

**6b,7b~Brian Kim Stefans to Peter Jaeger and to Bill Luoma.****“friendly, natural-feeling text”**

Dear Peter,

I'm not sure I would use the phrase “violence of law” if by law you mean a set of stable standards, locked away in some pirate's chest somewhere at the bottom of the deep blue sea that only the privileged few (via the help of several semi-naked Hawaiian clam divers on Disney's payroll) can access, whether these be standards that are leveled “top down,” as in the law of the state, or more laterally, as in the “contracts” that each of us might use in negotiating with each other, say at a party or on a listserve. I have nice fantasies of absolute state control and the subsequent energizing of the rebellious populace against it, but I don't think that such a law exists (or that, consequently, any of us believe it exists enough to mobilize on a large scale, at least just yet). Our “laws” are provisional; one can't believe in the “violence of the law” if one doesn't believe in the eternal, Old Testament quality that is invested in them – I suppose the “violence of power” would be the more suitable term. (I'm not sure that frisking is merely a “symbolic gesture,” at least if you're vulnerable to the psychological violence of it and have no set of symbolic gestures, like punk garb or a foul mouth, with which to counter it; I've had several Korean relatives who were much more than frisked when passing back and forth between the countries, and it ain't fun.) But I do think there are contracts in all our sets of interactions, whether they be top down or lateral; I suppose I would hope to conflate the two, to open up this basic perception in my reader, or at least to issue myself a reminder. Laws operate in even the most minute social interactions; the potential for violence is great, not to mention theft, rape, outright maulings, even if, say, the conversation were on a polite level. These kinds of conversations occur, in my experience, most often in rave/ambient-type events, which are often filled with computer-oriented artists with no social skills; I usually feel quite violated after these events if I've talked to anyone at them, and don't know why (I blame it on Bucky Fuller). I'm very interested in the issue of “information flow” between two individuals, how much one pays attention to oneself when speaking, how much to the “other,” to the other (no quotes), to the one named Peter (the guy with the bald head, in England, author of “Power Lawn” and *ABC of reading the TRG*). I suppose this may address your final sentence: my sense is that, by pitting several writing registers against each other, I would illustrate some of the principals of the between-spaces – the “gulfs” – between these registers (by extension speech registers), taking that famous “white space” of the French and making it more carnivalesque, where all the excess, the “non-meaningful,” meanings resonate in an observable, ordered (or authored) space, which is to say I'm not interested in free-for-all type meanings in that white space, but in a prosody for it, a hopefully quite beautiful choreography of echoes, reverb, clashing, etc. This is an extension, I believe, in my interest in computer interfaces, which I obsess about when setting a text to screen; I don't consider this interest dada in nature, in the sense of jamming the waves of meaning, but architectural, in the sense of placing structures for viewing (or “from which to view”) in a once wild field. One thing I might mention in this context is that I was just interviewed by Darren Wershler-Henry in a “chat room” situation – using the ICQ software – and I was interested in how, in this text-producing medium (like email) Darren was able to cut me off mid-sentence, or at least start “talking” while I was still writing, hence putting a cork in my natural tendency toward logorrhea and wanting to complete my ideas (how silly of me!). It produced a very friendly, natural-feeling text, but with a lot of intellectual missed opportunities, hence the space between the entries was quite lively with future thinking. It was conversational but very “written,” with complete, even ornate, sentences, literary turns of phrase, the whole pantheon of textual practices, but I was nonetheless not permitted to be as self-absorbed as I usually am when constructing responses, as I am now, Pavel, to you. My point being, I suppose, that we should have fun with these laws, even this violence, and maybe even become scholars (in the Rimbaudian sense) of the sorts of possible vocabularies in social interactions (of which art is the most interesting, opaque manifestation), if only for self-preservation (though the laws for how this knowledge might become useful probably haven't been written yet). Thanks for your letter, nice to frisk it.

Best,  
Brian

(response to Bill Luoma)

**I alphabetized the phrases of my response to Peter Jaeger, then constructed useful paragraphs from the output, keeping as much alphabetization as possible, by turns adhering and departing from a very uninteresting Al Gore-ism (politics as usual). This is the title.**

1. A hopefully quite beautiful choreography of echoes... This is false.
2. I don't know why (I blame it on Bucky Fuller, and it ain't fun), but I do think there are contracts in all of our sets of interactions, and maybe even some scholars (in the Rimbaudian sense) of the sorts of possible vocabularies in social interactions. This is true.
3. In this text-producing medium (like email) Darren was able to cut me off mid-sentence. It produced a very friendly Korean relative. This is false.
4. Which art is the most interesting? any of us believe it exists enough to mobilize on a large scale? (As I am now.) This is true.
5. Laws operate in even the most minute social interactions, like punk garb or a foul mouth or literary turns of phrase, locked away in some pirate's chest somewhere at the bottom of the deep blue sea that only the privileged few (via the help of several semi-naked Hawaiian clam divers on Disney's payroll) can access. This is false.
6. I would illustrate some of the principals (Mrs. Moonache, Mr. Dixon, Dr. Killpatient) of the between-spaces, the "gulfs" between these registers (by extension speech registers), if only for self-preservation (though the laws for how this knowledge might become useful probably haven't been written yet). Hence the spaces between the entries were quite lively with future thinking. This is true.
7. A lot of intellectual missed opportunities. I've had several which were much more than frisked when passing back and forth across the countries. This is false.
8. In the "contracts" that each of us might use in negotiating with each other, in the law of the state (at least if you're vulnerable to the psychological violence of it and have no set of symbolic gestures, at least just yet, ye author of *Works & Days*), are architectures, but I don't think that such a law exists (or that I was nonetheless not permitted to be as self-absorbed as I usually am when constructing responses – I was!) but in a prosody for it. This is true.
9. (I'm not sure that thinking is merely a "symbolic gesture.") This is false.
10. In my experience, in my interest in computer interfaces (in England), in the sense of jamming the waves of meaning, in the sense of placing structures for viewing (or "from which to view") in a once wild field, meanings resonate in an observable, most often in a rave/ambient-type, event. This is true.
11. One thing I might mention in this context is that I was just interviewed by Darren Wershler-Henry in a "chat room" situation – using the ICQ software – and I was interested in Pavel. This is false.
12. My point being: natural-feeling text, not to mention theft (Old Testament quality that is invested in it) – I suppose the "violence of power" would be the more suitable term (say at a party or on a listserve) – which I obsess about when setting a text to screen (which is to say I'm not interested in free-for-all type meanings in that white space) is complete. This is an extension, to open up this basic perception in my reader, to the one named Peter (the guy with the bald head, the other [no quotes]), to you, where all the excesses, whether these be standards that are leveled "top down" or whether they be top down and lateral (which are often filled with computer-oriented artists with no social skills with which to counter it) take that famous "white space" of the French and make it more carnivalesque. We should have fun with these laws. This is true.

13. One can't believe in the "violence of the law" if one doesn't believe in the eternal rape and reverb. This is false.

14. Pitting several writing registers against each other, clashing, consequently, "etc." with (ornate) violence puts a cork in my natural tendency toward logorrhea and wanting to complete my ideas (how silly of me!). This is true.

15. I'm not sure I would use the phrase "violence of law" if by law you mean a set of stable standards. I'm very interested in the issue of "information flow" between two individuals. I am conversational but very "written" (opaque manifestation), or at least started "talking" while I was still writing. I wrote, say, sentences, the "non-meaningful," the conversation on a polite level (the potential for violence was great), the whole pantheon of textual practices. These kinds of conversations occur, or at least issue me a reminder – "MORE LATERALLY ORDERED (OR AUTHORED) SPACE." This is false.

16. Our "laws" are provisional, outright maulings. This is true.

17. I have nice fantasies of absolute state control and the subsequent energizing of the rebellious populace against it. I suppose this may address your final sentencing. This is false.

18. How much one pays attention to oneself when speaking, how much to the "other," I believe, is an interest I don't consider dada in nature. I suppose I would hope to conflate the two. My sense is that I suppose I usually feel quite violated after events if I've talked to anyone at them. This is true.

Dear Bill,

I think you can make one of your boxes from this text: there are 18 phrases, 9 true and 9 false, though I don't know if, as nodes of meaning, they are stable enough to either stop or start (or support) a programmatic application of them, whether in life or love. Of course the box would be 3 x 3, not 4 x 4, but I suppose an interesting Flash piece could be in the works: over a period of time, the user interacts, and is variably confronted with sets of 9 true or false phrases, not knowing which are which, but could be in different states of deceptive or honest interaction with my beliefs, hence creating aesthetic effects (and opinions about "me") ranging from the Oppenish ("true") to the Bernsteinian ("false"), though it would be up to him/her to determine, based on a moment-by-moment observation of mood, the nature of the aesthetic experience. Is this on the sadistic <--> masochistic axis here, or on the sympathetic <--> apathetic? These statements are not truly Boolean in any way ("like a stopped watch / right twice a day"), but if I am being truthful (though not "true") in my declarations of truth and falsity, you may have a way of coming to know me, though perhaps not the "truth." And if I am being false, you are equally prepared; the flirtation with either pole at different seconds of the day ('s interaction) is what's interesting. I prefer the pastoral analogies of meandering through a (Finlay-ish) garden rather than the urban analogies of walking through a maze of (Watten-ish) hallways when programming; the first is wild, the second structured, hence algorithms that I use, which often suggest constructivist rigor, are not interesting unless Allen Ginsberg is tossing banana salamanders from the tops of furious green Tarkovskian potato trees. (Yes, ambiguity, but the assurance of fleshy bodies as well). I think computer code is beautiful in the same way that plans for the day are beautiful: they are maps for possible interactions with the world ("hello world" in Kernighan Ritchie's *Collected Poems*), but as we know some of our best days are the worst planned (which seems what *Works and Day* is all about, in a way, structure duping the fallible, failing human body and vidi-versa). As for Chomsky: I confess to never having read him closely, nor any of the linguists who seem bent on "final descriptions" of deep syntax and grammar, but I identify strongly with the effort; I suppose my way of dealing with this ignorance is to produce "pointer-texts" (which operate, I suppose, like pointer variables in C++), texts which don't claim "essential" content of their own but which reflect, and influence, the content and/or social status of an original text (I link the idea also to Smithson's "non-sites," which I also don't understand fully, though I was born there: Rutherford, NJ). Of course, this is a form of recursion; forgot you mentioned that. I don't think algorithms need be foregrounded (eh, Jackson?), but I have had experiences, in my computer work where users (eh, Marjorie?) thought there was a bug in the application when it was really a "feature," a matter I think resulting partly from generational gaps since anyone who

has seen jodi.org knows a bug is always a feature. I think it's just a matter of time before people can see the revealed codes, or the dialogic play between process and subject, beneath the apparent splatter of data-panicked poetry in the same way they see the balletic motions of the alcoholic painter Ed Harris when looking at "Lavender Mist, No 1. (1950)" or "She Wolf (1943)" at MoMA – we can, and should, leave it to the movies! Thanks for your interesting letter (you're a much more accomplished programmer than me, by the way); hope I got to at least a few of the issues therein.

Love,  
Codin' O'Brien