

# FORUM

University of Edinburgh  
Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts  
Issue 19 | Autumn 2014

<b>Title</b>	“the killing of speech”: The Sonic-Politics of The Four Horsemen
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<b>Publication</b>	FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts
<b>Issue Number</b>	19
<b>Issue Date</b>	Autumn 2014
<b>Publication Date</b>	05/12/2014
<b>Editors</b>	Jessica Legacy and Yanbing Er

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## “the killing of speech”: The Sonic-Politics of The Four Horsemen

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*In The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound, Marjorie Perloff suggests that “however central the sound dimension is to any and all poetry, no other poetic feature is currently as neglected.” This paper locates its study of the paleotechnic sound poetry quartet The Four Horsemen along emergent philosophical vectors in sound and vibrational studies to consider the possibilities of vocal expression beyond logocentricism.*

In *The Sound of Poetry / The Poetry of Sound*, Marjorie Perloff suggests that “however central the sound dimension is to any and all poetry, no other poetic feature is currently as neglected” (1). Perloff’s claim possesses a poignant resonance in a Canadian context when considering the criticism of paleotechnic sound poetry quartet The Four Horsemen. The group consisted of four experimental poets: Steve McCaffery, bpNichol, Paul Dutton, and Rafael Barreto-Rivera, who were active from 1972 to 1988. Scholars such as Stephen Scobie, McCaffery (in his role as critic), and Frank Davey among others have written on the group. Much of this criticism discusses Dadaism and graphism, radical linguistic deconstruction, and connections to Toronto’s psychoanalytic commune Therapeutics and might be recognized by sound theorist Steve Goodman as a critical circumscription symptomatic of what he refers to as “linguistic imperialism,” which “subordinates the sonic to semiotic registers” (82). In this article I will locate my discussion of The Four Horsemen along a similar philosophical vector, drawing on theorizations of vocality and possibilities of expression beyond logocentricism. In particular, I will draw upon theorizations and manifestos of voice, sound, and materialism developed by McCaffery, Nichol, Goodman, and Adriana Cavarero, whom I find useful in articulating the potentialities of sound poetry and its possibilities of material socio-political intervention. Each of these writers, through various theoretical and practical methods, seeks to comprehend the significance of expression beyond the linguistic system. In his 2001 essay “Voice Extremis,” McCaffery identifies what is at stake in expression outside of language; he writes, “the extreme mission for [sound] poetry from Artaud to the performative enactments of the 1970s was neither expenditure nor spontaneity per se but rather the killing of speech in its capitalist, propositional embodiments” (186). In this way, sound poetry is a response to capitalism’s totalizing affect in its attempt to shatter linguistic homogenization and find a mode of communication outside of capitalism. This paper seeks to re-engage the topic of sound poetry as a mode of intervention into material and socio-political conditions as a critical assault upon capitalism’s homogenizing program. An analysis of The Four Horsemen by way of a sonocentric critique will rediscover and reconfigure the radical potential of their work (and the sound poetry event) which linguistically centred analysis has inadvertently undermined.

It is important to first note the material complexities of a study on sound poetry. Critics face a unique challenge when assessing The Four Horsemen's work since it can be located within a tradition that Lucy R. Lippard refers to as the de-materialization of the art object, a comprehensive term that usefully describes art of the 60s and 70s that de-emphasized "material aspects" (5). Ron Mann's film *Poetry in Motion*, one of the few publicly available video recordings of the group, exemplifies some of their essential qualities. The video presents a tightly structured sound poem that begins with a single multi-vocal cry. This primitive sounding is the refrain of the work and is emitted five times throughout the near three-minute performance. In between these aggressive, disruptive, and primal cries the group demonstrates their astounding vocal capacities and explore a range of non-linguistic sounds including singing, sputtering, squeals, humming, breathing, pops, gargles, and more. No form of standard linguistic expression is used in this piece. This recording, however, is inconsistent with reports of typical performances by The Four Horsemen. The video recording re-mediate performance, divorcing their bodies and energies from the audience, altering the spatial dynamics, and nullifying the live experience as a process of corporeal/material exchange. When recorded these performances become graphic, re-inscribed with analogue and digital materials, altering the audience's engagement with the performers. In addition, in Mann's film, the group is performing in front of three microphones. Most writing on The Four Horsemen explicitly notes that they avoided the use of electro-acoustic aids for reasons that I understand thusly: 1) the exclusion of technology emphasizes the bodily aspects of their performance, and the uncontaminated connection between bodies on the stage and in audience, and 2) this exclusion ensures that technologies, specifically capitalist technologies like microphones, speaker systems etc., do not become part of the sonic exchange. Second, bpNichol appears to be acting as conductor. In an account of the group's praxis, James Sanders and Mark Prejsnar note "no one really is the leader/composer" (56) so that they maintain a non-hierarchical collaborative structure. I assume that the group compromised their praxis in these ways for the sake of capturing a high-quality sound/video recording for a tight timeslot.

Aside from Mann's film, there are few other materials useful to this study with the exception of audio recordings: *Canadada* (1972), *Live in West* (1977), and *2 Nights/4 Horsemen* (1988). In this regard, John Havelda identifies another obstacle that complicates the study of their work: The Four Horsemen's emphasis on the corporeality and materiality of the sound poetry event is absent from audio recordings. Furthermore, some recordings are deemed better representations of the group's performances than others. According to Havelda the audio recording *Bootleg* (1981) received an incredibly limited production run (35 copies) because "McCaffery felt it misrepresented the group's performances" (102). By this logic, I understand the available recordings to be satisfactory representations of the group's performances and suitable for study of the sonic materials of their work. All of this is to say that when this paper engages with the sounds of The Four Horsemen, it is a necessarily speculative endeavour. It is an engagement with a quasi-form of their work: the quasi-Horsemen, or the quasi-sound poetry event.

For McCaffery, linguistic expression is intricately bound with capitalism and its problematic program of homogenization and standardization; he writes, "Capitalism begins when you / open the dictionary" ("Lyric's Larynx" 178) and, in a separate context, suggests that "Language ... functions like money and speaks *through* us more than we actively produce *within* it" ("Diminished Reference and

The Model Reader”13). McCaffery and contemporaries such as Nichol, Bill Bissett and others, believed that language had been systematically regularized to the extent that expression of the self had become imitative of the power structures that alienate, suppress, or deny individual expression. Instead, they formulated a mode of poetic expression aware of language as a means of exchange, and sought to find ways of expressing themselves outside of this system.<sup>1</sup> Traditional advertising, for example, relies on clear, standardized communication so that the target-audience may easily understand the product and can be persuaded to purchase it. In this way, advertisers use language to initiate capitalist modes of exchange that are only possible because of this initial, tempting utterance. This reliance on standardized modes of communication tends to suppress writing and enunciations that exist outside of the dominant idiom—this includes spellings that may not reflect, for example, the vernacular of Caribbean or African-Canadian writers. In response to issues like these, McCaffery wrote a hopeful 1970 manifesto “for a poetry of blood.” Though he ultimately abandoned the manifesto and distanced himself from its views, the piece articulates an “utter faith” in sound’s “liberating” and transformative capacities; he writes, “EITHER YOU TRANSFORM OR YOU / DESTROY” (275). McCaffery’s manifesto offers an extensive consideration of sound and its value over language and poetry. For McCaffery, poetry and sound share the same basic qualities: “rhythm & pulse” (275) and it is through sound, and its affect, that one achieves “the successful assimilation of your own [biology] into another biology” (275). This undertaking is analogous to Nichol’s description of his own poetic projects that seek expression beyond standardized linguistic communication: “language means communication and ... communication does not just mean language” (18). His visual and sonic experiments, like McCaffery’s manifesto, seek to transcend the limitations of singular corporeality and linguistic homogenization, or in Nichol’s terms to find “as many exits as possible from the self (language/communication exists) in order to form as many entrances as possible for the other” (18). Sound poetry is not simply the disruption of linguistic convention, but a means of using its sonic material properties to transcend singular notions of the self and corporally affect the social world.<sup>2</sup>

While McCaffery, in a 2008 interview for *Rain Taxi*, distances himself from the radical utopian optimism of this earlier work, similar concerns regarding the problem of voice beyond language is of central importance to Cavarero, particularly in her book *For More Than One Voice*, in which she seeks to distinguish voice from language, a forced connection which “radically denies to the voice a meaning of its own that is not always already destined to speech” (13). Clearly, McCaffery and Cavarero’s views on voice and the possibilities of expression beyond language are incongruous, but they do not necessarily need to elide. While McCaffery has largely maintained his distance from his previous work, Cavarero’s writing indicates a new breed of optimism. For Cavarero, voice “communicates the elementary givens of existence: uniqueness, relationality, sexual difference, and age” (8) and reminds us that “voice is sound, not speech” (12). Cavarero develops these ideas from Hannah Arendt’s concept of the “human condition” which is concerned with “the uniqueness that makes everyone a being that is different from all others” (3). The Four Horsemen anticipate Cavarero’s thinking about voice. In their work, the unique qualities of each voice—accents, vocal textures, and lung capacities, for example—are employed as unique and crucial aspects. In other instances, they challenge the boundaries of their essential qualities to the extreme by experimenting with the limits of their own voices. They explore the depths and heights of being through vocal

soundings. In this way, The Four Horsemen, like Cavarero, recognize that the voice communicates essential ontological characteristics of individual human beings. Cavarero recognizes, however, the limits of this assertion and asks how one can move “from ontology to politics” (16). In the context of this paper, how does The Four Horsemen’s expression of the ontological-self through sound intervene into the material conditions of capitalism?

Goodman’s *Sonic Warfare* offers an answer to this problem of intervention in his theory of a vibrational ontology. While Goodman refers to this concept as ontological, his theorization is inherently political. Drawing from affect theory, Goodman’s thinking about sound probes deeper into the sonic sphere to identify vibration as a manifestation of uniqueness, a foundational element to all things.<sup>3</sup> “All entities are potential media that can feel or whose vibrations can be felt by other entities” (82). For Goodman, we are not language-beings; we are vibrational beings. While Goodman focuses on infrasonic sounds—sounds that are beyond even the vocal range of The Four Horsemen—his theorization usefully highlights the material properties of sound. Sound may often be invisible to the human eye, but it still can affect the world in a material way. Goodman draws attention to this fact: “Vibrating entities are always entities out of phase with themselves. A vibratory nexus exceeds and precedes the distinction between subject and object, constituting a mesh of relation in which discreet entities [ap]prehend each other’s vibrations” (83). To push this further, I suggest that as vibrational-beings, we are constantly exposed to the unique qualities of all entities at all times. We are always out of phase with what we perceive to be ourselves and in phase with other selves and things. Whether it is receiving the thrum of bass from a passing car or the sonic cacophony of a sound poetry event, the body is a hypersensitive antenna receiving vibrations whether the receiver is fully aware or not.

For example, in a piece by The Four Horsemen entitled “Mayakovsky” Nichol screams the sound poem’s name, “MAYAKOVSKY,” two-thirds of the way through. In this moment, the listener receives both the linguistic and sonic-materials of that sound, which engages the nervous system. The audience may be startled and jump if they were not expecting the sudden break from Nichol’s talk about talking, or perhaps they might laugh, amused by the sudden shift into the frenetic absurdity of rapid heavy breathing and nonsense song from the other members. The sound poetry event is the “vibratory nexus” (Goodman 83) at which a listener receives unique vibrations transmitted through vocalization.

Vibrational transmission is political. The political here is employed in terms analogous to Jacques Rancière’s sense of the word—the political resides in acts of *dis-sensus*, or when an entity becomes separate from a community by challenging or resisting the consensus of an established politic.<sup>4</sup> While capitalism seeks to homogenize and commodify all things, sounds—especially sounds and sound events that exceed standard modes of exchange whether they are vocal, verbal, or otherwise—offer a means of experiencing difference and otherness without necessarily subordinating the other. Praxes of listening and sounding are political. In this specific case, The Four Horsemen’s vocal transmission of vibrations seeks to intervene and disrupt the self as a singular, consensual vibrational being that capitalism, as McCaffery would argue, successfully controls. The deconstruction of oral communication is one of the ways this dis-sensus is achieved; sonic transmission is another means. It is useful to think of the sound poetry event as a forum that provides a type of disruption necessary to create a sense of disorientation, which in turn allows the audience to experience

alternative states of being—it is in this alternative state that radical possibilities begin to emerge. McCaffery's manifesto for sound poetry is a striking anticipation of Goodman's theorization of vibrational ontology and sonic affect. Both describe a process of affective or sonic transmission. McCaffery has referred to this affective process in distinctly McLuhanesque terms, referring to "sound" as "the extension of human biology" ("poetry of blood" 275), echoing the subtitle of McLuhan's *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, a text that effectively explores media's effect on human perceptual senses and systems. With Goodman's convincing accounts of vibration's engagement with material realms, the potency of McCaffery's "poetry of blood" is revitalized. Re-inscribing the overwhelmingly evident, but neglected, affective material properties of sound into sound poetry studies recuperates the socio-political potential of the praxis.

The processes of vocalization and listening are, as Cavarero notes, corporeal endeavours: they implicate "a correspondence with the fleshy cavity that alludes to the deep body" (4). Indeed, sound poets vocalize through an interaction of tissues, muscles, bones, and saliva; these sounds are to be received by a listening audience. Though invisible, these sonorous vibrations penetrate the body, moving along the surface of the skin, through the ear canal, and stimulating the nervous system with a seemingly infinite range of possible affects. In this way, the acoustic event enjoys a complex corporeal exchange of energy, intelligence, and emotion.

However, even before sound is emitted, a sound poetry event has material demands. The performance space is organized by the promise of sound. If The Four Horsemen were to perform on a stage then the chairs and bodies of the audience would have to be positioned accordingly. If they were to perform on the radio such as the CJRT, where they performed "Seasons" on 22 September 1979, the station may need to make the spatial modifications necessary to accommodate the performance of four eccentric and energetic men for a radio-listening audience. According to James Sanders and Mark Presjnar, the group almost always performed in spaces used for the "conventional poetry reading: colleges, radio stations, poetry festivals, art galleries, rehearsal areas" (60), spaces that are institutional or intended for formal use. The Four Horsemen "did not do random performances in public places" (60).

The choice of venue is significant. York University's Curtis Lecture Hall, for example, where they performed in January 1973, is (conventionally) a place in which speech is used as a passive container for thought, logic, and meaning.<sup>5</sup> The lecturer communicates thoughts to the students; the students are expected to record those thoughts and reciprocate in a meaningful way. The Four Horsemen perform functions radically different from the lecturer. Similarly, the typical radio station broadcasts speech that communicates information (news, weather updates, traffic reports, etc.) or music and commercials to entertain and promote products. In fact, the same night in September 1979 when The Four Horsemen were featured on CJRT's "Music and Literature" radio show, the station had broadcast pieces by Bach and Vivaldi previous to the show and followed it by Big Band recordings.<sup>6</sup> When the work of The Four Horsemen was featured at night on 18 February 1979 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), CJRT was broadcasting readings of selected writings by Mark Twain, Will Rogers, and Charles Laughton.<sup>7</sup> While all of these broadcasts are related by their fundamental sonic properties, the more conventional programming is incongruous to the sonic praxis and politics of The Four Horsemen. Instead, The Four Horsemen sonically invade these spaces and

airwaves, disrupting the flow of speech, logic, and entertainment to redefine and subvert the sonic and material compositions and meanings of these spaces.

The Four Horsemen's assault upon language and standardized communication is clearly audible in their sound poem "Assassin" from *Live in the West* (1977). The piece opens with hissing sounds from several of members, accentuating the "sss" sound of the word assassin. Nichol's voice emerges from the hissing with a buoyant and repetitive song: "sin sin sin-a-sin sin sin," repetitively playing with the phonemes of the word until the group begins to ecstatically chant "AH-SA-SIN." The tempo of this chant accelerates with each repetition until it breaks apart, leaving only sounds of hyperventilation, which are quickly silenced by a cry. This sequence is repeated and silenced once more. Here The Four Horsemen become assassins themselves, the killers of speech in "its capitalist embodiments" ("Voice" McCaffery 186). They deconstruct the title-word "assassin," spilling out its sonic parts—words such as "sin" and "ass" as well as its pre-linguistic (or non-linguistic) sounds including hisses, screams, shouts, inhalation and exhalation. The Four Horsemen charge through these sonic elements, stripping the word of its singular meaning and open it to find "as many exits as possible" (Nichol 18). This is the kind of linguistic analysis critics often employ when discussing the work: a focus on the deconstruction of language and logic that results in a discourse of negation, aligning their work with earlier twentieth century experiments performed by the Dadaists. McCaffery, in his 1970 sound poetry manifesto, denounced this kind of assessment to be a "misinterpretation" ("a poetry" 275) of their work. On the one hand "Assassin" is the creative realization of this metaphorical killing of speech through the destabilization of the word. However, I would also like to suggest that this piece is an anticipatory creative realization of Cavarero's argument that "voice is sound, not speech" (12). In this way, the poem is a creative process of accentuating, and thereby, revealing innate sonic material that is outside of language, but integrally part of an experiential, material, and corporeal event.

The work of The Four Horsemen does not simply signal a turn away from language to emphasize vocalization, sound, and sonic materialism, but also offers an experiment in formulating alternative sonic communities. The Four Horsemen events were opportunities to rethink models of communal gatherings and the conditions that bind us together (material, corporeal, and otherwise). In "Mischievous Eve," another recording from *Live in the West*, communal and affective sonic properties are realized through a variety of means. "Mischievous Eve" begins with a maniacal laugh repeated by one of the members that is soon accompanied by the group. As the laughter reaches a peak, laughter is also heard to be coming from the audience. Nichol's voice emerges singing "Remember, remember the fifth of November" and very quickly the song enters into a series of chant-like rhythms anchored by the quiet, sustained repetition of "remember" with accompanying non-referential squeals, hums, alveolar trills, and guttural sounds. This continues until McCaffery announces himself through a didactic, authoritative speech entitled "History of North American Respiration." The clarity of McCaffery's voice and speech begins to wane as Dutton and Barreto-Rivera's chant, "one voice alone still cannot say what two voices together saying one thing can," increases in speed and volume until they overpower McCaffery's voice. When McCaffery's voice re-emerges he no longer has the voice of didacticism, but instead chants "get them speaking your way." McCaffery's vocal transformation and re-alignment with Dutton and Barreto-Rivera's bivocal chant

signifies the powerful influence of increased sonic qua vibrational magnitude. Considering both the allusion to Guy Fawkes Day – a British holiday commemorating the radical plot to explode Parliament – and the biblical story of Eve – who transgresses the command of God – critic Stephen Voyce argues that these allusions “collude in significant ways: both involve a transgression against property by figures whose traditional status as villains is challenged” (234). From a sonic perspective, “Mischievous Eve” engages notions of transgression and property in interesting ways. Here it is the voice and its affective sonic material that transgresses the borders of the body, the property lines of the self. The group employs the sound of laughter at the beginning of the work as a cathetic mechanism, a means of unifying or tuning the audience into the piece, the performers, and each other. I say “sound of laughter” because there is no joke or other comedic prompt: the sound itself is contagious. Laughter, here, is a transferable sonic-thing that spreads throughout the nervous system, inciting pleasure, and uniting the community. Alternatively, the sound of laughter in “Mischievous Eve” is a sonic extension of the self into a larger body of organisms. Sound as an affective contagion is thematised even more explicitly by the exchange between McCaffery’s didactic voice and the chant of Barreto-Rivera and Dutton. Barreto-Rivera and Dutton do not chant meaningfully to the didactic McCaffery to convince him to speak their way, but do so by exemplifying the power of their unified voice. The chant-like rhythm overwhelms his singular, sonic-being to unite their forms of vocalization. It was not uncommon for The Four Horsemen to encourage audience participation during their performances either. Most of these performer-attendee interactions were “person-to-person” (Sanders and Prejsnar 56), integrating the audience into the sonic event and creating a truly communal happening. These cases illustrate Goodman’s notion of a “vibratory nexus” where sound transcends the distinction between performer and audience creating a “mesh of relation in which discreet entities [ap]prehend each other’s vibrations” (83). It is within the space of The Four Horsemen’s sound poetry events that sonic forces provide a communal basis instead of linguistic communication; it is here that the community vibrates differently from the dominating, speech-oriented capitalist politic.

Writers for Canadian newspapers such as *The Globe and Mail* confirm that The Four Horsemen were indeed offering their audiences a transformative communal space and a radical sonic experience outside of quotidian life in a capitalist society. In some cases, reviewers struggled to articulate just what occurred on the night’s stage, offering little more than basic descriptions of the sounds they heard and actions they saw. There seems to be little analytical or evaluative accounts of The Four Horsemen in these forums. For example, in 1978, Adele Freedman, a writer for *The Globe and Mail*, reviews a performance by The Four Horsemen and another Canadian sound poetry group Owen Sound. After taking the reader through various highlights of the performances Freedman admits that “It’s impossible to isolate individual performers and compositions. The magic of the evening was cumulative” (A13). Echoing similar sentiments, on 9 July 1982, in an article entitled “Poetry event rich in variety,” Ann Jansen reviews a night of “rock and reggae poets, sound poets and performance artist poets” (E8) at a small club called Scuffers in Toronto. She describes The Four Horsemen’s performance to be “as electrifying as it is indescribable” (E8). At first, describing an event as magical or electrifying seems to be contingent popular discourse for events that exceed conventional description. However, I suggest that in the case of these reviews, that is not true. This type of language declares the success of The Four Horsemen’s events. These writers are not using

populist expressions in lieu of more accurate diction, but are actually articulating the enchanting qualities of these events. Sound poetry events are electrifying, using sound to charge the audience with thrilling and delightful energies. They are magical, empowered with the ability to shift local consciousness through the use of a seemingly unnatural force: sound. These qualities are crucial to events that are intended to resist capitalism and its program of disenchantment, the standardization of all things. The sound poetry event, like that of The Four Horsemen, re-inscribes the radical possibilities of alternative – call them magical, electrified or whatever you like – material realities outside of capitalism's totalizing homogenization; it is the killing of speech and the resurrection of sound, body, and life. With this achievement, the sound poetry of The Four Horsemen can be deemed a success.

As noted earlier in the essay, McCaffery comes to repudiate the radical political ambitions of The Four Horsemen. In a *Rain Taxi* interview he describes the conditions of this shift: "This utopian belief that linguistic change is the necessary prelude to social-political change led me into conceiving my poetics as a critique of language under capitalism. That belief and optimism is now gone" ("Trans"). While McCaffery has abandoned this mode of poetic critique, the effect of his work and the work of The Four Horsemen has been long lasting. While some students, critics, and poetry enthusiasts may find sound poetry to be a divisive practice there is a significant community of artists, writers, and thinkers who rally around the work of The Four Horsemen. McCaffery and Nichol are both tremendously influential; their work is frequently included on course syllabi and they are considered to be important writers in the fields of Canadian Literature and Poetry and Poetics. *Open Letter*, a recently defunct journal for writing and theory in Canada, published several issues dedicated entirely to Nichol and McCaffery's work, which included essays on The Four Horsemen. Most significantly, there has been a recent revival in interest in The Four Horsemen. The Four Horsemen Project – conceived by Kate Alton and Ross Man and described as a multi-award winning, dance, theatre, sound poetry, and animated performance – is committed to the spectacular restaging of The Four Horsemen's work. In Canada, the project has won positive praise from newspapers, blogs, and magazines from across the country. While this re-creation of The Four Horsemen deserves a more rigorous critical examination – especially a consideration of the way a spectacular re-staging may denigrate the group's initial radical ambitions – it does suggest that the work of The Four Horsemen continues to be a site of significant communal engagement, relevant to a contemporary audience.

In this article, I have attempted to re-engage the socio-political and material possibilities of sonic praxis and acknowledge that The Four Horsemen as a group were successful in their critical and disruptive efforts. Sound poetry events, as they were created by The Four Horsemen, were not only opportunities for individuals to revel in the performative negation of language in its "capitalist embodiment" (McCaffery, "Voice" 186), but, taking into account the material properties of sound and vibration, they offered their audience an opportunity for alternative socio-political engagement that is outside of the homogenous conditions of capitalist systems: they can be and vibrate together without subordinating one another. The impact of this engagement does not need to be long lasting. This kind of thinking about sound, however, does not need to be limited to The Four Horsemen. We could also consider similarly powerful sonic/spatial disruptions created by the Indigenous Idle No More Round Dances that recently swept across Canada, or we can think of the musically charged dub poetry

performed by Lillian Allen, Chet Singh, and d.bi young. How does their work vibrate? Alternative states of vibrational-being need not be long lasting; these interstitial moments of critique and relief are significant, and their effects can be long lasting.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this see also McCaffery's "Writing as a General Economy" in *North of Intention* (2000).

<sup>2</sup> It is useful to also distinguish the ambitions of *The Four Horsemen* from other poetics that are charged by non-linguistic, musical elements. Ezra Pound's definition of *melopoeia*, for example, seems to resonate with *The Four Horsemen*. Pound defines *melopoeia* thusly: "wherein words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning" and, furthermore, "can be appreciated by a foreigner with a sensitive ear, even though he be ignorant of the language in which the poem is written" (25). Pound articulates not only a kind of musically charged poetry, but also a sonic aspect of poetry that exceeds linguistic convention while reinforcing meaning. Evidently, both Pound and *The Four Horsemen* are interested in identifying and utilizing these sonic aspects that exceed language. However, there is a crucial distinction to be made: Pound argues that musically charged poetry can reinforce meaning even to those outside of the language while the praxis of *The Four Horsemen* does the opposite. Instead, they charge their sound poetry with non-linguistic, even music-like elements not to reinforce meaning and its communication, but to break it apart and destabilize it. If we were to try to resolve the two we could say that *The Four Horsemen*'s vocalizations resonate with Pound's concept of *melopoeia* except that their meaning is not to bear meaning in any singular way.

<sup>3</sup> For this purposes of this paper, "Affect" is provisionally understood as it is defined in the introduction to the *Affect Theory Reader* (ed. Melissa Gregg, Gregory J. Seigworth): "affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, and in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves" (1)

<sup>4</sup> For more on this see *The Politics of Aesthetics* by Jacques Rancière as well as *Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics* edited by Beth Hinterland et al.

<sup>5</sup> See "Around Toronto This Week." *The Globe and Mail* 19 Jan. 1973: T2. Print.

<sup>6</sup> See "FM Radio AM." *The Globe and Mail* 22 Sept. 1979, Schedule sec.: D79. Print.

<sup>7</sup> See "FM Radio AM." *The Globe and Mail* 17 Feb. 1979, Schedule sec.: E44. Print.

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