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Barbara Montefalcone

Introduction

- ¹ In *Peinture et poésie : le dialogue par le livre*, French poet and critic Yves Peyré points out the existing connection between the development of independent publishers in France and what he defines as the tradition of the “book of dialogue” or artist’s book¹ (Peyré Y., 2000: Introduction) “Entre ces deux réalités [livre de dialogue et petite édition] il y a des similitudes touchant certains points de fabrication, sinon même un parallélisme lié à leur raison d’être,” (Peyré Y., 2000: 100) he asserts. According to Peyré, small presses and artists’ books do not only appear almost at the same time (in 1876) but their development is also parallel to that of little magazines with which they share an equivalent marginal position in the literary market, and a similar intimate relationship with the authors.

- 2 As we know, European avant-garde movements found in these independent publishing ventures strong allies to convey their literary and artistic theories which could not - and did not want to - fit in any form of mainstream publication. Now, by looking at the other side of the Atlantic, and by transposing Peyré's analysis of the late 19th century European publishing scene to the different, yet comparable, literary context of post-World War II America, we discover interesting parallels concerning the issues the publishers had to face as well as their way to cope with them.
- 3 As Jerome Rothenberg pointed up in the introduction of *A Book of the Book*, a publication that he co-edited with Steve Clay of Granary Books, "the latter part of the 20th century was the second period of great awakening both of experimental writing and of the artist's book as such." Both he and Clay "see the period as one in which - more than ever - artists and poets took control of their own work apart from the nexus of dealers and markets." (Rothenberg J. and Clay S., 2000: 15) This search of independence from the market as well as from the gallery system characterizes the literary and the artistic worlds from the 1960s onward and is at the roots of major projects in the history of the artist's book such as *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations* by Ed Ruscha. (1963)² Rothenberg, as much as Peyré, relates the development of poetic innovation and experimental writing to the context of the arts in general, and of the visual arts in particular: they both underscore the intersection of the two fields (the poetic and the artistic) in moments of critical historical and cultural changes at the beginning of the 20th century in Europe and during the second half of the same century in the U.S.
- 4 In this paper I would therefore like to show how American avant-garde poetry found a way to circulate and to express its unique voice by its association - and most of the time by its collaboration - with the visual arts. In fact in the 1950s, a viable way for poetry to be read and become known was through the connection some poets were able to establish with the art world: Abstract Expressionism had shaken the art world in a way that poetry had not been capable of yet, and this had allowed such artists as Jackson Pollock and Willem De Kooning to gain both popular and artistic recognition. The art market was in full swing while the book market seemed lost in a slow and inescapable decline. Thus, at that time, young poets such as Robert Creeley and Charles Olson were looking at the arts to understand how to make what Creeley called "the shift" they were willing to accomplish in their own field.

Possibly I hadn't as yet realized that a number of American painters had made the shift I was myself so anxious to accomplish, that they had, in fact, already begun to move away from the insistent *pictorial*, whether figurative or non-figurative, to manifest directly of the *energy* inherent in the materials, literally, and their physical manipulation in the act of painting itself. Process, in the sense that Olson had found it in Whitehead, was clearly much on their minds³ (Allen D., 1979: 77)

Robert Creeley's (and Charles Olson's) *The Black Mountain Review*: Poets and Artists on the Page

- 5 Mainstream publishing did not seem to offer emerging poets any chance to discover the work of contemporary fellow writers and, at the same time, the current publications of those writers associated to the academic world were showing no new direction to young poets as Creeley and Olson. There were some exceptions, of course, as Cid Corman's *Origin* and the *Golden Goose*, edited by Frederick Eckman and Richard Wirtz Emerson⁴. But

generally, as Creeley recalls, most of the young American writers felt “a great distance from the more conventional magazines” of their time: “Either they were dominated by the New Critics, with whom we could have no relation, or else they were so general in character, that no active center of coherence was possible”⁵ (Creeley R., 1989). As American poet Gilbert Sorrentino explains, before the founding of *The Black Mountain Review*, the literary magazine associated to the Black Mountain experimental College, “one worked in a kind of numb solitude, unpublished and unread, and, more to the point, without access to those works that could have acted as direction and buttress to one’s own false starts and scribblings” (Sorrentino G., 1970: 111). What was missing was a center as much as models to look at and a community to belong to, all things that the artistic world was already partially experiencing through, for instance, the New York School.

- 6 A key moment in the development of independent publishing in the U.S. and, as a consequence, of the development of experimental poetry, was Charles Olson’s appointment as rector of Black Mountain College in the early 1950s. Olson’s interest in interdisciplinary projects combined with his desire to promote the College and to attract new students, brought about the creation of a number of original publishing activities within the College itself which thus acted as “a catalyst for the revival of the small press movement in the U.S.” (Harris M.E., 1987:197). Moreover, the College functioned as a frame that allowed many young poets to find the company and recognition they had been looking for in order to express their own poetic voices. “The way I came of age as a poet, or came into poetry at the time, it really was a company,” Creeley explains.

I’d lived in a sort of isolated manner and then suddenly arriving at Black Mountain I found here were all these peers and relationships were just validating and reassuring beyond belief. That company stayed all my life. I’d blessedly have it, had it (Creeley in Jackson B., 2005).

- 7 The history of small presses in the U.S. and Creeley’s personal career as a poet intertwine in an interesting and revealing way. In 1953, when he was still living in Mallorca (Spain), he was chosen by Charles Olson as the editor of the College’s innovative journal, *The Black Mountain Review*. Under Creeley’s supervision, *The Review* quickly became a reference for many young poets and actively contributed to the development of experimental and innovative poetics. In fact the magazine did not only give voice to unheard writers, it also brought together poets, artists and scholars who shared a common vision of the creative act and its results. It thus revealed the presence of a coherent cultural project that was being developed in the margins of established poetic and artistic theories.

For me, and the other writers who came to be involved, it [*The Review*] was a place defined by our own activity and accomplished altogether by ourselves – a *place* wherein we might make evident what we, as writers, had found to be significant, both for ourselves and for that world – no doubt often vague to us indeed – we hoped our writing might enter (Creeley R., 1989).

- 8 Moreover, *The Review* established a clear and assertive link between poetry and the visual arts through the editorial choice of pairing the work of emerging poets with that of their fellow artists⁶ and through its challenging and innovative design. In fact the first four issues, characterized by the repetition and variation of the same geometrical pattern on the front covers, have a strong visual identity and were designed by Japanese artist Kitasono Katue, who was recommended to Olson and Creeley by Ezra Pound⁷. The last three issues, associated to the artists John Altoon, Dan Rice, and Edward Corbett⁸, challenged the reader by the absence of titles (they simply appear on the spine) and by

the presence of abstract and graphic patterns showing the editor's interest in abstract expressionism⁹ (Stella R., 2010: 27, 28). Thus the first issue of *The Review*, published in 1954, embodied Creeley's cross-disciplinary approach to publishing: it was made up of poems, reviews, articles on different topics and by an eight-page visual section with lithographs by French artist René Laubiès¹⁰. In keeping with the spirit of Black Mountain College, *The Review* was clearly "in the margins" by being anti-academic and by defying the standards of current publication both by intersecting different fields and by devoting large sections to the reproduction of visual works (photographs, paintings), something that was almost unique at the time (Stella R., 2010: 26). Besides, Creeley did not only accept works from the College's students, but also published the poetry of writers who did not belong to the Black Mountain group but whose work he felt needed to be known.¹¹ Thus, as former Black Mountain student and poet Michael Rumaker recalls, *The Black Mountain Review* quickly became "a Bible" for young poets such as Rumaker himself, Ed Dorn or Joel Oppenheimer who were looking for validation and inspiration in the difficult cultural context of the McCarthy Era (Duberman M., 1972: 416).

- 9 But *The Review* was also important for its editor. In fact, the impact that Creeley's work as editor had on his own poetic practice was enormous. Through *The Black Mountain Review*, Creeley was able to articulate a visually grounded and interdisciplinary poetics that he probably would not have had the opportunity to develop otherwise. On the other hand, by publishing the work of young poets and by combining their poems with the work of contemporary painters and photographers among whom Harry Callahan, Robert Rauschenberg or René Laubiès, Creeley offered a new perspective from which to view and to appreciate poetry. *The Black Mountain Review* shaped Creeley's career as a poet as much as the history of small presses and literary magazines as *The Review* was shaped by the work of daring and innovative editors such as Creeley himself or as Charles Olson, who inspired Creeley's work and supervised each issue of *The Review*.

Jonathan Williams's Jargon Series: from Sharing a Page to Collaboration¹²

- 10 This holds even true for another figure associated to Black Mountain College: writer, photographer and publisher Jonathan Williams. Through his many interests, Williams embodied what Johanna Drucker has defined as the "synthetic and inter-disciplinary sensibility" characterizing the post-1945 activities in the arts. The accomplishments he obtained with his only work as a publisher suffice to show how, in the 1950s, "the traditional boundaries of literary, visual or other forms [had] blurred in a synthesis of new modes and new media," (Drucker J., 1993: 4) and this in a way brings us back to the European avant-gardes studied by Peyré. In fact in 1951, even before the first issue of *The Black Mountain Review* was released, Williams had already started the publication of his "Jargon series," a series of books that, by joining poetry and painting, launched the collaborative poetics characterizing the work of many poets associated with Jargon.¹³ As Mary-Emma Harris states in her book about the arts at Black Mountain College, Williams was able to look at what was going on both at Black Mountain and outside the College's marginal context, and to synthesize the different forces that were shaping American poetry. (Harris M.E., 1987: 197) Through projects where the book "is seen as a form to interrogate, not merely [as] a vehicle for reproduction," (Drucker J., 1995: 9) Williams was thus able to give birth to the first examples of artists' books produced in the U.S.

- 11 When he started his Jargon Press, Jonathan Williams solemnly proclaimed that his own mission as a publisher was “to keep afloat the Ark of culture in [those] dark and tacky times.” (Williams J. in North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame, 1998) He considered himself as part of a tradition of independent publishing starting in the 18th century and including such figures as Walt Whitman and Ezra Pound. (Henderson B., 1980: 126) Yet, he also admitted that, by publishing artists’ books, he was doing what *he* liked:

I like making well-crafted books, and poems, and images, because it pleases me to do so. And it’s nice to please some of one’s friends now and then. I have never cultivated a commercial audience. I try never to do anything just for money, and it seems to have been quite successful at that. (Beam J., 2003)

- 12 Jargon’s publications were thus parts of Williams’ personal creative activity: the specificity of their design and of the poetry chosen for the publications were not just dictated by the lack of financial means or of poetic material, but were also – and above all – expressions of a specific personality whose singularity they embodied.¹⁴ Moreover, the editorial process of combining a poem with a visual piece of work mirrored Williams’ personal found poetics: as he explained in a 2003 interview, , “a lot of [his] poetry is found”, and the thing he loves about found material is that “you wake it up, you ‘make’ it into something.” (Beam J., 2003)

- 13 *An Immoral Proposition*, (Laubiès R., 1953) featuring Robert Creeley’s poetry and René Laubiès’ drawings, constitutes a good example of Jargon’s editorial policy. Published in 1953, the year Creeley started to edit *The Black Mountain Review*, *An Immoral Proposition* presents itself as a small and apparently simple book, made of thin carton sheets tied together by a loose black cord. Creeley’s poems, printed on the back of the sheets, appear on the left-hand side of the book and face a series of Laubiès’ lithographs especially conceived for the occasion. The experiences of writing the poems that would have paired Laubies’ inks and of making the book were essential for an emerging writer such as Creeley who, in a letter to Jonathan Williams, asserted: “A poem alone is one thing but [a] poem in juxtaposition with RL/s drawings, etc., is something else again...”¹⁵ (Cappellazzo A., 1999: CD-ROM) Creeley was aware, as much as Williams was, that the book was a key step towards the development of a new poetics sustained by independent publishing. As he writes to Williams, the title of the collaboration translates the spirit of the project:

This title: *The Immoral Proposition* [...] it’s an irony, of course – but it is also, the poem is, « an immoral proposition », by the standards of the (expected) reader. The whole book is, an immoral proposition by polite standards....¹⁶ (Cappellazzo A., 1999: CD-ROM)

- 14 Among those standards against which the book established its right to exist, were the limited number of published copies – two hundred – and the new collaborative approach to publishing that it embodied, an approach where the publisher, the poet and the artist worked together towards the realization of a common goal. Yet, by denying any narrative and by demanding an almost simultaneous apprehension of both the text and the visual work, the book was an “immoral proposition” also in terms of the reader’s expectations that it deflated. Laubiès’ lithographs did not illustrate Creeley’s words: the poems were conceived as a response to the ink drawings and did not precede the visual work. In addition, the visual aspect of Creeley’s poems and their linguistic fragmentation, together with the alternated rhythm they established with the images, played a part in complicating the reading process.

- 15 Thus, *An Immoral Proposition*, together with other early Jargon publications such as *All that is Lovely in Man* (featuring Creeley's poetry and Dan Rice drawings and published in 1955) or Joel Oppenheimer's *The Dancer* (matched with drawings by Robert Rauschenberg, published in 1951) testify how, in the second half of the 20th century, small presses not only managed to circulate avant-garde poetry but actively participated in the defining process of a new challenging poetics. By allowing some publications to materialize, and by helping some talented poets to articulate their thoughts, Jargon Press, as much as James Laughlin's New York-based publishing house New Directions and Ferlinghetti's City Lights, functioned as powerful generators of new poetic and artistic ideas. Much of their merit is due, of course, to their founders' spirit and mission: Williams was not just acting as publisher and distributor, he was also creating the conditions for the birth of innovative projects by facilitating the exchange between artists and writers and by offering them a space where they could engage in an active dialogue.
- 16 The correspondence between Creeley and Williams offers many records of the publisher's attempt at making the poet aware of the originality of his voice, something which parallels Cid Corman's efforts to allow the emergence of a new poetics through his letters to the contributors of his avant-garde magazine *Origin*. In fact, correspondence was, for many unpublished poets, a way to experience 'publication' for the first time: by sharing their poems with their peers, and by exchanging comments about the possibilities of a new poetics, they managed to make their work available and public, even though just for a very limited audience. This is the case, for instance of Creeley's letters to Olson: because of its design and organization – and for the intersection of poetry and art that it displays – this correspondence can be considered as Creeley's first true experience in editing and publishing his poetic material. It truly functioned as a form of education and training for him.¹⁷ (Butterick G., 1980) Conversely, some of Olson's letters to Creeley were actually published by Creeley himself: the letters from the Yucatan, published in 1953 as his *Mayan Letters* by Creeley's Divers Press, constituted Olson's second publishing venture.¹⁸ Robert Creeley's poem "The Conspiracy," translated the reactionary value of this poet-to-poet correspondence in 1950s America:

You send me your poems,
I'll send you mine.

Things tend to awaken
even through random communication.

Let us suddenly
proclaim spring. And jeer

at the others,
all the others.

I will send a picture too
if you will send me one of you.
(Creeley R., 1982: 131)

- 17 Creeley's correspondence and his experience as editor of *The Black Mountain Review*, together with Jonathan William's publishing venture with Jargon, show how the work of a publisher demands different skills among which –and maybe above all– the ability to establish human relations. Their experience in publishing experimental poetry puts also forward the frequent overlapping of the role of the editor and that of the publisher: both

Creeley and Williams honed creative skills together with the knowledge of a precise set of rules; very often they also had to act as distributors of their work and travel the country to sell or donate their books. Thus, in the early 1950s, Williams loaded his car up with books, and travelled across the United States to give readings and distribute the first issues of the Jargon series. (Harris M.E., 1987: 202) These travels were necessary, as he explained in an interview with William Corbett in 1980, not just to distribute books, but also to meet with some of his authors, and more importantly, to “make” an audience:

I have done everything that I could possibly figure out, or that anyone has told me to do. I took on the basic American notion that if there wasn't an audience, you had to go out and find or make one. Actually *make* one, more than find one. (Williams J. in Henderson B., 1984: 120)

- 18 Thus, through their work, Williams and Creeley showed the possibility of a diversified approach to publishing: their activity was not simply reduced to the choice of an author or to book conception, but it was grounded on many different issues among which the most essential were of aesthetic and artistic nature. Yet, this interest in the creative aspect of publishing that *The Black Mountain Review* and Jargon testified was favored by—and at the same time was the product of—the specific character of small presses. In fact, the marginality and the geographic fragmentation that often characterized independent publishing, as well as its frequent lack of financial means, could also be seen as its force: the freedom these publishers had to conceive the book they wanted as well as the control they had of their work would not have been possible if they had been under the pressure of the literary market. It was actually that very market against which they were acting that brought the poets and small publishers to find an alternative way to make their voices heard. As Jacques Derrida has beautifully stated: “La liberté s’entend et s’échange avec ce qui la retient, avec ce qu’elle reçoit d’une origine enfouie, avec la gravité qui situe son centre et son lieu.” (Derrida J., 1967: 101)
- 19 In the 1950s American poets, publishers and artists allied themselves to develop a new expressive language and to make that language heard. As Yves Peyré explains, small presses and collaborative books share a more direct approach to publishing for both the poet and the artist engaged in the creative work.
- A l’évidence, l’auteur est, ici et là, [dans les cadre des petites éditions et du livre de dialogue ou livre collaboratif] bien davantage partie prenante dans la transposition de son texte en un livre qu’il ne peut l’être dans l’édition vraiment industrielle : la maquette est alors son fait (Peyré Y., 2000: 100).
- 20 By actively participating in the different stages of the editing and publishing processes, the poet who—out of choice or necessity—publishes with an independent publisher has the feeling that he can control the process through which his text becomes public. Therefore, according to Peyré, small presses seem to succeed—if not in suppressing, at least in reducing—the process of dispossession any author undergoes:
- 21 Un auteur n’aspire à rien d’autre, dans la mesure où il prend en charge la fabrication de ce livre, que de contrôler la dépossession à laquelle il consent, mieux, de posséder totalement [...] le processus de cette dépossession. (Peyré Y., 2000: 100)

Steve Clay's Granary Books: Collaboration and the « Physicality » of the Book

22 This would also explain why those poets for whom the visual aspect of their poetry is an essential component of its creation and appreciation are particularly willing to work with artists and have completely embraced the spirit of independent publishing. Let us mention Robert Creeley, Susan Howe, Charles Bernstein and many others who have acted, and still act, as both writers and editors of both their books of poetry and of their collaborative books.

23 New York-based independent publisher Steven Clay has taken on the movement started forty years earlier by Creeley and Williams and has established, since the mid-1980s, his independent publishing house known as Granary Books. The variety of Clay's production over thirty years has been displayed in a recent retrospective organized at the Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library in order to celebrate the University's acquisition of the publisher's archive.¹⁹ At first inspired by Jonathan Williams's attempt to combine poetry with the visual arts while at the same time functioning as a key reference for a whole community of writers, Clay opened a gallery space in Soho where he organized readings, exhibitions and events around the publication of collaborative works. The hybrid nature of the space itself (gallery, bookshop and then publishing house) underscored the cross-disciplinary interests that still seem to drive Clay's work:

We found 636 Broadway, doing it together with no formal plan. On the tenth floor you could display books, artist's books, that you couldn't on the ground floor [...] Dick Higgins of Something Else Press came into the store and so did the poet Jerome Rothenberg, who became and remains essential to Granary. (Corbett W., 2016)

24 The choice of basing his small press in New York was an evidence for Clay in the mid-1980s: at the time the city was the second major home for small presses in the U.S. (after Berkeley, California), and presses such as Persea Books and, more importantly, Full Court Press, were located there.²⁰ The difficulty of the project yet was to convince the artists to collaborate with poets, a problem that Williams had already encountered when publishing his *Jargon* books. Both in the 1950s and in the mid-1980s, artists were part of an established community and did not really feel the need to venture in a field—the field of poetry—which to some of them was partly unknown. Moreover, as Peyré states, the book is the poet's ground: “Le livre est la terre natale de l'écrivain, ce n'est pas avant tout le lieu de l'artiste. Il est pour ce dernier un pays étranger, une surface énigmatique à apprivoiser.” (Peyré Y., 2000: 30) In spite of the difficulty of the project, Clay pursued his idea and finally opened Granary Books which, since 1989, has become “one of the most unique and significant small publishers operating today.” Granary's mission echoes that of Jargon Press, but it also brings something new to it. As Clay explains:

For over twenty years, Granary Books has brought together writers, artists, and bookmakers to investigate verbal/visual relations in the time-honored spirit of independent publishing. Granary's mission [is] to produce, promote, document and theorize new works exploring the intersection of word, image, and page.²¹ (Clay, Mission Statement)

25 What is new in this mission statement is the emphasis Clay puts on “documenting” and “theorizing” new works: Granary does not only publish limited edition books, but it also produces trade editions and scholarly publications such as the seminal *The Century of Artists' Books* by Johanna Drucker (1995), or *The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books* by

Renée Riese Hubert and Judd D. Hubert (1999). It has thus arrived today at “a richly dialectical form of publishing,” according to poet Charles Bernstein who has often published his poetry with Granary. Clay, Bernstein continues, “takes formal self-reflection about books as a fundamental part of its projects” (Bernstein C. in Clay S., 2001: 8) and this makes the publisher a genuine collaborator, as much as the poets and the artists with whom he works. This publishing practice that Clay has adopted and partly transformed does not only engender a new literary poetics: it also produces what scholar Claire MacDonald defines as “a new poetics of publishing” that treats the activity of publication as a “self-reflexive curatorial art project for the late age of print.” (MacDonald C., 2003: 135) Writer and publisher Kyle Schlesinger echoes this statement when, in a conversation with Clay in 2004, he asserts:

At Granary you have clearly taken collaboration to another level – one that reflects a highly personal sense of involvement that exceeds the nuts and bolts of logistical coordination. « Personal publishing », for lack of a better phrase, is like curating in some respects, insofar as it’s a form of art all too often overlooked (Schlesinger K., 2010: 78).

- 26 Even if Clay introduces new elements in the practice of publication, Granary’s mission stays true to the spirit of the independent publishing it considers its model. In fact Clay’s book projects look back to Jargon’s emphasis on the materiality of the book, and this to the extent that the first publication that Clay identifies as a “Granary” book is *Wee Lorine Niedecker* by Jonathan Williams (Origin Books, 1986). As Clay explains, the book embodied several elements that remained important to him such as “an acute awareness of the book as a physical object.” Williams’ Jargon Society,
- made ample use of a diverse array of publishing formats including folding cards, broadsides, postcards, pamphlets, and books. The Jargon Society was one of two or three publishers which loomed behind the emerald curtain at the fore edge of my imagination as possible exemplars for an entity which had not yet been conceived (Schlesinger K., 2010: 78).
- 27 The multiple ways in which the books took form, and “the relation of the ‘book-ness’ to the writing itself” (Clay S. in Brossard O., 2001) were two major qualities that Clay admired in Jonathan Williams’s publications: this explains why he considered the Jargon series as one of his models when he started his publishing venture. Moreover, as he recalls, most of the poets that counted for him as a young writer (Lorine Niedecker, Charles Olson, Mina Loy, Joel Oppenheimer and Robert Creeley just to name a few) were published by the Jargon Society.²²
- 28 Creeley himself acted as a strong influence for Clay, not only for the direction that he indicated in the way form and content²³ had to be related (both in writing and in bookmaking), but also for his daring choices as editor of *The Black Mountain Review*. Indeed, through his many publications Clay also evokes *The Review*’s mission to convene different creators working together towards the accomplishment of the same goal.²⁴ Among these creators, he reasserts the importance of the typographers and binders who contribute to defining the material aspect of the books and who are given a place of honor in his works.²⁵ *Nods*, Granary Book’s first official publication (1991), does not only bear the names of the writer (John Cage) and the artist (Barbara Fahrner) whose work appear in the book, but it also shows the name of printer and typographer Philip Gallo who has given essential contribution to many other Granary’s books. This first book, that ended up being the result of a totally casual encounter between the artist, the writer, and the publisher, stands for Clay as a clear example of his working method:

This has been my way. No plan. Casual. Don't know what the book is going to be until it is done. I don't like to work with someone else's project. [...] Friends are the only people I know to work with. I trust that once something is set in motion, everything will come on time. Trust in the unknown is better than forcing things. (Clay S. in Corbett W., 2016)

Conclusion

- 29 Once again, the pleasure of sharing a common space and of collaborating with others seems to be the leading force behind the publisher's effort. The freedom in the choice of a project, and the spirit of comradeship that characterize Clay's approach to publishing appear as the common qualities of the three independent publishing ventures analyzed in this paper.²⁶ Thus even today the success of the struggle against poetic marginalization dwells in a vision that sees no boundaries between the arts. To put it in Jonathan Williams' words, one could say that the activity of *The Black Mountain Review*, of Jargon Press and, even if in a different way, of Granary Books show how "one group of smart, articulate poets managed through their interconnection and their publications to define a kind of contemporary literary history." (Bertholf R.J., 2009)

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NOTES

1. Peyré prefers the term "book of dialogue" (*livre de dialogue*) to the much more general formula of "artist's book."
2. See Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artist's Books*, and Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste, 1960-1980*.
3. Creeley, "On the Road: Notes on Artists & Poets 1950-1965", in Allen, Donald ed., *Was That a Real Poem and Other Essays*, Bolinas, Four Seasons Foundation, 1979, p. 77.
4. Cid Corman's *Origin*, Third series, issue 1, April 1966. <http://mayanletters.tumblr.com/post/136637893180/origin-1951-1986-cid-corman>
5. Creeley was mainly referring to such mainstream magazines as *The Kenyon Review* (founded in 1939 by John Crowe Ransom who served as its editor until 1959). As he explains he had "published stories" in it, and in the *New Directions Annual*, yet neither place could afford him "the actual company nor the range of [his] own work that *Origin's* second issue provided."
6. Two modernist precursors of *The Review* can be found in *Contact*, published in New York by Robert MacAlmon and William Carlos Williams (1930-1923) and devoted to the promotion of American poetry and the visual arts, and *BROOM*, published between New York and Rome in the early 1920s (1921-1924). For more details see: Ambre Gauthier, "*BROOM: An International Magazine of the Arts (1921-1924): une revue d'avant-garde américaine*".
7. *The Black Mountain Review*, first and second issue, Spring and Summer 1954. Covers by Kitasono Katue: <https://f.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/2064/files/2016/01/full0001.jpg>
8. Two artists out of this group of three will collaborate with Robert Creeley in two of his first collaborative books: Dan Rice, *All That is Lovely in Men*, and John Altoon, *About Women*, Los Angeles. Significantly enough, Robert Creeley's collaboration with Dan Rice will be published by Jonathan Williams, publisher of the Jargon Series. See *The Black Mountain Review*, issues 5 (1955), 6 (1956), 7 (1957), Covers by John Altoon, Dan Rice, and Edward Corbett. <https://f.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/2064/files/2016/01/full00011.jpg>
9. Rachel Stella's essay offers a complete description and analysis of the visual aspect of *The Review*.
10. *An Immoral Proposition*, Robert Creeley and René Laubiès, 1953: http://theses.univ-lyon2.fr/documents/getpart.php?id=lyon2.2006.montefalcone_b&part=117677
11. See also Schlesinger, Kyle, "Getting Behind the Word: Creeley's Typography".
12. Jonathan Williams' *Jargon Books*: <http://jacketmagazine.com/38/jwd02-schlesinger.shtml>
13. Jonathan Williams was a clear influence for both Creeley and Olson and his Jargon publications were seen as models by Creeley when he was editing *The Black Mountain Review*. This is confirmed by the advertisements for Jargon that appear in several issues of *The Review*. For more details see Robert, Creeley, "The Black Mountain Review".

14. Jonathan Williams was not the only publisher interested in the materiality of the book and in making well-crafted objects in the mid-1960s. David Godine's printing shop based in Boston was well-known for the craftsmanship of its books as well. As Bill Henderson emphasized in 1984, "Too often small press publications are sloppy and slapdash. Godine - carrying on in the tradition of England's nineteenth-century master printer, William Morris - publishes editions that are works of art themselves." (Henderson B., 1984: 67). Yet, Godine's approach appears different from Williams's as he seemed more concerned with the conception of well-bound and beautifully crafted manuscripts whereas the director of the Jargon series focused more on the interaction between the words and the images on the page and on the way the writing was embodied in the book production. The presence of a direct relationship between the form and the content of a book will be a leading principle for editors of the following generations such as Steve Clay (Granary Books).

15. Creeley, letter to Jonathan Williams, July 24, 1953.

16. Creeley, letter to Jonathan Williams, October 16, 1953.

17. See also, *Charles Olson and Robert Creeley: The Complete Correspondence Vol IX and X*.

18. Olson, Charles, *Mayan Letters*. Olson's first publication was *Call me Ishmael*, 1947.

19. *The Book Undone: Thirty Years of Granary Books*, Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, September 8, 2015 – January 29, 2016. See also: Jerome Rothenberg, 2015.

20. Persea Books was run by Michael Braziller who published poetry, but also fiction, nonfiction and translations. Full Court Press, founded by Joan Simon, Ron Padgett, and Anne Waldman, and run from 1974 to 1989, published young writers as well as more established authors as William Carlos Williams and Allen Ginsberg. See: Henderson B., 1984: 68.

21. Granary Books, Mission Statement. Available online: http://www.granarybooks.com/old_mission_statement. Retrieved April 30, 2017.

22. In his interview with Olivier Brossard, Clay also mentions two additional presses that acted as major influences for him: Dick Higgins' s Something Else Press, and Simon Cutts's The Coracle Press (Clay S. in Brossard O., 2001) .

23. Robert Creeley's well-known statement "Form is never more than an extension of content" functioned as a leading principle for Clay both in his writing and in his publishing activity.

24. Clay's relationship with Robert Creeley goes far beyond the simple influence of *The Black Mountain Review* on Granary Books: in fact, in more recent times (1999) Clay also published two collaborative books by Creeley: *Drawn and Quartered* with Archie Rand, and *En Famille* with Elsa Dorfman.

25. See note 14.

26. In a tribute to Clay published in 2005, Jerome Rothenberg puts an emphasis on the publisher's ability to create the ideal ground for collaboration and active exchange: "Granary collaborations aren't limited to poets and artists whose names appear on covers and title pages, but Clay calls also on the skills of typographers, printers, designers and binders (...) the process is therefore active and marked by an interdependence and coordination that has, for those of us participating, the feel of a nearly communal project – a work, even a working through, in common." Jerome Rothenberg, "Steve Clay's Granary Books: A Tribute by Jerome Rothenberg".

RÉSUMÉS

Les avant gardes européennes de la première moitié du vingtième siècle ont largement témoigné du rapport existant entre l'activité des éditeurs indépendants et la pratique de la collaboration artistique/littéraire. Des œuvres telles que *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jeanne de France* (Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay, 1913) ou *Facile* (Paul Eluard and Man Ray, 1935) n'auraient peut-être jamais vu le jour si la petite revue *Les hommes nouveaux*, ou le petit éditeur G.L.M. n'avaient pas agi en tant que médiateurs afin de permettre à ces œuvres d'arriver jusqu'au public.

Le contexte artistique et littéraire des Etats-Unis de l'après deuxième guerre mondiale, bien que différent de celui de l'Europe du début du vingtième siècle, présente des parallèles intéressants liés au rôle de la petite édition et à son encouragement de la collaboration entre les artistes et les écrivains de l'époque. En examinant le travail d'éditeurs courageux tels que Robert Creeley (*The Black Mountain Review*), Jonathan Williams (Jargon press), et plus récemment, Steve Clay (Granary Book) il est possible de remarquer comment, pendant la dernière partie du vingtième siècle, la poésie d'avant-garde américaine a trouvé un moyen de circuler et de faire entendre sa voix unique à travers son association, et le plus souvent par sa collaboration, avec les arts visuels. Pendant les années 1950, Creeley insistait pour associer, dans les sept numéros de *The Black Mountain Review* qu'il éditait, la poésie la plus novatrice de l'époque avec les reproductions d'œuvres d'artistes contemporains, et cela d'une façon tout à fait unique à l'époque. Au même moment, Jonathan Williams faisait écho à l'oeuvre de Creeley en soulignant encore plus l'activité collaborative des artistes et des écrivains qu'il choisissait de publier dans sa série de livres Jargon. Enfin, dans une période plus récente (1980), Steve Clay s'est inscrit dans la continuité du travail de Creeley et Williams en établissant sa maison d'édition new-yorkaise, Granary Books, et en publiant une longue série d'œuvres collaboratives où l'unicité des textes se matérialise dans l'apparence concrète des livres.

The early 20th century European avant-garde movements have extensively shown the connection existing between the activity of independent publishers and the practice of literary/artistic collaboration. Such works as *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jeanne de France* (Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay, 1913) or *Facile* (Paul Eluard and Man Ray, 1935), would have never been published if the little review *Les hommes nouveaux* or the small publisher G.L.M had not acted as facilitators to allow those works to reach an audience.

The artistic and publishing context of post-war America, though different from that of pre and post World War I Europe, presents interesting parallels concerning the role of small presses in encouraging the activity of collaboration between artists and writers. By exploring the work of daring editors and publishers as Robert Creeley (*The Black Mountain Review*), Jonathan Williams (Jargon press), and more recently, of Steve Clay (Granary Books) it is possible to see how, during the latter part of the 20th century, American avant-garde poetry found a way to circulate and to express its unique voice by its association - and most of the time by its collaboration - with the visual arts. In the 1950s Creeley insisted to match, in the seven issues of *The Black Mountain Review* that he edited, the most innovative poetry of the time with the reproductions of works by contemporary artists, and this in a way that was totally unique at the time. Jonathan Williams, through his Jargon series of well-crafted books, echoed Creeley's work and put an even stronger

emphasis on the activity of collaboration between the artists and the writers that he chose to publish. In more recent times (1980) Steve Clay took on the movement started years earlier by Creeley and Williams and, by establishing his publishing house known as Granary Book, began publishing a long series of collaborative works where the specificity of the writing is directly embodied in the material aspect of the book.

A menudo, las vanguardias europeas de la primera mitad del siglo XX han atestiguado de la relación entre la actividad de los editores independientes y la práctica de la colaboración entre arte y literatura. Obras como las de *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jeanne de France* (Blaise Cendrars y Sonia Delaunay, 1913) o *Facile* (Paul Eluard y Man Ray, 1935) nunca hubieran existido si la pequeña revista *Les hommes nouveaux*, o el pequeño editor G.L.M. no hubieran actuado como mediadores con el fin de que dichas obras pudiera llegar al público.

El contexto artístico y literario de los Estados Unidos después de la segunda guerra mundial, aún diferentes de lo que pasó en la Europa de principios del siglo XX, presenta paralelismos interesantes relacionados con el papel de la pequeña edición y sus incentivos para que colaboren artistas y escritores de la época. Al examinar el trabajo de editores valientes como Robert Creeley (*The Black Mountain Review*), Jonathan Williams (Jargon press), y más recientemente, Steve Clay (Granary Book), es posible señalar cómo, durante la primera parte del siglo XX, la poesía vanguardista estadounidense ha conseguido que circule y se pueda escuchar su voz única a través de su asociación, y muy a menudo gracias a su colaboración con las artes visuales. Durante los años 50, Creeley insistía para que se asociara, en los siete números de *The Black Mountain Review* que editaba, a la poesía más novadora de la época con las reproducciones de las obras de artistas contemporáneos, y ello de manera completamente original para la época. Coetáneamente, Jonathan Williams hacía eco a la obra de Creeley al subrayar aún más la actividad colaboradora de los artistas y los escritores a los que escogía publicar en la serie de libros suyos, Jargon. Por último, en un periodo más reciente (1980), Steve Clay se inscribía en la continuidad del trabajo de Creeley y de Williams, al crear su editorial neoyorquina y publicar una larga serie de obras de colaboración en las que el carácter único de los textos se materializa en la apariencia concreta de los libros.

INDEX

Mots-clés : The Black Mountain Review, Jargon Press, Granary Books, petits éditeurs, collaboration, livres d'artiste, États-Unis.

Palabras claves : The Black Mountain Review, Jargon Press, Granary Books, pequeños editores, colaboración, libros de artistas, Estados Unidos.

Keywords : The Black Mountain Review, Jargon Press, Granary Books, small presses, collaboration, artist's books, U.S.A.

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