

like the idea of going straight in (.) does (.) in soliloquy (.) does Goldsmith tell the reader what he's doing (1.0) or does he just start straight in

Simon Morris: (.)

Howard Britton: no (.) he just goes straight into it with what he calls Act 1 (.) so (.) I like the idea of no explanation

Simon Morris: (.) (.) (2.0)
(1.0)

(.)

Howard Britton: um-hm

Simon Morris: (.)

Howard Britton: well (.) I think the contextual frame (.) It's important (.) umm (.) but it's part of a bigger view I have of what his work's doing (.) because I think that (.) umm (1.0) he represents what I call an attack on language (.) I think that will come clear as we have our conversation but an attack on language is what I understand as poetry at least from a psychoanalytic perspective (.) shall we start with this idea of poetry (.) in psychoanalysis and link it to Goldsmith's work

Simon Morris:

Howard Britton: because (.) I've (.) um (.) I'd like to use the psychoanalytic definition of poetry if I'm going to call him a poet (.) I think that people have called him a poet and there are his own books of poetry as well (.) but (.) um (2.0) the psychoanalyst Pierre-Gilles Guéguen describes poetry as a schizophrenia or an attack on language (.) um (.) he claims that language for the poetic art (.) umm (.) is an attempt to try to reign in (.) the delicious jouissance of words (.) now we've talked about jouissance before as the (.) the sort of satisfaction at the level of the drive and not at the level of language (.) I mean it is an enjoyment that does not pass through the circuits of the Other (.) now I think (.) for me (.) Kenny Goldsmith's work is at the level of removing the context that supports words as language (.) I mean language as meaning (.) and returning them to the side of the drive (.) words stripped of meaning become objects (.) um (.) which is an impossible task and that

impossibility for me produces a kind of jouissance (.) because I think jouissance can only emerge within some limits (.) or against some limits (.) uhh (.) or posit some limits (1.0) much like your own work (.) I think (.) Goldsmith takes away the context that provided one limit (.) to give it a meaning (.) and puts it into a different context (.) um (.) to remove meaning and then he puts it back into a book form which is the grand irony of his work in one sense (.) that he destroys language and yet still contains it within a frame (.) I mean the way he uses the book (.) because the book is usually seen as the container of meaning (.) so in Goldsmith's work he destroys language by a removal of the container of the meaning in language (.) and sometimes it may be the syntax of the language (.) sometimes it may be the other speaker of the language like in soliloquy (.) umm (.) or it may be just a (.) huge (1.0) mismatch of language in the way that he sometimes works within his poetry writing (.) his specific poetry (.) um (.) but I think that context is really important (.) I've said that (.) umm (2.0) what he does is removes the context from language (.) making language into an object in this case (.) yes he makes language into an object (.) he removes it from the context in which it occurs where it's not an object (.) it's a meaning but he reduces it back to an object and he removes it from the context which gave it meaning and places it somewhere else (.) in a new context (.) another scene (.) so he is drawing attention to three (.) three registers or three places (.) where it was and therefore the assumptions (.) that have kept it in that place (.) where it is now and what that tells us about the new context (.) and-and the new place (.) and (1.0) within that there's a transformation of language into the object itself (.) and so there's a third reading of it as well (.) and (.) umm (.) according to (.) to Lacan (.) um (.) there's a proximity between poetry and the language of the unconscious (.) umm (.) and he believes (.) Lacan formulates a term *lalangue* (.) which (.) um (.) is an infiltration into language of jouissance and for me I think that's what (.) um (.) *lalangue* refers to (.) a use of language as a plaything (.) so the child (.) before it learns to speak (.) I mean to create a meaning (.) will play with words to enjoy them independently of meaning (.) of the Other (.) and I see that kind of regression at work in Kenny Goldsmith's work as well (.) but what it is (.) is that we infiltrate a jouissance into language when actually language has been drained of its meaning in the newspaper report that he rewrites (.) in the (.) um (.) weather forecast in his most recent work (.) it's been drained of all meaning and I think (.) sometimes (.) a very dubious meaning (.) because I think in the weather report idea the weather report is a very (.) um (.) structured (.) formalised use of language but it's a use

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Howard Britton: but I'm quite interested in that other term you've mentioned of (.) um (.) uncreative (.) because I've wondered how to interpret what he says (.) when he mentions uncreative (.) on one level I just see it as (.) as an attempt to reject a formal aesthetic (.) uhh (.) in his art practice we usually think of art as a creative activity and he wants to be uncreative for his 39th year of practising uncreativity or whatever it is that he says (.) but (1.0) not only that though (.) it-it's (.) uncreative to the extent that I'd say he's working with readymades and the readymades are actually words (.) and he's found words as readymades again and he reassembles them (.) and that's where his uncreativity is in the (.) in the process of (.) um (.) stripping the normal creative function of meaning and taking that out and finding the words once again as readymades to put into some other form (.) but the other form is outside any aesthetic (.) and therefore (.) it-it's (.) for me (.) an uncreative form (.)

Simon Morris: (.)
 (.) (.) "I'm training them to forget"¹ (.)

(.) "I'm training them to forget everything they've ever learned about writing (.) their ego (.) their sense of narrative"² (.)

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Howard Britton: but-but what is the ego (.) uh (.) the ego is meaning (1.0) psychoanalytically speaking (.) the ego is the thing that has the identity of the (.) um

Simon Morris:

Howard Britton: that’s right (.) yeah (.) yeah

Simon Morris:

(.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.)

“what this institution cannot bear (.) is for anyone to tamper with language (2.0) it can bear more readily the most apparently revolutionary ideological sorts of ‘content’ (.) if only that content doesn’t touch the borders of language and all of the juridico-political contracts that it guarantees (.)”³

(.) (.) (.) (.) (.)

Howard Britton: that-that’s what I mean when I say then (.) that (.) um (.) as I said earlier that he shows us how language functions by removing it from the context in which it occurs (.) and that-that draws attention to the assumptions that take place (.) what you’re saying (.) reminds me very much (.) of the (.) I think it’s the foreword by Foucault to (.) uh (.) Deleuze and Guattari in (.) uh (.) it must be (.) it must be (.) A Thousand Plateaus (.) I think or (.) or (1.0) maybe its just Anti-Oedipus where he talks about non-fascist living (.) and the idea of removing the frame (.) umm (.) to show the levels of oppression and the assumptions we make about that (.) how that structures our world and our way of understanding the world (.) I think that (.) that’s a very important element of his work (.) and I think it’s one that fits very much with that view that we see in Deleuze and Guattari about the way in which there is an effect of (.) umm of liberation (.) in (.) art practices (.) when they’re at their (.) their best (.) and that liberation is not necessarily in terms of a politics of liberation but it’s the creating of a subjective space (.) in relation to (3.0) the political (.) and the newspaper as we saw when we worked with our ideas on Metzger in a similar way (.) the newspaper is one of his mediums that he likes to

work with (.) or one of his materials (.) and because the newspaper is (.) is replete with meaning (.) but it's also a very powerful tool in its own right (.) uhh (.) to (.) to keep us structured and to maintain the political realm (1.0) Kenny Goldsmith's work doesn't disrupt (.) doesn't counter the politics (.) what he does is he creates a subjective space which is far more subversive (1.0) far more radical than opposing politics with politics (.) or (.) um (.) meaning with new meanings (.) of one master discourse with another (.) he is more interested in evacuating meaning and draining meaning away from situations (.) to create a space for something else to emerge (.) that I call the subjective I think (.) the subjective space is the (.) the space that one finds outside the dominant discourses (.) the dominant meaning (.) and it's useless (.) it has no intrinsic value (.) it's-it's not an interest that capitalism would have (.) so it will never be an exchange value or a market value (.) and it will always escape any kind of recognition (.) so we (.) we are operating on the margins (.) between the visible and the invisible on one level (.) which (.) because he himself has made a series of books that are predominantly invisible (.) despite their vastness (.) in a sense (.) seems (.) seems very (.) very appropriate as a way of looking at his work as well (.) I was (.) when I first came across his work (.) I was aware myself of also becoming interested in Jazz and in particular in Jazz the way that it-it-it takes a theme and it destroys it (.) to find out on one level what on earth that theme is about (.) so there's a lot of play within it (.) and (.) for me (.) not all Jazz is like this but the best Jazz is that which almost disintegrates (.) which is on the edge which defines a rim (.) into a cacophony (.) which is presumably (.) is not a dissimilar idea to your maelstrom of words (.) and it's the same kind of thing (.) Jazz for me is breaking down a lot of meanings and (1.0) is always on the edge of total disintegration and destruction of the meaning (.) but the good Jazz musician can bring that together again (.) um (.) at their end of their set or whatever it might be (.) but in a new context (.)

Simon Morris: (.) (.) (.)
(.) (.) (.)
(.) (.) (.)
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"all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy (.) all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy (.) all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy (.) all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy (.) all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy (.) all work and no play makes Jack a dull

language (.) the blizzards of words (.) and I think (.)
 there's no (.) it doesn't surprise me that you enjoy (.)
 umm (.) Kenny Goldsmith's work so much because (.)
 he is working (.) in many respects (.) with the same
 preoccupations as yourself about this (1.0) and (.) and
 that's too why I think it's a very ethical work and a very
 (1.0) um (.) uhh (.) and a very (.) I don't know (.) it's
 possibly a (.) very (.) umm (2.0) I suppose very ethical
 is all I can say about it (1.0) because it-it (1.0) its true
 to something else (.) its true to a subjective meaning (.)
 it's not true to a universal meaning (.) and (.) language
 is a fantastic vehicle to work with because it's a
 universality (.) umm (1.0) or it presents that to us
 where as what he's doing is making it into something
 entirely personal (.) which is not entirely unlike (.) umm
 (1.0) the psychotic would do (.) the (.) the words have
 their very own meaning (.) and it reminds me very much
 of the start of a Samuel Beckett novel (.) it might be
 Molloy but it might not even be Beckett (.) I would have
 to check that for you (.) where he talks about (.) having
 a word in his mouth (.) which he sucks like a stone (.)
 umm (.) I think it is a pebble from the beach and he has
 a whole collection of them (.) and I think (.) that's (.)
 that's for me (.) the same kind of relationship when I
 talk about Goldsmith and his reduction of words as
 objects (.) they are something to suck on that one feels
 heavy and cool and sculpted on ones tongue (.) and
 which mean nothing

Simon Morris: (.) (.)
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 "language is a virus from outer
 space"⁶ (.) (.) (.) (.) (.) (.)
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 (.) (.) (1.0) (.) (.) (.)
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Howard Britton: but you can't pour language (.) as you put it (.) until you've taken the things away from it that hold it in place

Simon Morris:

Howard Britton: yeah, the supports

Simon Morris:

Howard Britton: and (.) one of the (.) that's (.) it's that structure and support that creates the meaning of the words (.) not the words themselves (.) umm (.) which (.) which I-I think is a very (.) kind of (.) psychoanalytical way of looking at language as well (.) that language only gains its meaning retrospectively (.) when you've finished speaking (.) it doesn't have a meaning until the last word's been uttered

- (.) represents a micropause in the conversation
- (1.0) represents a pause in the conversation of a one second duration
- (2.0) represents a pause in the conversation of a two second duration
- (3.0) represents a pause in the conversation of a three second duration

- hyphenated words represent a stutter

Simon Morris is an artist living in York, England. Exhibitions include BIBLIOMANIA (Printed Matter Inc., New York, USA), THE ROYAL ROAD TO THE UNCONSCIOUS (The Freud Museum, London) and RE-WRITING FREUD (An Art of Readers, Rennes, France and The 1st International Festival of Media and Electronic Art, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). He has received grants from The Henry Moore Foundation, Arts Council England and The British Council. All of Morris's work can be viewed online at www.informationasmaterial.com

Dr. Howard Britton is a teacher and a psychoanalyst with a practice in York, England.

¹ Anne Henochowicz, *Petty Theft : Kenny G Gives A's for Unoriginality*, The Daily Pennsylvanian, University of Pennsylvania, November 18, 2004.

² *Ibid.*

³ Craig Dworkin's cites Jacques Derrida in *Reading the Illegible*, Northwestern, 2003, from Jacques Derrida, *Living On: Borderlines*, transl. James Hulbert, in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, New York, Seabury, 1979, p.95

⁴ Text from Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining*, 1980

⁵ Graham Gussin, 'Out of It', *Nothing*, August and Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, Eds. Graham Gussin & Ele Carpenter, 2001, p.12

⁶ William S. Burroughs