

Feminafesto: Olson

Feminine

*Writing so that all the world
Is redeemed, and history
And all that politics,
The “State” and Subjection
Are for once, done away with,
As the reason
Of writing.*

And from
Footnote to HU (lost in the shuffle)

And the 6’4” Negress stood in the middle of the room full of bright and talking people. Listened for a moment to what they were going on about, and threw this at them, as her contribution: ART IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE ACTUAL. And without giving them a moment to think, said: ONLY THE ARTIST (she had just come in) IS ON TIME!

The feminine, the goddess (you could say inside Olson) winks everywhere. She’s all over the place in the field of Olson. Polis is goddess’s eyes. Poetry’s job is to reclaim the awareness of the world and to be on point, on time, ready, gestated. Not carrying reference or received un-digested knowledge. Not lost in ownership of “thing”, or of odious comparison of thing over other thing. Rather embrace self-existence of the natural symbol. Things are symbols of themselves. Language is the instrument we play on. That’s what he got at. AND THE FEMININE WAS THE FEMININE. And the feminine as I experience it sees that un-conditionality of space. Of letting things exist or giving them enough silken rope to hang themselves... And poetry might be in turn truly be in turn the RIVAL GOVERNMENT.. And more and more required that it be, this rival zone, a feminine project. Not female. Feminine. Feminine in principle which is about container, atmosphere, perspective, community – in the Sanskrit – *prajna* – wisdom of womb born. Prajna is also carries a notion of discriminating awareness wisdom. Give it over, guys. Turn in the psychological hung-up non-existent paper tiger WMD. The fiction of white male dominance. It’s

over. Redemption because the female for the most part designates the sex which nurtures, does not torture, & bears offspring. & keeps it going, in my experience, and sees- intuitively KNOWS - the interactions, the vibrations of the symbiotic web. Olson might have been confused, demonized by what dark un-resolve represented by Mother, by Wife, Lover. By Daughter. The harmony of the universe, he said, is not logical. Logos is not a final discipline. *Instantly and instantly*. Discourses are dodges. Most wanting of illumination and pleasure. The thing itself, and its relevance to ourselves that are the experiencers of it. Cut to the chase..

If you do this to that THIS happens, or that to that to that to THAT, this happens. The implications of feminine as Nature, as Earth, Gaia, as Karma are everywhere in the big O's mappemunde. History – whose version you have to ask. Olson's was wild on this: istorin, check it out for yourself. You already know, from us Lunarians who spend a lot of time reflecting back your own light, you guys and your master master-narratives, you a must equipped to let it go, the history, the subjection, the state. It's not working. Towards the end of HUMAN UNIVERSE Olson parses shape-shifting Mayan myth – How it's better to be a bird, or man and woman as the sun is, or how you can turn into a wasp, a humming bird how moon puts on a crab shell in disguise etc. How the particulars of the protean dance are Magic! Hot for the world they lived in he says of those closer to the earth, the planets...And yes, as we know, to counter now a romanticism born of privilege – tho Olson lived in poverty as a poet. Olson turned me toward the La Ruta Maya, toward the codices, toward the struggle of the Zapatista – I thank him. Communalism and anarchism, that's what needs negotiating as Don Byrd so eloquently points up in his essay “an actual earth of value/to construct one”

What do we need to reclaim as poets, investigators, archeologists of morning? What needs to be uncovered? Regrouped? Where indeed is Olson Now. How is Poetry the good news?

What became in a post mortem of Olson was critique of the life. Disassembling attitude toward his management of Black Mountain. The Family's suffering. But my god, the enormity of the Creeley correspondence in hand. The Full Maximus to ponder. Don Allen & Ben Friedlander's Collected Prose. Suddenly a critique of Mythopoetics (what better in the hands of an Olson?) which was a non-no for the Language School. The idea of epic as a male form off limits to serious women writers, as in my own

case. Uncovering of the crucial relationship with Frances Boldereff for the work, thought, investigation. This woman of unique brilliance cast a bright light on so many of his poetic forays, obsessions. Her letters shine, nurture...she is overlooked perhaps in her own right. We shall see.

An apprentice of the New American poetry, young woman I saw Olson at 20. Witnessed him come un-glued then hold fast, an open system a flickering dissipative structure at Berkeley. Watched him eschew kingship. Falling apart and coming into strange shape in the act of the poem. The fluidity of the feminine was attractive albeit ungainly.

Gloucester was the choice for my first marriage's honeymoon. A city that was a poem. I saw Olson at the famous reading in London, Royal Albert Hall, his hands pressing on the podium, Was it an hallucination his feet hovering about the stage dancing, could that be? I spoke with him briefly at the famous party with Ungaretti, Michael X and Mick Jagger, held at Panna Grady's home: the former Chinese Embassy. I said come to the Poetry Project. I sent him arrowheads when he was dying in New York.

The womanless *Call Me Ishmael* is a wrestle with Ahab's demons, in need of redress, the reading in poetry, philosophy, history are female absent. That needs balance now. I have been honoring dead heroes - fathers for months - Creeley, Berrigan, Olson, Kenneth Koch on the horizon this week. I spent hours over last weekend being interviewed by Coppola's people for the Kerouac & beat documentary. The exemplary women of my generation are elders now - let's get them in the conversation before they, too, are the dead Mothers we mourn. Olson I think would be knocked over by the work of Susan Howe, of Bernadette Mayer, of Lyn Hejinian, Alice Notley. By the long stamina of their poems.

For tasks: Writing by Women and Men. More trust in our innate Proprioception. Generally, see the history/version of a particular kind of thug Male. The dead-end State (control) we see everywhere and inside our own psyches. Question the rampant subjection, clearly, as in "extraordinary rendition", rendition of humanity of language, rendition of compassion, the purpose: out from under an insane hierarchy of grab & Empire & bleak language. And a globalization that stinks. All the great heroic ghosts are in us, waiting for the reclamation, redemption for the end of Subjection, all the crimes of the State. I watched President Truman from my baby carriage as

his motorcade snaked in a victory parade after WW II down Houston Street,
and was told I cried.

Olson quit that War Information Office job, turned toward the feminine
praxis and frequencies of poetry.

*“And she sprinkled water on the head of the child, crying
“Cioa-coatl! Cioa-coatl!”
with her face to the west.*

*

In Cold Hell, In Thicket

*What has he to say
In hell it is not easy
To know the tracteries, the markings
(the canals, the pits, the mountings by which space
declares herself, arched, as she is, the sister,
awkward stars drawn for teats to pleasure him, the brother
who lies in stasis under her, at ease as any monarch nor
a happy man*

*.....how
shall he convert this underbrush, how turn this unbidden place
how trace and arch again
the necessary goddess?”*

—

*And who
can turn this total thing, invert
and let the ragged sleeves be seen
by any bitch or common character? Who
can endure it where it is, your beloved is, where she
who is separate from you, is not separate, is not
goddess, is, as your core is,
the making of one hell*

*where she moves off, where she is
no longer arch*

;

*that men killed, do kill, that woman kills
is part, too, of his question*

*

For Sappho, Back

because the human is so light a structure

*

The Ring Of

(poem to Aphrodite)

*she rose
from the genital
wave*

*

Epigon

*Beauty hath
two forms*

*in the hidden wood, in
the room, sleep*

*Lady, who
art*

*

*The earth the Others
call it darkling)
they flee. Persephone
is never of their making,
Demeter neither. Women
are delights, things to run with, equals,
– small game they slay*

-

They only remember what space has had her arms around

(letter to FB, lines for Dahlberg)

(wizardess) he called his secret lover & Muse Frances Boldereff.

*

*to go to grass
as his daughter now suckles*

We are blind

*not from darkness
but by creation we are
moles. We are let out
Sightless, and thus miss
what we are given, what woman
is...*

(The Death of Europe)

*

“the chain of memory is resurrection”

My vanity

*is only the exercise
of my privilege as yours, conceivably,
might be as hers, thy peahen, is
also brilliant when she takes it up: Willendorf
the stone, breathes back
into life.*

*

As the Dead Prey Upon us

*Is it any wonder
my mother comes back?*

*

(o mother, if you had once touched me

o mother, if I had once touched you)

*

Method, method

*I too call on you to come
to the aid of all men, to women most
who know most, to woman to tell
men to awake. Awake me,
awake*

*

Rise
mother from off me
god damn you God damn me my
misunderstanding of you

The Distances

So the distances are Galatea

*

Cross-Legged.
The Spider and the Web

with this body worship her
if necessary arrange
to sit before her parts
and if she object as she might
ask her for your sake to cover
her head but stare to blindness
better than the sun look until
you know look look keep looking until
you do know you do know

*

MAXIMUS

*“...to be on the sweetness of earth herself,
great goddess we take for granted...”*

*--as the female animal in the boughs
of the tree, out of eating the leaves makes milk
which warriors do no know is*

the initiation

of another kind of nation

*the Blow is creation
& the Twist the Nasturtium*

*is any one of Ourselves
And the place of it ALL?*

Mother Earth Alone

*

What is the relationship between humans and Nature?

Homo sapiens sapiens- “Man, the wise, the wise:” Hardly.

Rather we seem planetary fools.-

Atmospheric Chemist James Lovelock speaks of the relationship between Humans and Nature as an impending War, David Foreman wrote that far from being the central nervous system of Gaia we are a cancer eating away at her.

The sperm tails of men evolved through symbiosis A possibility that sperm tails and oviduct undulipodia derived from Spirochete bacteria that became ancestral cell “whips”

A discovery of centriole-kinetosome DNA on its own chromosome and tightly packed at the base of each cell whip is the single most important scientific advance for the theory of Symbiotic theory of cell evolution- (DNA 1953)

In contrast to neo-Darwinian evolution as an unmitigated conflict in which only the strong survive, there’s an essential alternative to consider

An interactive view of the history of life on earth...

Recognizing ourselves not as lords but as partners. Olson intuitively was on to this.

Anne Waldman

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