

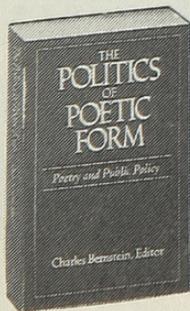
## The Politics of Poetic Form

*The focus of this collection is the relationship between the form of a poem and its ideology. These essays document the struggle of the writing against the reading of language, poetry vs. authority, meaning vs. reality. The prose is meant to invoke confusion, to insist that the formed be forced into uniform, out of the society where the Other determines meaning. As Bruce Andrews puts it, "According to the rules, they write our bodies — when we talk, according to the rules." Sometimes injustice is so great that it can only be expressed in poetry; and sometimes the poetry is so great that it cannot be*

### The Politics of Poetic Form

Charles Bernstein, Editor. 1990; 245 pp.

**\$12.95** postpaid from The Segue Foundation, 303 E. 8th Street, New York, NY 10009; 212/674-0199



*expressed at all, except by breaking the rules.*  
—Laurie Abbott

• I would say that one's Poetic Politics shapes itself within the weaving movement of personal motive with energy, identity, knowledge, and the ability to process emotions, ideas, sensations into a meaningful response to the world. As for myself, my poetic is essentially to make space for the unthought. As a woman, I am left with a language that has either erased or marginalized women as subjects. Therefore in my poetic I perform what is necessary to make space for women's subjectivity and plurally, to make space for a positive image of women. This task engages me to question language — symbolic and imaginary, from all angles and dimensions.

In conclusion, I would like to say that a good part of my life has gone into writing and it probably will continue to be like that. In the desire and the necessity to reinvent language, there is certainly an intention for happiness, a utopian thrust, a serious responsibility. It is because I feel both profoundly in me that I continue my course of writing. Voyage without end, writing is what always comes back to seek me out in order to distance death and stupidity, lies and violence. Writing never lets me forget that if life has a meaning, somewhere it is in what we invent with our lives,

with the aura of streams of words that, within us, form sequences of truth. There is a price for consciousness, for transgression. Sooner or later, the body of writing pays for its untamed desire of beauty and knowledge. I have always thought that the word beauty is related to the word desire. There are words, which, like the body, are irreducible: To write I am a woman is full of consequences. —Nicole Brossard

• With the advent of bebop, with which neither Williams, Miller, nor Carlin seem to have been much engaged, black musicians began to assume a more explicit sense of themselves as artists, conscious creators, thinkers. Dizzy Gillespie would don a beret and a goatee, as would among others, Yusef Lateef, who would record an album called *Jazz for the Thinker*. Anthony Braxton's pipe, wire-rim glasses, cardigan sweater, and diagrammatic titles are among the present-day descendants of such gestures. The aural equivalent of this more explicit reflexivity would come at times to resemble a stutter, conveying senses of apprehension and self-conscious duress by way of dislocated phrasings in which virtuosity mimes its opposite. Thelonious Monk's mock-awkward hesitations evoke an experience of impediment or impairment, as do Sonny Rollins's even more stutterlike teasings of a tune. . . .

—Nathaniel Mackey

*The Whole Earth Review*; Mar 1, 1991; 70