

CONVOLUTED  
CONCLUSIONS, ~~CONVULSED~~ EFFUSIONS,  
CONVEX EXCLAMATIONS UN-  
CONJUGATED EJACULATIONS  
(spurt! spurt!) CONFOUNDED EXPECTO-  
RATIONS, etc.

Umm... gosh... lessee here - Wednesday July  
25<sup>th</sup>... just a day from Anna's 26<sup>th</sup> birthday...  
I sit + try to sum up - I have coffee +  
sandwiches - tuna on toast - in Kermit's (once Crunker's -  
Under New Management the last couple years or so)  
I muse... I looked a little bit at what I'd  
written, so far, in this megaletter - I've given up  
on writing down page ~~numbers~~ #s... this is being  
written on a Pencil Tablet ("For Home Office +  
School")... I thought it contained nothing  
but a list of poems, I was totalling up  
page number of poems that I considered  
acceptable, it says I have 114 pgs ~~of~~ so far  
of what I've tracked down... anyway my  
Pencil Tablet also contains other scribblings...  
I'm constantly uncovering stuff, I have  
about 15 notebooks, not all full,  
but literer ~~er~~ droppings lying all over  
the place... for instance, in my pencil

Tablet I find... I'm constantly writing about how to write, trying to figure it out... in quotes, so you'll know this was written a few months ago...

"the best way is simply to talk talk endlessly talk without ceasing... jotting down all fragments of consciousness, grunts of passion, stuttering splutterings of garbled speech, nearly virtually almost automatic writing, the quick sketching of whatever mental picture happens to be flickering through one's buzzing and bubbling head at the moment..."

Editing a little - some of this is worthless, but a little further down the page...

"ah the urge to write a dense multi-character swirling kaleidoscopic view of our society, all stratas all styles all voices all social stations as Tom Wolfe was urging us to do in his Harper's piece a month ago + a couple nights ago on Nightline (I guess no governments were being overthrown that night)

urging us to return to a Dickensian-Balzacian overview of the world, characters, dinner parties, neighborhoods described in loving detail and yes he's certainly got a point but I don't feel real qualified to write about such things not being a real insider, a real world traveler, a real social observer... talent lies much more in the direction of fantasy, satire, puns, dreams... though Brother's K. fave novel & had always hoped to chronicle human character in such detail & depth realism raised to the pitch of hysteria...

a ~~copy~~<sup>few</sup> notes on Tom Wolfe...

1. He sometimes writes for The National Review & I read a thing - glanced at actually - a prose-thing where he referred to "Reagan's intellect" & how can somebody advocate "realism" in fiction when they are clearly not in touch with reality if they can say "Reagan's intellect" with a straight face?

2. Lots of other people have been saying the same thing - get more journalism back into fiction & less self-indulgent toying with form - for years.

3. Lots of people are already doing what Wolfe is advocating... Robert Stone, in "A Hall of Mirrors," his 1<sup>st</sup> novel, very accurate as far as I can tell, depiction of New Orleans, with a cynical protagonist Reinhardt ~~and~~ who is an alcoholic disc jockey, lots of straight-forward, spare clean Hemingwayish (though not as tiresomely stylized) descriptions of drifters, right-wing nuts, pot smokers, social workers... a real tragic kind of novel, but honest...

Stone (~~I read~~ <sup>was</sup> this in Harper's) wrote an article about his experience taking the 1960 census in New Orleans going door-to-door, "exactly how many men women children crazy uncles + dogs are living in this seedy domicile?" obviously his experience went into the writing of the novel, "A Hall of Mirrors"...

Stone, by the way, was one of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters as described in Tom Wolfe's "Electric Kool-Aid Acid Tests"... I don't know if Wolfe uses real names in that - Kesey's name, of course... Stone's mother was a paranoid schizophrenic, he spent a lot of his early years in an orphanage run by nuns...

the other book I read by him, "Children of Light" has a character who is paranoid schiz... the book's about Hollywood, about the making of a film in Mexico, it's also very good...

Don DeLillo's more surreal and playful in <sup>most of</sup> his books but Libra draws a great deal of its material from the historical record... Libra's pretty much of a downer, but... I'll throw in what I've been writing about it for this possible independent study, to give you some idea of what I write like when I'm being critical - I've created an all purpose appendix... a few little tid-bits... DeLillo's other books... The Names is my favorite, of what I've read... it's about terrorism, recent convulsions in the Middle East archaeology, radical film making & cult killings based on the alphabet - the character in it named Paul is the one Louie said ~~was~~ was reminiscent of you, Mr. Intensity... American is his most light-hearted book... his humor is always pretty black... White Noise is

real good about academia... Running Dog is a detective novel about an allegedly pornographic film of Adolph, Eva & Company in the bunker in Berlin in the last days of the Reich, with various forces jockeying for possession of this unseen but infinitely valuable flick...

Great Jones Street is about rock'n'roll... my little paper should show his books are more or less about everything...

Walker Percy, another realist... The Movie-goer, his best book, the first one, a quick read, only about 200 pgs., set in New Orleans... a good place for fiction, I guess... my brother lived there for about 3 years or so... he told me they didn't have a law about open containers in cars until sometime in the early 1980's... a Louisiana state senator said "But I like to drink when I drive!"

A city teeming with anecdotes...

My appendix will serve in lieu of a final summing up statement - I'll jot down some stuff -

poems, etc... you asked me a couple weeks ago after an evening of Tater Boy Eries if politics was what I wanted to write about... I was hyped-up on ghostwritten fakery, subliminal corporate bullshit... but I never had a subject, per se, that I wanted to focus on... you have to focus, but once you're done, you move on to something else... skimming through my letter, I can see a couple points where I was about to talk about something & then moved on to something else... the mysterious drifter, baseball card-ogling ~~and~~ short order profile of a serial killer cook Joe has moved on, nobody's seen him in a couple months... I had a couple long-winded anecdotes about afterhours I attended, & discussions that ensued... I haven't clipped & saved much, of ~~the~~ late... taking this class, Kiddy Lit... & writing poems & editing poems for ~~the~~ those couple of readings... & this DeLillo project... the letter has gotten lost in the shuffle which is fine, I'll just throw in a few things in

the appendix, poems + whatnot... + books  
that have inspired/provoked/disturbed etc.  
me... the old PICT thing of people  
sharing what they know... I'd love to  
hear Stacey tell us what she's been doing  
with her painting what she's been looking  
at... Tom rarely writes, but the guy  
can talk like hell as you certainly know  
maybe he could just mail a tape of  
a monologue about music, he's one of those  
oral as opposed to printed-page type people...  
Steve + Mary, I'm real curious about  
what they're thinking about... + about  
the growth + development of Jade Eleanor  
+ little 9 lbs (!) Darius Michael...

so anyway... no conclusions...  
life isn't summable-uppable... you can  
write back to me + ask penetrating questions  
about the contents of this overflowing  
epistle-trough... enjoy yourself in Arizona...  
it was good to see you again...

Love,  
Jeff



## Appendix

July 26<sup>th</sup> - well, I'm up and writing a little earlier than usual... I'll type another page or so on that DeLillo piece, I was going to stop at page 5 that's just how many I had typed, but I'll do this, call you before noon... how productive of me!

I was going to list a few things... like I said at the close of this letter, I'd like to see other people we know, & friends of friends & so on, listing what they're interested in... a book I read, that concerns this listing phenomenon<sup>(sp?)</sup> is called After Everything: American ~~Cultures~~ Intellectual History Since 1945 - I don't know the author, it's a university press, it may well be out of print... ~~there~~ I have a copy somewhere - the chapter I was most impressed by was called "The Overburdened Mind"... about the explosion of culture literature historical surveys, magazines, scientific studies... how unmanageable it's become... the author quotes Walter Scott as saying that he read every book published in England ~~that~~<sup>one</sup> year...

which you could do in whatever period  
it was Scott lived in... the writer said, &  
I think he's absolutely right that we are  
still unaware of the full impact of this  
explosion of knowledge, — that it hasn't  
really sunk in... I've thought about this  
a lot... how people go on saying, "so & so  
is one of our 4 or 5 greatest living novelists"  
but I don't think there's anybody alive that's  
in a position to make that statement... who's  
read all of our novelists? Maybe you can dismiss  
certain writers by skimming a few pages...  
hardboiled, porn, many adventure tales about  
War, certain kinds of thrillers, the type of  
fantasy or science fiction novels that ~~are~~  
are a series: "Conan the Barbarian Kicks  
Arnold Schwarzenegger's Ass: #85 &  
so on... but there are something like  
200 MFA programs in creative writing  
in this country, with each person enrolled  
producing a novel or a collection of poems  
& stories... every college seems to have  
a "review" of some kind, ~~is~~ The Kenyon  
Review, the Georgia Review, The Mount Nazarene

Bible School Review etc... I think, this knowledge of excessive knowledge had something to do with my lapsing into silence in the mid to late 80's... there were emotional reasons, too, but I had the sense that even if I were published it wouldn't really matter, only a handful of people would be listening... & I guess, ultimately I had to come to the realization that you create for your own reasons, your own pleasure, whatever... I don't know if you know the anecdote about Thoreau he had a book published, I don't think it was "Walden" maybe "a Week on the (whatever river - Merrimac? - I haven't read it)"... & the book was printed up, but nobody was buying it, maybe ~~his~~ Emerson bought a copy, & Thoreau's mom, but that was about it... so Thoreau said "I know have a library of about a thousand books 800 of which I wrote myself"...

I guess that's the attitude you have to take... I try, to remind myself that Isaiah didn't know what Lao-Tzu was up to, or Chuang-Tzu, & both those Chinese

philosopher dudes were pretty much ignorant of Australian aborigine art & the aborigines didn't know jackshit about pygmy music, & I don't have a timeline in front of me so I don't know exactly who was alive at the same time as so + so, it's always fascinated me that people arrive independently at ideas. Kierkegaard didn't read Nietzsche, I don't think, but there are certain similarities. Fred N. did read Dostoevski ("the only psychologist I have anything to learn from") but Fyodor never read Fred even though there's a Nietzschean character ("if there is no God, everything is permissible") in all of Fyodor's big novels... I do believe there are certain ideas "in the air" nothing all that mysterious about it, some people are just more perceptive than others, prophets not being blessed ~~so~~ with supernatural powers, they've just got their ear to the ground & they can hear those buffalo coming... more listing...

Mark Halliday - "Little Star" - narrative,

memory poems about summer camp, The Beatles,  
his uncontrollable lust for women his  
missing notebook with jottings & possibly embarrassing  
facts about himself, & a poem called "Describers"  
that's about the information explosion...  
it's available in paperback, & it has a  
picture of Elvis on the cover! If I  
were a blurb writer, I'd say it's "hilarious  
yet poignant"...

~~Culture in a Box~~

Boxed In? Culture in A Box? - something  
like that - the subtitle has "T.V." in it -  
the author is Mark Crispin Miller - essays  
on T.V. ads, the decline of rock'n'roll,  
a 1984 campaign journal dissection of  
the news, a great tribute to Hitchcock  
& a piece called "Big Brother is You Watching"  
also by Mark Crispin Miller - the  
May '90 issue of the Atlantic - the cover  
story I told you about - Hollywood's new  
subliminal advertising

News of the Universe  $\rightarrow$  Robert By...  
Leaping Poetry

Bly's ideas, I guess, influenced ~~the~~ the way I write as much as anybody - or maybe I should say, the way I'd like to write - both books are anthologies with essays - on surrealism, the reptile brain, meditation, environmentalism, Jung...

Bly's kind of a crackpot at times. I certainly don't buy his whole worldview, but he's a fascinating thinker...

The Banquet Years → Roger Shattuck  
The Innocent Eye

modern art in general - very knowledgeable, & very readable... discusses Balzac, Apollinaire, Alfred Jarry, Proust, ~~the~~ painters like Rousseau, Dada, Eric Satie, all kinds of stuff...

Oh gosh - I'm running out of gas...  
Lautreamont - Maldoror... Lautreamont was the godfather of surrealism, & better than any of his descendants... (except maybe Robert Desnos) Maldoror is as strange as anything I've ever read,

Alice in Wonderland is about the only thing comparable... very much like Rimbaud - blasphemous, visionary, sad, & written when Lautreamont was in his early 20's - Alexis Lykiard's translation is probably the best - you'd know more than I would, Mr. French dude...

The Origin of Consciousness in the Break-Down of the Bi-Cameral Mind - Julian Jaynes - I've only glanced at this - I won't even attempt to describe his ideas - but it's fascinating... about hearing voices, self-consciousness, metaphorical thinking...

ENOUGH! (for now)