

I think that disjunctive and non-sequential writing can change states of consciousness, awakening the reader to reality, and thus the need for political change.

I think it does this by forcing an aberration in the left brain language centers. I have seen examples of writing in *Scientific American* (September 1979) of people with diseases of the left hemisphere and they read like disjunctive and non-sequential writing.

Disjunctive and non-sequential poetry thus forces a cross to the right hemisphere. This cross can take place only at alpha brain wave levels, when the hemispheres meet (according to Robert Orenstein in *The Psychology of Consciousness* [New York: Viking Press, 1972]). This alpha state is a raised level of consciousness akin to the meditative state as shown by bio-feedback machines.

This is not, however, a state of bliss, which is supposedly registered by theta brain wave levels.

Further confirmation of disjunctive and non-sequential writing directly affecting the brain is found in an essay by Alan Davies and Nick Piombino in *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* (Volume 4, 1981), which discusses the production of the N400 brain wave in response to subjects' coping with "nonsense." Davies and Piombino quote a *New York Times* (March 11, 1980) report on this research: "This N400 wave seems to be tapping into a higher mental process."

**CHARLES BERNSTEIN:** In responding to Hannah Weiner's comments, I want to point to a related, if opposing, comment made by Paul Sprecher at the same New School session (following my talk). Sprecher pointed to the relation between certain forms of "disjunctive" poetry and glossolalia (speaking in tongues) as practiced by certain charismatic Christian sects. What if glossolalia produced the same detectable brain wave alteration as discussed by Weiner? In the case of glossolalia, any "measurable" heightened consciousness is co-opted (or absorbed) by the social circumstance in which the physiological/cerebral event is experienced. The

political issue can never be the cerebral event in isolation but rather must include the social context in which the event is interpreted or in which it functions, uninterpreted. In this respect, it is worth noting that the new formalists, who advocate a return to strongly metered traditional verse, have, at least in one instance, justified their position by arguing that such verse exercises the right brain in sharp contrast to unmetered, including disjunctive, poetry which appeals only to the left brain. Indeed, this raises a fundamental flaw in reductivist left brain/right brain dualism: distinctions like intuitive versus analytic are social not biological distinctions, reflecting, for example, class, education, and gender. For me, the political question concerns the *mind in action*, in context, not the brain as receptor.

**WEINER:** Glossolalia is a result of heightened states of consciousness and is non-political, like other effects of heightened consciousness such as telepathy, out of body travel, clairvoyance, healing. The work is to make the consciousness political. At heightened states of consciousness, both sides of the brain are energized, thus making the mind in action more effective because it has more power and knows more.

THE POLITICS OF POETIC FORM  
Ed Ch Bernstein Roof 1990

Hannah Weiner

I think that language oriented writing can change states of consciousness, awakening the reader to reality, and thus the need for political change.

I think it does this by forcing an aberation in the left brain language centers. I have seen examples of writing in Scientific American, Sept. 1979, of people with diseases of the left hemisphere and they read like language poetry.

Language poetry thus forces a cross to the right hemisphere. This cross can take place only at alpha brain wave levels, when the two hemispheres can meet. (According to Ornstein in the Psychology of Consciousness). This alpha state is a raised level of consciousness akin to the meditative state as shown by bio-feedback.

I might add, however, that it is not a state of bliss, which is registered by theta brain wave levels.

Further confirmation of language oriented writing directly affecting the brain is found in an article by Alan Davies and Nick Piombino in Signage by Alan Davies, which describes the N400 wave, a response to coping with nonsense. Quoting the New York Times of March 11, 1980, "This N400 wave seems to be tapping into a higher mental process."

Hannah Weiner

I think that disjunctive and non sequential writing can change states of consciousness, awakening the reader to reality, and thus to the need for political change.

I think it does this by forcing an aberation in the left brain language centers. I have seen examples of writing in Scientific American, Sept: 1979, of people with diseases of the left hemisphere and they read like disjunctive and non sequential writing.

Disjunctive and non sequential poetry thus forces a cross to the right hemisphere, This cross can take place only at alpha brain wave levels, when the two hemispheres meet. (According to Ornstein in the Psychology of Consciousness). This alpha state is a raised level of consciousness akin to the meditative state as shown by bio-feedback.

This is not, however, a state of bliss, which is supposedly registered by theta brain wave levels.

Further confirmation of disjunctive and non sequential writing directly affecting the brain is found in an article by Alan Davies and Nick Piomboni in Signage by Alan Davies, which describes the N400 wave, a response of the brain in coping with nonsense. Quoting the New York Times of March 11, 1980, "This N400 wave seems to be tapping into a higher mental process."