1969 was perhaps Finlay's most vociferous critique of the small press milieu that had not only propagated the best of the new American poetry, the British poetry revival and concrete poetry, but also diluted it. The lawsuit that Finlay filed against Montgomery (and won) concerned the publication of a new edition of *The Dancers* that was erroneously promoted by Fulcrum as a first edition.[127] Thus the same poetry collection that had introduced Finlay into the small press milieu in 1961 would be the one that precipitated his withdrawal from it. The Fulcrum case also set the trenchant tone of Finlay's subsequent work which would

increasingly invoke the militant side – the 'ordnance' as well as the 'ordinance' – of Apollo: 'his music, his muses, his missiles'.[128] Finlay's 'music' became more martial, his 'muse' neo-classical and his 'missiles' more incendiary. Nevertheless, Finlay would continue to bear the burden of an Ideal – Beautiful and Pure – that, perhaps tragically, even the staunchest Apollonian mind could not meet.

Notes

[1] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World As Will And Idea*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Kegan Paul, 1909), p. 455.

[2] Simon Cutts, *Some Forms of Availability: Critical Passages on the Book and Publication.* New York: Granary Books, 2007), p. 77.

[3] Cutts, p. 78.

[4] Edwin Morgan, '*Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*.', in Alec Finlay, ed. *Wood Notes Wild: Essays on the Poetry and Art of Ian Hamilton Finlay* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1995), pp. 26-27, pp. 26-27.

[5] Morgan, pp. 26-27.

[6] For a detailed account of Finlay's relationship with the Scottish Renaissance and how he combated its parochialism, see Ross Hair, *Avant-Folk: Small Press Poetry Networks from 1950 to the Present* (Liverpool Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 70-74.

[7] Morgan, p. 26.

[8] Stephen Bann, 'Ian Hamilton Finlay: An Imaginary Portrait', in Alec Finlay, ed. *Wood Notes Wild: Essays on the Poetry and Art of Ian Hamilton Finlay* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1995), pp. 55-79, p. 59

[9] E. M. de Melo e Castro, 'Poetry Prose and the Machine', *TLS*, 3143 (25 May 1962), p. 373, p. 373.

[10] Augusto de Campos, Haroldo de Campos, and Decio Pignatari, 'Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry', in *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, ed. Mary Ellen Solt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), pp. 71–72, p. 72.

[11] De Campos, et al., p. 72.

[12] Ian Hamilton Finlay, *A Model of Order: Selected Letters on Poetry and Making*, ed. Thomas A. Clark (Glasgow: WAX366, 2009), p. 16.

[13] McGuffie's involvement with the Wild Hawthorn Press ceased in December 1963 when she moved to New York. Shortly after, Finlay met his future wife Sue MacDonald-Lockhart who succeeded McGuffie as co-editor.

[14] Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, February 3 [1964], Box: 24, Folder: 12. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[15] In 1959 Turnbull started the *Migrant* magazine (followed by the Migrant Press in 1960), while living in Ventura, California. Situated in Worcester, Turnbull's friend Michael Shayer was Migrant's UK editor.

[16] Ian Hamilton Finlay, letter to Cid Corman, *Origin*, 6 (1962), pp. 1-2, p. 2.

[17] Jonathan Williams, *The Magpie's Bagpipe: Selected Essays*, ed. Thomas Meyer (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982), p. 12.

[18] Bill Vaughan, *Hawthorn: The Tree that Has Nourished, Healed, and Inspired Through the Ages* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 5-6.

[19] Ian Hamilton Finlay, untitled insert, *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.*, 3 (1962), np.

[20] Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Selections*, ed. Alec Finlay (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), p. xx.

[21] Quoted in Gael Turnbull, *More Words: Gael Turnbull on Poets and Poetry*, eds. Jill Turnbull and Hamish Whyte (Bristol: Shearsman, 2012), p. 35.

[22] Duncan Glen, 'Some Thoughts and Reminiscences', *Chapman*, 78-79 (1994), p. 27.

[23] Glen, p. 27.

[24] Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. Alan Bold (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984), p. 813.

[25] Finlay, untitled insert, np.

[26] Giles Gordon, *New Saltire*, 4 (Summer 1962), np.

[27] Robert Creeley, *Collected Poems, 1945-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), p. 156.

[28] Ian Hamilton Finlay, review of *The Scots Literary Tradition* by John Speirs, *New Saltire*, 4 (Summer 1962), pp, 79-81, pp. 79, 80.

[29] Finlay, *Selections*, p. xx.

[30] Anton Chekhov, *The Short Stories*, ed. Robert N. Linscott (New York: The Modern Library, 1959), pp. 108-109.

[31] Finlay, *Selections*, p.xx.

[32] Ian Hamilton Finlay, *The Dancers Inherit the Party and Glasgow Beasts*: *Early Poems and Stories*, ed. Ken Cockburn (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2004), p. 126.

[33] Robert Tait, 'The Concreteness of a Wild Hawthorn', *Extra Verse*, 15 (Spring, 1965), pp. 1-13, p. 1.

[34] Cutts, p. 78.

[35] Finlay, letter to Corman, p. 2.

[36] Quoted in Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetics and Community at Mid-Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 49.

[37] Davidson, p. 49.

[38] Michael Horovitz, 'Afterwords', in *Children of Albion: Poetry of the Underground in Britain*, ed. Michael Horowitz (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 316-377, pp. 317, 349.

[39] Friederich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, trans. Wm. A. Haussmann (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1923), p. 21.

[40] Nietzsche, p. 169.

[41] Michael White, 'Nietzsche and the Artist', in *A Companion to Art Theory*, eds. Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde (Oxford: Wiley, 2002), pp. 183-195, p. 185.

[42] Nietzsche, p. xix.

[43] Nietzsche, pp. 25-26.

[44] Nietzsche, p. 128.

[45] Nietzsche, p. 128.

[46] Nietzsche, p. 129.

[47] Nietzsche, pp. xviii-xix.

[48] Nietzsche, p. 41.

[49] Nietzsche, p. 98.

[50] Daniel Belgrad, *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 15.

[51] Nietzsche, p. 42.

[52] Michael McClure, 'From a Journal', in *The New American Poetry, 1945-1960*, ed. Donald Allen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 421-424, p. 423.

[53] Frank O'Hara, *The Collected Poems*, ed. Donald Allen (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), p. 498.

[54] Quoted in Frank O'Hara, *Art Chronicles: 1954-1966* (New York: George Braziller, 1975), p. 39; Donald Allen, 'Preface', in *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960*, ed. Donald Allen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. xi-xiv, p. xii.

[55] Evelyn Toynton, *Jackson Pollock* (New Haven and London; Yale University Press, 2012), p. 53.

[56] Toynton, pp. 52, 53.

[57] Alan Fowler, *Towards a Rational Aesthetic: Constructive Art in Post-war Britain* (London: Osborne Samuel, 2007), p. 6.

[58] Stephen Bann, 'A Context for Concrete Poetry', in *Studies in the Arts: Proceedings of St. Peter's College Literary Society*, ed. Francis Warner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), pp. 131-149, p. 132.

[59] Fowler, p. 6.

[60] Stephen Bann, 'Introduction: Constructivism and Constructive Art in the Twentieth Century', in *The Tradition of Constructivism*, ed. Stephen Bann (New York: The Viking Press, 1974), pp. xxv – xlix, p. xxviii.

[61] Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, August 2 [1964], Box: 24, Folder: 77. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[62] Finlay, *A Model*, p. 38.

[63] Anonymous, *Tarasque*, 9 (1970), np. The tone and biographical detail of these comments, cited as part *Tarasque*'s editorial, suggest Finlay is the author.

[64] Stephen Bann, *Midway: Letters from Ian Hamilton Finlay to Stephen Bann 1964-69* (London: Wilmington Square Books, 2014), p. 110.

[65] Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, October 10, [1964], Box: 24, Folder: 6. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[66] Anonymous, np.

[67] Bann, *Midway*, p. 99.

[68] Ron Loewinsohn, 'After the (Mimeograph) Revolution', *TriQuarterly* (Spring, 1970), pp. 221-236, p. 222.

[69] Anonymous, np.

[70] Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, September 21st [1967], Box: 24, Folder: 26. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[71] Piero Sanavio, review of *Concrete Poetry. An International Anthology*, by ed. Stephen Bann, and *Height Texts + One*, by Jean-François Bory, *Leonardo*, 1.2 (April 1968), pp. 203-204, p. 203.

[72] 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard' is the title of Edwin Morgan's essay in *New Saltire Review*, 3 (1962), pp. 65-74.

[73] Alec Finlay, 'The Dewy Glen', in Ian Hamilton Finlay, *The Dancers Inherit the Party and Glasgow Beasts*, ed. Alec Finlay (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), p. 100.

[74] Edward Lucie-Smith, ed., *The Liverpool Scene* (London: Donald Carroll, 1967). All three poets were included in the Liverpool poet Pete Roche's anthology, *Love, Love, Love: The New Love Poetry* (London: Corgi Books, 1967).

[75] Tait, p. 8.

[76] Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1956), pp. 9, 10.

[77] Ronald Johnson, 'T Poem', *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*., (teapoth), 23 (1967), np.

[78] Gael Turnbull, 'Brewed', *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.*, 23 (1967), np.

[79] Finlay, *Selections*, p. xx.

[80] T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1921), p. 53.

[81] Jandl and Finlay, p. 38.

[82] Writing to Ronald Johnson in 1964, Finlay recounts 'a visit from John Silkin of Strand magazine, and his frightful wee poet friend Ken Smith, the ultimate in blue-jersied young bitter angry poets, very masculine fucking profile and all [...]. They're all worried about people or something, so you're not allowed to talk about football or pop records [...] or culture or beauty or music or painting, or anything except them. Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, August 13, 1964, Box: 24, Folder: 5. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[83] Nietzsche, pp. 128-129; c.f. Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1947).

[84] Ian Hamilton Finlay, 'Scene', *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.*, 16 (1965), np.

[85] In his poem 'landsman's tea / fisherman's tea', Finlay emphasises the strength of the latter by squaring the letter 't'. Fisherman's tea is 't^2' whereas landsman's tea is 't'. Finlay, *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*., 23 (1967), np. Thanks to Alistair Peebles for this insight.

[86] 'I will tell you something that is not natural', Finlay writes Johnson: 'the angel. Mondrian was the great artist of the Right-Angel. The Right-Angel is the Archangel'. Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald, Johnson, April 20, 1967, Box: 24, Folder: 21. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library. See also Ross Hair, 'Models of Order: Form and Cosmos in the Poetry of Ian Hamilton Finlay and Ronald Johnson', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 56.2 (Summer 2014), pp. 181-225.

[87] *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*., 5 (1962), cover.

[88] Alec Finlay, p. 104.

[89] Quoted in Alec Finlay, p. 107.

[90] William McGonagall, 'The Famous Tay Whale', *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse.*, 5 (1962), insert.

[91] Gertrude Stein, *Picasso* (New York: Dover, 1984), p. 23.

[92] Finlay, *A Model*, p. 22.

[93] Nietzsche, pp. 24-25.

[94] Kasimir Malevich, 'Suprematism', trans. Howard Dearstyne, in *Modern Artists on Art*, Robert L. Herbert (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2000), p. 119.

[95] Malevich, p. 117.

[96] Finlay, *A Model*, p. 22.

[97] Ian Hamilton Finlay, 'Homage to Malevich', *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*., 8 (1963), np.

[98] Susan Howe, "The End of Art." *Archives of American Art Journal*, 14.4 (1974), pp. 2-7, p. 7.

[99] E. H. Gombrich, *Mediations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 3.

[100] Gombrich, p. 3.

[101] Gombrich, p. 2.

[102] Gombrich, p. 4.

[103] Gombrich., p. 4.

[104] Donald Kuspit, *The Critic is Artist: The Intentionality of Art* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), p. 155.

[105] Malevich, p. 118.

[106] Plato, *Philebus*, trans. J. C. B. Gosling (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), p. 51.

[107] Josef Albers, 'The Artist's Voice' (1962), in *Josef Albers: Minimal Means Maximal Effect* (Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2014), p. 288.

[108] Albers, p. 287.

[109] Finlay, *A Model*, pp. 27-28.

[110] William C. Seitz, *The Responsive Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1965), p. 7.; Finlay, *A Model*, p. 28; Ian Hamilton Finlay, 'Three Optical Poems' *Lugano Review*, 1.1 (1965), pp. 61–64.

[111] Jeffrey Steele, 'Cicerone', *The Anglo-Welsh Review*, 16.38 (Winter 1967), pp. 55-67, p. 56.

[112] Steele, p. 56.

[113] Steele, p. 56.

[114] Ian Hamilton Finlay, 'ajar', *Poor. Old. Tired. Horse*., 12 (1964), np.

[115] Steele, p. 58.

[116] Natalie Ferris, *Abstraction in Post-War British Literature, 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), p. 83.

[117] See Ginsberg, title page.

[118] Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), p. 191.

[119] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (Boston: John W. Luce & Co., 1906), p. 26.

[120] Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Glasgow Beasts, An a Burd* (Edinburgh: Wild Hawthorn / Wild Flounder Press, 1961), np.

[121] Wallace Stevens, 'Anecdote of the Jar', *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, 15.1 (October, 1919), p. 8.

[122] Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, 21 Sep, Box: 24, Folder: 26. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[123] Greg Thomas, *Border Blurs: Concrete Poetry in England and Scotland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019), p. 51.

[124] Ian Hamilton Finlay to Ronald Johnson, February 13, 1969, Box: 24, Folder: 36. Ronald Johnson papers, MS 66. University of Kansas. Kenneth Spencer Research Library.

[125] Bann, *Midway*, pp. 300-301.

[126] Finlay, *A Model*, pp. 39-40.

[127] See Hair,"Models of Order', pp. 214-215.

[128] 'Temple of Apollo' description, *Little Sparta: The Garden of Ian Hamilton Finlay*. https://www.littlesparta.org.uk/temple-of-apollo/. [Accessed June 28, 2022].