Neither Us nor Them:
Poetry Anthologies, Canon Building and the Silencing of William Bronk

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The surest, and often the only, way by which a crowd can preserve itself lies in the existence of a second crowd to which it is related. Whether the two crowds confront each other as rivals in a game, or as a serious threat to each other, the sight, or simply the powerful image of the second crowd, prevents the disintegration of the first. As long as all eyes are turned in the direction of the eyes opposite, knee will stand locked by knee; as long as all ears are listening for the expected shout from the other side, arms will move to a common rhythm.

(Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*)

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Part I

"So Large in His Singleness"

By 1960 William Bronk had published a collection, *Light and Dark* (1956), and his poems had appeared in *The New Yorker, Poetry*, *Origin*, *and Black Mountain Review*. More, Bronk had earned the admiration of George Oppen and Charles Olson, as well as Cid Corman, editor of *Origin*, James Weil, editor of Elizabeth Press, and Robert Creeley. But given the rendering of the late 1950s and early 1960s poetry scene as crystallized by literary history, Bronk seems to be wholly absent—a veritable lacuna in the annals of poetry. Despite evidence of his presence, it is almost as if William Bronk did not exist at least until 1982 with the National Book Award for *Life Supports: New and Collected Poems*. Bronk's erasure unveils a gap in cultural memory. Bronk's apolitical poetry was not in keeping with the political tastes of the time, yet his publications seemed to have gained a "literary" presence. Nevertheless, the silencing of poets such as William Bronk, when placed in a socio-historical context, accentuates the processes and assumptions that were central to the political and literary dialectics of late 1950s and early 1960s poetry canons and the symbolic nature of canon-building as manifest in and by the anthologies.

To fully comprehend the case of William Bronk, one must revisit the portrayal of the poetry environment of the time—the one that has been reified by literary history and originates in Robert Lowell's acceptance speech for the National Book Award in 1960 for *Life Studies*, where he off-handedly describes the current scene of American poetry as a tension between two divisive poetic positions—the "raw" and "cooked.":

> Two poetries are now competing, a cooked and a raw. The cooked, marvelously expert, often seems laboriously concocted to be tasted and digested by a graduate seminar. The raw, huge blood-dripping gobbets of unseasoned experience are dished up for midnight listeners. There is a poetry that can only be studied, and a poetry that can only be declaimed, a poetry of pedantry, and a poetry of scandal.[1]

The distinction between the raw and the cooked, filtered through the structuralist lens of Levi-Strauss as a way of differentiating the binary of "savage" and "civilized" discourse, involves both poets and readers in Lowell's assessment. Further, the depiction of two poetic camps gestures towards the tendency to categorize and reduce things into "digestible" binaries—a Hegelian dialectic of points and counterpoints that "represents" history and bears directly upon the processes of canon formations and anthologies.

In 1960, Lowell's comment articulates the conflict of poetries that had been seething throughout the 1950s and would come to a head in May of 1960 with the publication of Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry*. Donald Allen, the editor of *The New American Poetry*, conceptualized the anthology as a challenge to academically-sanctioned verse by culling a range of poets who shared the "total rejection of all those qualities of academic verse."[2] The anthology pushed to realign American poetic history around Charles Olson's conception of field composition—governed by the principles that "FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT" and "ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION"—as detailed in his "Projective Verse" and "Letter to Elaine Feinstein."[3] The structure of the anthology itself reinforces the centrality of "Projective Verse" and its challenge by placing Olson's "The

Kingfishers," with its opening line "What does not change/is the will to change," as the first poem of the anthology. *The New American Poetry*, in this regard, is a text organized around the "will to change" poetry from the confines of formal verse as championed by the New Critics into the explosive free-verse of Charles Olson and company.

More particularly, *The New American Poetry* was a direct challenge to *New Poets of England and America*, edited by Donald Hall, Robert Pack, and Louis Simpson, which was first published in 1957 and reprinted in 1962. The Hall, Pack, Simpson anthology was the assertion and culmination of what Ron Silliman refers to as "Eurocentric closed verse form,[4] as emphasized by the title—*New Poets of England and America*—whereby the lineage/tradition with British literature is maintained. Moreover, the poetry of the Hall et. al. anthology is an assembly of traditional verse forms either as sonnets, sestinas, villanelles or poems that rely upon regular rhyme patterns as discursive poetic strategies typified by the rhyming couplets of Donald Hall's "Marriage" wherein the subjective intimacy of the bedroom is exposed to the reader's gaze: "When in the bedded dark of night/I touch your body huddled tight," which yields "special knowledge then /That crosses and will cross again." [5]

As Marjorie Perloff observes,

> In 1960, the Age Demanded that a poem be self-contained, coherent, and unified: that it present, indirectly to be sure, a paradox, oblique truth, or special insight, utilizing the devices of irony, concrete imagery, symbolism, and structural economy. [6]

Along with its "special knowledge" partially (and voyeuristically) divulged from the privacy of the bedroom, "Marriage" stresses craft above ideas. Charles Altieri notes that the "emphasis on craft […] produced a highly inbred professionalism governing both the training of artists and the judgment of their work."[7] *New Poets of England and America* further valorizes craft and professionalism in the introduction to the anthology, written by the arch-champion of traditional verse, Robert Frost, who regards the academy as fertile soil for the inception and reception of poetry:

> As I often say, a thousand and, two thousand, colleges town and gown together in the little town they make, give us the best audiences for poetry ever had in all this world. I am in on the ambition that this book will get to them—heart and mind. [8]

Frost's narrative reifies Lowell's depiction of the civilized readers digesting civilized poetry within a "cultured" academic setting. In this context, *New Poets of England and America* valorizes academic verse, which is implicit in the title with its suggestion of the continuation of a literary history and tradition wherein the poets collected are a "new" manifestation of an established tradition. In contrast, the "new" of *The New American Poetry* modifies poetry and emphasizes a mode of poetics that breaks with history and its emphasis upon craft. The challenge is, on the surface, an issue of new, antinominal poetics versus staid literary tradition and continuity—the either/or conflict between the "raw" and the "cooked," "projective-open poetry" and "closed-formal verse," or poetry that can be "studied" and poetry of "scandal." These poetic groupings of "new poets" versus "new poetry" are fueled by the tension that generates a sense of collective belonging. Such tension signifies the crisis of post-1950s American poetry, and explains the heated rhetoric and the militant patrolling of the borders of each camp that manifest most distinctively as the official party organ—the anthology.

Given this clash of poetic ideologies in and around the time of Robert Lowell's speech and the publication of *The New American Poetry*, the question begs to be asked, what if a poet is not easily grouped in either camp? Or, what if a poet displays attributes that belong to both camps? After all, with such a historical narrative of literary history where the world is split into either the Robert Lowell-New Critical-Academics or the Charles Olson-Projective-Non-Academics, what happens to a poet whose work defies the categorical imperatives upon which a dialectic model of canon formation depends? In other words, what happens to a poet like William Bronk, who doesn't fall neatly into the "us" or "them" camp but has characteristics of both? While it is naïve to assume that the anthology is the representation of all the worthwhile poetry of a particular period or thematic focus, yet an anthology, even more so than the works of individual poets, is the integer of major figures: a hierarchy is proposed that situates itself and its schematic poetic structure in relation to literary history. The repercussions of not fitting into the prescribed roles upon which the anthology depends is to be excluded from the dialogues of literary history. To be passed over by the anthology is to be silenced. In this light, the case of William Bronk is particularly instructive.

As most readers of Donald Allen's groundbreaking anthology are aware, William Bronk is not included in the cast of poets assembled within *The New American Poetry*. But what might be surprising to many is that Bronk was invited by Allen to contribute to the anthology and he was the final person to be cut from the final manuscript. On the 20th of July, 1958, Allen wrote to Bronk that "Both [Robert] Creeley and [Cid] Corman have urged me to ask you for poems" for an "anthology of modern American poetry."[9] In response to Allen's invitation, Bronk sent him *Light and Dark*, the "little collection that Corman published in '56.'"[10] Nine days later and at Allen's encouragement, Bronk also sent his essay "The Occupation of Space: Palenque" and other unnamed poems for consideration in the Evergreen Review, which Allen edited. (Incidentally, no works of Bronk's ever appeared in the *Evergreen Review* despite a series of letters between Allen and Bronk.)

In terms of Allen's editing of the final manuscript, Bronk was one of the seven cut from the final manuscript—along with Judson Crews, Paul Goodman, Joanne Kyger, David Lyttle, Jack Micheline, and Stan Persky—and according to the dates on Allen's rejection letters, Bronk was by far the final person cut.[11] As late as the 8th of September, 1959, Allen still intended to include Bronk in what was to become the first part of *The New American Poetry*, the "Origin/Black Mountain" section.[12] Yet on the 29th of December, 1959, one week after making the final editorial decisions for the manuscript, Allen wrote to Bronk remarking that,

> After struggling with the anthology for two years, I finally got it into shape and found that I had to limit it drastically in scope. In the end I was unable to include any of your work, much as I admire it. I regret this very much. I am returning your *Light and Dark* with this note and my best thanks.[13]

The gist of Allen's editorial decision is left largely unexplained; i.e., how does Bronk's work not fit the shape and scope of Allen's "vision." Moreover, the specifics of Allen's decision are not addressed in either the collected Allen papers at the University of California, San Diego Poetics Library or Bronk's collected papers at Columbia University Butler Library. Even more interesting, despite a period of correspondence throughout 1958 and 1959, neither Allen nor Bronk recalled that they had ever corresponded; and when asked what he had sent, Bronk seemed surprised since he did not recall that he even had been invited to be part of *The New American Poetry*; [14]

consequently, both the poems that Bronk sent in addition to *Light and Dark* as well as the crux of Allen's editorial decision remains a void within the continuum of literary history.[15]

The gap in Bronk's and Allen's more recent memory of these events, though, is perhaps symptomatic of cultural memory in that the exclusion from *The New American Poetry* created an aporia that drastically impacted the inception and reception of William Bronk's poetry. The gap in Bronk's and Allen's memory is the "natural" result of Bronk being relegated, in that moment of rejection, to the margins of "major" poetry. Bronk's absence in most subsequent anthologies that followed in Allen's wake is a "natural" extension of Allen's earlier but unarticulated decision. But because of this seemingly definitive moment, where Bronk was almost amongst the now canonical patriarchs of the 1960s, Bronk's poetic cache is particularly intriguing to the processes of canon formations and the closed and limited network upon which history is construed.

The rationale for Bronk's omission from *The New American Poetry* should be fairly obvious to those familiar with Allen's famous anthology. First, Allen organized the anthology into five more or less geographic communities: Black Mountain, the San Francisco Renaissance, the Beats, the New York Poets, and a fifth group with "no geographic definition," although those poets tend to be affiliated with the San Francisco Renaissance more so than any other grouping.[16] Situated in Hudson Falls, New York, William Bronk is clearly not a geographic member of the Black Mountain group nor any of the others, although he published in the *Black Mountain Review*. The geographic structure of "communities" of poets was established in September 1959 in an exchange of letters between Allen and Creeley, from which Allen adhered to Creeley's suggestions for the sections—although Creeley suggests seven with a section dedicated to the "Patriarchs" of the anthology (Zukofsky, Olson, Rexroth, and Duncan) and with the San Francisco Renaissance divided into an early and later period. Originally, Allen had conceived of the anthology as a more "complete" literary history that would have included the "first generation" of American poets who established the foundation for poets of *The New American Poetry*: William Carlos Williams, H.D., e.e. cummings, Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, and Wallace Stevens, who would be followed by "Rexroth, Patchen, and Zukofsky."[17] In this schema, the poets of *The New American Poetry* would constitute the "third" generation of this tradition. Such a structure would contextualize the anthology and legitimize it within a poetic lineage that included the modern and high modern poets. The anthology, conceived along these historic lines, would present an alternative literary history with distinctive American roots as opposed to a British centered poetic tradition *of New Poets of England and America*.

Charles Olson, though, quashed the idea of including the "Patriarchs" section, remarking that,

> I wouldn't myself add either of those two units: either the 'aunties' or the grandpas. If the thing we are now in is just in its own character, and there isn't one of us who isn't bound together in that way, than by any of those older connections. In fact those connections strike me as smudging the point; 1950 on. [sic throughout][18]

Allen says of Olson's remark that "That decided it for me; I would concentrate on the new poets […]."[19] In essence, Olson wished to divorce contemporary poetry from the "old" and thereby valorize its "newness." An extended historical view might undermine the explicit agenda of proposing a "fresh" image of poetry, which was clearly the task that Olson as well as other poets who played a large part in shaping the anthology had envisioned. For example, Allen Ginsberg, in a letter dating May 1958, described Allen's anthology as,

> a great bomb [that would] clear the air almost immediately of all the doubting critical bullshit—most of the material will come as a complete surprise to a place say like the English depart[ment] at Columbia—or people like Simpson (silent gener) & Timbimatu (ignorant preface to new New World Writing poetry selection […] was just dumb statements about prissy lifeless poetry.) There have been a few anthologies of young US poetry lately & not one of them has introduced anything new—here you have this tremendous goldmine to unload all at once—should be a historic piece of publishing […]. Maybe save the world! [20]

The thrust of *The New American Poetry* was to challenge traditional verse—what Ginsberg calls "prissy lifeless poetry"—under the banner of "Projective Verse." If Olson's "Projective Verse" is the fetishized paradigm of the "new," then certainly in comparison, Bronk's work with its more-or-less regular line lengths—usually iambic pentameter—and the "normal" appearance of the poem upon the page in uniform stanzas falls within the suspect category of the "old" and academic. Bronk's work lacks the explosive visual excess of "open" verse, and his poetry was "digestible" for the academic palate, which is confirmed by the fact that some of his early poems appeared in the *New Yorker* and *Poetry* as well as *Origin* and the *Black Mountain Review*.

For example, Bronk's "The Marches Upstate," collected in *The World, The Worldless* (1964) but first published in *The New Yorker* in 1949, shares more with "closed" poetry than the thrust of Olson's field by composition. The final two stanzas of the poem read:

> Road-gashed, it is road-gashed
> and wire-strung. What green,
> what sun, shall flesh and warm the flesh?
>
> Loved land, unlovely, none can fit
> you, for you have no shape.
> Mirror in March my human face. (*LS* 51)

Composed in five uniform stanzas of three lines, the poem is structured around a number of slant rhymes such as "gashed" and "flesh"; "fit" and "face"; "shape" and "face"; and "gashed" and "green." While not a regular rhyme pattern, the poem suggests "closed" tendencies, and in the early 1950s, Olson contemptuously and suspiciously regarded Bronk as a "neo-classicist" (although he would later revise his opinion in 1957 in response to *The World, The Worldless*). Furthermore Olson remarked to Cid Corman that "I am so sick of this sort of thing you show me from Bronk—the green of it, the green-sick, too—the bad-headedness, as well as the manners." [21] The key term to Olson's dismissal is "manners"—a socially coded word that locates Bronk within the genteel "neo-classicist" tradition that smacks of Robert Lowell's depiction of "cooked" poetry. Olson's assessment of Bronk as poetically other—the "enemy" of the "New" poetry—certainly may have influenced Allen's decision to exclude Bronk although no evidence exists that might corroborate such a claim. Nevertheless, clearly Bronk was regarded as neither "projective" nor "new" enough and, therefore, not suitable for *New American Poetry*.

The difference between the poetics of Bronk and Olson helps to explain Bronk's exclusion from *The New American Poetry*, but his exclusion needs to be considered within another context that clearly supercedes "aesthetic" considerations—the socio-political nature of canon building. That is, the first section of the anthology was to be the "Black Mountain/*Origin*" section—and neither

Bronk nor Corman are included in the *New American Poetry*. After all, Corman considered the two poles of the magazine to be himself and Bronk—and not the "Black Mountain" poets. As he remarks,

> Against [Bronk's] fixedness in Hudson Falls has been my movement around the world, so that *Origin* has had both the specific gravity of the local and the scope of the larger world community.[22]

Bronk was an anchor around which Corman's poetry and translations " revolved." More, "Bronk […] is clearly […] the thread that binds all the issues together."[23] Turning to *Origin*, Bronk's "Some Musicians Play Chamber Music For Us" appeared in the first issue and then "The Acts of the Apostles" and "My Father Photographed with Friends" were published in the Fall 1951 issue of *Origin* (#3) and his work appeared in 13 of the 20 issues, including a Bronk "special issue" (January 1969) and two poems in the final issue (January 1971). Subsequently, to not include Bronk in the Black Mountain/*Origin* section of *The New American Poetry* was not to represent the "gist" of *Origin*; yet to exclude Corman from the anthology was to disavow *Origin* altogether.

Nevertheless, Allen did not cut Corman, who had served as a very important advisor from the inception of the anthology to its completion. Rather, Corman asked to be removed for professional reasons:

> Would you do me a kindness and omit me from your anthology? I realise I have signed a contract and if the book is well on its way toward being published, I dont want to spoil it for you—but I am convinced that neither you nor Rosset has any genuine interest in my work. And I am not at all in sympathy with EVERGREEN REVIEW or Grove's policies in choice of material or in dealing with writers. [sic throughout][24]

Bronk was still considered for the final version of *The New American Poetry* six months after Corman's "resignation,"[25] so Corman's "revolt" against "Grove's policies in choice of material or in dealing with writers" was not a response to Bronk's exclusion. Corman's vision, though, seems prophetic in hindsight in that it anticipates how Bronk would be treated. Nevertheless, the severing of Corman, the only other person who might have bridged Bronk and "Projective Poetry," made Bronk's position within a manuscript bound by its "anti-closed" poetry stance tentative and awkward.

In terms of poetics, Corman's poetry clearly parallels Bronk's. For example, Corman's "I Have Come Far to Have Found Nothing" shares much with Bronk:

> I have come far to have found nothing
> or to have found that what was found
> was only to be lost, lost finally
> in that absence whose trace is silence.[25]

The poetics of interrogation and statement as well as the ideational content echoes the thrust of Bronk's work. Consider the above against the ending of Bronk's "Loew's World":

> This unreality is one we know:
> the actual is no more real than this.

I turn in my seat for the reassurance of you,
your substance which is there. Wanting a land
for our weather, a world of solid shapes, not one
the light made, we think to leave,—for where? (*LS* 53)

Clearly, Corman and Bronk are working from similar poetic and philosophical perspectives. But given the above two poems, now consider a more direct and narrative passages in Olson, such as this one from "Maximus, To Himself":

I have made dialogues,
have discussed ancient texts,
have thrown what light I could, offered
what pleasures
doceat allows
But the known?
This, I have had to be given,
a life, love, and from one man
the world.[26]

As an ideational pivot, Corman suggests a bridge between Olson and Bronk by emphasizing how a poetry of statement and ideas—such as Bronk's—is a mode of open poetic inquiry. Further, to quote some other lines from "Loew's World" that speak to the parallels between these passages from Olson, Corman, and Bronk, "We/are disturbed to find so much similitude" (*LS* 53), especially between two poets who have been scripted by literary history as drastically and poetically different from one another—Olson and Bronk.

To complicate the issue a bit more, *The New American Poetry* includes Helen Adam's rigorously structured "I Love My Love" that, despite its epigraph from Robert Duncan, is more poetically Other than any of Bronk's poetry. The opening stanza of Adam's poem reads,

There was a man who married a maid. She laughed as he led her home.
The living fleece of her long bright hair she combed with a golden comb.
He led her home through his barley fields where the saffron poppies grew.
She combed and whispered, "I love my love." Her voice like a plaintive coo.
Ha! Ha! Her voice like a plaintive coo.[27]

The poem follows this structure through fourteen stanzas, and in retrospect seems more likely to have been lifted from the Pack, Simpson, Hall anthology than Allen's. Certainly the inclusion of "I Love My Love" disrupts the "open" poetic agenda. Adam's epigraph from Duncan is key, though, to the inclusion of the poem and sheds light upon the direct effect of poetic communities upon anthology making—as well as the inclusion of Adam's "closed" poem and the exclusion of Bronk that obviously extends beyond poetics. Allen apparently changed his selection of Adam's poetry to "I Love My Love" at the pressure of Robert Duncan, who was Adam's advocate during the time when the anthology was being collected. Adam's affiliation with Duncan, therefore, superceded the overarching projective poetics of the anthology, and the creation of the anthology, in this light, is contingent upon a network of poets—a point that is not surprising given the fact that the anthology was shaped from its beginning by recommendations of poets provided by poets. Subsequently, Corman's indignant and brusque removal of himself from *The New American*

Poetry may have impacted Bronk's position, who, therefore, not only lacked the critical link between his poetry and the projective tradition but also lost a strong advocate; consequently, his position within a community of poets bound by their dogmatic rallying around projective verse became even more marginal and less tenable. As Marjorie Perloff notes, "The difference—and this happens in canon making (even counter canon making) all the time, has to do with particular literary and cultural affiliations."[28] Or, more relevant to *The New American Poetry*, one's affiliation with other poets is the difference. In a letter to Charles Olson, Bronk writes about this in a revealing and personal way:

> I dont [sic] think I am just crying on your shoulder about my personal neglect though it must sound so. But I find the whole problem interesting. I know, of course, that one should not—no rather can not as a practical matter—expect one poet to really much like the work of another—not a contemporary's anyway—even though I also know that an immense amount of poetic politics in the way of logrolling and mutual back scratching, pretending to like each other supports the whole poetry industry in the US today.[29]

The politics of poetry—as "logrolling" and "mutual back scratching"—is certainly evident in the construction of *The New American Poetry*, and without anyone supporting Bronk's poetry, his position within the "industry" is certainly precarious—precipitating his eventual absence, silence, and marginalization.

The predominant and governing issue of *The New American Poetry* is collective identity as emphasized in Allen's letter to Creeley where he asks "Where to place Judson Crews in this kind of [geographic/school] arrangement?"[30] Without the tethers that linked Bronk with the community of *The New American Poetry*—namely, the "patriarchs" and Cid Corman—the same question might be asked of Bronk. Interestingly enough, Creeley's reply to Allen simply omits Crews in the list of poets for the anthology, and he remarks that within the "*Origin*/Black Mountain Section" that "Bronk is marginal, more Stevens than anything."[31] Creeley's statement, though, should be read in a more generous light of literary history since he is not proclaiming that Bronk is a marginal poet, especially since Creeley's career dictates otherwise: he published Bronk in *Black Mountain Review*; originally recommended him to be part of *The New American Poetry*; dedicated a poem to Bronk ("Echoes" in *Windows* [1990]); served on the panel that awarded Bronk the National Book Award in 1982 for *Life Supports*; and in his memorial to Bronk (February 25, 1999) states that "Finally, there was no one else quite like him, so large in his singleness, so separate yet enclosing. One will not see his like again."[32] Rather, in 1959 Creeley perceives Bronk as marginal to the thrust of *The New American Poetry* because of the unique problem of his singleness—neither us nor them. Bronk doesn't fit, and in this way, he challenges the governing fiction of the anthology as a concerted, unified effort.

Such singleness, despite its power, is problematic especially in relation to anthology formations. As Giorgio Agamben remarks in a political language that can easily be translated into the canon-formation processes of anthologies,

> For the State, therefore, what is important is never singularity as such, but only its inclusion in some identity, whatever identity (but the possibility of the whatever itself being taken up without an identity is a threat the State cannot come to terms with.) [33]

As Golding remarks, "The stress on community [by Olson and Origin] provides a way to propose a collective alternative canon that stands more chance of being taken seriously than the work of isolated poets."[34] The emphasis upon collectivity—clustered around the paradigm of Olson—supercedes individual effort since so much was at stake in the debate between open and closed poetry. Within the context of the collective identity of *The New American Poetry*, the inclusion of Bronk might have introduced a poetic confrontation and called into question the simplified binary upon which the anthology was founded—academic vs. anti-academic, closed vs. open, and cooked vs. raw—although that binary is still present in the figure of Helen Adam. Since Bronk defies the accuracy of such categorical imperatives, his position is questionable. But even more importantly than aesthetic difference, since he doesn't have anyone claiming that he is part of that collective—Creeley's disavowal being the final judgment—he is not included.

The same rationale, of course, applies to Bronk's exclusion from the "academic," "cooked" anthologies such as *The New Poets of America and England*, even though Bronk fulfilled the criteria established by the editors for the anthology: he was born between 1917 and 1935 (Bronk was born in 1918); he was working from a more traditional poetry background that gestured back to Shakespearean sonnets as poetic and thematic sources; and he was a student of Robert Frost while at Dartmouth. Bronk's inclusion and his less than rigid poetry would have implicitly undermined the argument of the collective identity of the "new" poets. By doing so, he would have called into question the homogeneity of the anthology—a homogeneity that was desired and presented in both the Hall, Pack, and Simpson anthology as well as in Donald Allen's. As Golding notes:

> One of [Allen's] much debated, and constantly changing organization was to minimize these differences—to create, as he put it in an August 1959 letter to Creeley, 'a tentative arrangement which would have some meaning *and also avoid pointless confrontations*'" [Golding's emphasis] [35]

A structure that presented a collected front would generate "meaning," and "pointless confrontations" were to be avoided because the collective whole was more important than individual egos.

The case of William Bronk demonstrates that while an aesthetic model of "newness" may be the driving impetus for an anthology, canons, ultimately, are contingent upon a presumed collective identity. The anthology always bears the imprint of identity. "The collection becomes the sign of collectivity; the display case and the aesthetic isolation of the pedestal certify the community value of belonging." [36] Further,

> To be a recognized poet in the early sixties was necessarily to be a pawn in some armchair quarterback's version of the Battle of the Anthologies, and the Anthologies in question were specially Allen's and the Hall-Pack-Simpson one in its two editions. [37]

The "arm chair quarterbacks" included poets (Hall and Simpson) for *The New Poets of England and America*, and in the case of *The New American Poetry*, the central "editor" was not Allen but a congery of poets: according to an unpublished letter by Robert Duncan to the editor of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, the poetic force behind *The New American Poetry* was Olson, Creeley, O'Hara, Ginsberg, Blaser, Jones, and Schuler.[38] These were not "arm-chair quarterbacks" but poets of substance and "rank." To be a recognized poet, to revise Rasula's description, was to be

recognized by poets who were, seemingly, united in their efforts to propose a group identity and set of cultural values. Allen, as evidenced by the various letters between himself and his poetry "advisors," was the medium, the messenger, for the "New" poetry.

In terms of *The New American Poetry*, Bronk was not granted the status of "belonging" to the arrival of the new: his work was not regarded as "open" or "projective" enough, and without an advocate such as Cid Corman, his poetry conflicted with the "new" poetic identity that Allen's anthology advances despite its disturbing "similitude" with aspects of Charles Olson's work. As *The New American Poetry* suggests, the battle for a space in the 1960s American poetry landscape was fierce. And in order for the "new" to shake off all vestiges of the "old" in order to claim such a space, it seemed justifiable to place under erasure important poetry from less than marginal poets such as William Bronk—poets who were not elected as either "us" or "them."

Part II

The Will to Change?

> [T]here is no such thing as a merely given, or simply available, starting point: beginnings have to be made for each project in such a way as to enable what follows from them.
>
> (Edward Said, *Orientalism*)

> Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.
>
> (The Who, "Won't Get Fooled Again")

While focusing upon William Bronk's exclusion from *The New American Poetry* may seem to be merely attempting to revise literary history by arguing against the socio-ideological/aesthetic dictates of Allen's editorial policy—a move that has been a standard critical maneuver in canonical debates over the last twenty years or more—in fact, William Bronk offers an intriguing lens to consider how the history of poetry crystallized around the "raw" and "cooked" binary and, moreover, how Allen's poetry anthology/canon became sacrosanct—the "beginning" of one strain of twentieth-century American poetry. Allen's poetic vision was the definitive force in shaping the canons of poetry since 1960, and Bronk's exclusion from that "vision" has proven to be prophetic in relation to Bronk's future. The "new" poetry of Allen's anthology radically challenged the singularity of the "new critical" canon—so much so that eventually *New American Poetry* figures such as Creeley, Duncan, Levertov, Ginsberg, O'Hara, Ashbery, and Snyder were included by one of their original arch-nemesis, Donald Hall, in his anthology *Contemporary American Poetry* (1962; revised 1972). Furthermore, many of those same poets found themselves embraced by the very institution that they were rebelling against—the academy—and were offered university positions. The anti-academics had become academics; and the raw became acceptable for "consumption" in graduate seminars because of a poetic paradigm shift indebted to *The New American Poetry*.

Despite the "broadening" of the canon, Bronk remains peripheral and is included in only a handful of anthologies: *The New Yorker Book of Poems* (1969), a collection of 900 poems that appeared in *The New Yorker* between 1925 and 1969 and includes the "cooked" along with such "raw" poets as David Antin, Paul Blackburn, Kathleen Fraser, Allen Ginsberg, George Oppen, Charles Tomlinson, and Diane Wakosi; Hayden Carruth's *The Voice that is Great within Us* (1970), a huge anthology that bridges the open and the closed and is dedicated, as emphasized in the introduction, to "the remarkable diversity of forms, the ability [of poetry] to find strength within itself for successive waves of renewal and change";[39] Cid Corman's *The Gist of Origin* (1975), that presents Bronk's inclusion within such an "oral" tradition; Edward Field's *A Geography of Poets: An Anthology of the New Poetry* (1979) in which Field "tried to show the enormous variety of poetry today from the vernacular to the formal." and where Bronk is touted as a poet "with ideas about life";[40] Eliot Weinberger's *Innovators and Outsiders: American Poetry Since 1950* (1993) that argues that in "a society where all poets are outsiders, most of the poets here are, or have been, outside the outside. All of them are innovators, those who made it new, amidst the more visible legions of renovators, those who make it like new;"[41] and most recently Cary Nelson's *Anthology of Modern American Poetry* (2000) that is a presentation of "twentieth-century American poetry in its astonishing and endless energetic variety." [42]

With the exception of Weinberger, who is accurate in his portrayal of Bronk as outside the outside,[43] all of these anthologies claim to represent the diversity of poetry. While it is not my intention to critique the supposed "democratic" editorial visions of these authors, it is of interest that when an ideologically-driven aesthetic program as well as a strict identity-centered poetic-politics are (seemingly) abandoned, Bronk is regarded as an anthology worthy poet. Yet, these six anthologies constitute only a small portion of the over 100 poetry anthologies published since 1950.[44] Further, most of the poetry anthologies, unlike the six that include Bronk, reify and repeat the division of poetic communities asserted in and by Allen's *The New American Poetry* and the Pack, Hall, and Simpson *New Poets of England and America*. [1] Canon debates have not moved beyond the arguments of the "open" versus the "closed" even as each subsequent anthology slightly reshuffles the deck with some poets awarded "cross-over" status. Subsequently, the last fifty years have mostly repeated the original binary with slight modifications, and essentially this has disallowed the inclusion of Bronk—among others—who were removed from the original debate.

The most blatant example of the reification of the "new" tradition while making it more "current" is *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised*, edited by Donald Allen and George Butterick (1982), which cuts fifteen poets from the original *New American Poetry* (Paul Carroll, Helen Adam, James Broughton, Madeline Gleason, Richard Duerden, Philip Lamantia, Bruce Boyd, Kirby Doyle, Ebbe Borregaard, Peter Orlovsky, Edward Field, Gilbert Sorrentino, Stuart Z. Perkoff, Edward Marshall, and Ray Bremser—none of which, incidentally, were ever in danger of not being included in the original anthology) and adds nine new poets to *The Postmoderns* (Jackson MacLow, Jerome Rothenberg, Diane di Prima, Anselm Hollo. Joanne Kyger, Robert Kelly, James Koller, Ed Sanders, and Anne Waldman). As the sub-title suggests, *The New American Poetry Revised* (my emphasis), the new anthology is a continuation of the old only with the field more finely-tuned. That is, Allen and Butterick deleted writers who proved in historical hindsight not to be "new" enough to be major and then added poets who,

> had become active or whose influence was felt after the 1960s. They were not so much hard on the heels of the older writers as in step with them throughout the 1960s, and so logically and readily belong here.[45]

Of the original seven cut, only Joanne Kyger has been re-evaluated and reinstated since her "presence" was finally "felt" in the early 1980s. Still a number of gaps are readily apparent in the anthology, and Marjorie Perloff goes so far as to offer a list of,

> Donald Allen should-have-beens, in that they were excluded from the second gathering largely by fluke, belonging by rights to the congeries already represented. These eight are David Antin, William Bronk, John Cage, Clayton Eshelman, Ronald Johnson, Kenneth Rexroth, Muriel Rukeyser, and Nathaniel Tarn. [46]

Apparently in 1982, Bronk's "influence" still had to be felt, despite the fact that Bronk's collected poems, *Life Supports*, was awarded a National Book Award in 1982, and that Charles Olson, the great patriarch and canon-shaper of *The New American Poetry*, had proclaimed in 1964 that in response to his reading of *The World, The Worldless*, "I may have, for the first time in my life, imagined a further succinct life" (quoted on the front dust jacket flap of the original North Point edition of *Life Supports* as well as included in the original press packet put together by New Directions for *The World, The Worldless*). Nevertheless, in 1982, Bronk still was not perceived as in "step with" the "older writers" (now "patriarchs") that had defined the field.

The Postmoderns streamlined the "tradition" by strengthening its core poets—paring away the "weak" ones—and thereby reinforcing the literary historical merit (and prophetic accuracy) of *The New American Poetry* by showing how "fundamental" Allen's original configuration had proved to be.[47] Allen's original editorial efforts proved to be extremely successful in generating an alternative canon, and *The Postmoderns* sought to repeat the earlier success of *The New American Poetry* while taking seemingly fewer risks. Like any sequel, once the formula proves to be successful, it becomes more and more difficult to deviate from its own prescribed boundaries; subsequently, the script remains the same, but a few of the characters and terms are altered to suggest both continuity and freshness. In *The Postmoderns*, the stock characters remain in place and a new term is superimposed upon "Projective Verse"—"Postmodernism."

Allen's and Butterick's definition of "postmodern" at the close of their preface to *The Postmoderns* seems ironic, though, given the "closed" and rigid definitions of what constitutes a "postmodern" poem. "Most of all, [postmodernism's] chief characteristic is its inclusiveness, its quick willingness to take advantage of all that had gone before."[48] Inclusiveness, as previously discussed, has been the predominant characteristic of those anthologies that have attempted to represent a range of poetries and which have included Bronk. Apparently, the definition does not apply to postmodern canons and anthologies, but is, rather, characteristic of a poetic mode: the postmodern poem is "revolutionary" in that the poet seeks a,

> new relation toward his or her world, a new 'stance toward reality,' where each poem's line, whether long-breathed or tightly controlled, is open to its own possibility, where the syntax responds with vital immediacy to the moment's pulse.[49]

Postmodernism, defined in such terms, reiterates Olson's principles of composition by field nearly thirty years after the fact, although those principles are masked now in a dispassionate

academic style and tone. The inclusiveness Allen and Butterick gesture toward, therefore, is contingent upon the paradigm of an Olsonian poetics, and again, those who do not fit within the original polemic established in *The New American Poetry* (regardless of the narrowness of that definition and the need to "revise" and include/exclude others) do not have the distinction of being "postmodern" enough for *The Postmoderns*. [50]

Clearly, *The Postmoderns* is derivative of its predecessor, and the strict adherence to the governing ideational-poetical-political structure of *The New American Poetry* is not surprising since *The Postmoderns* is the updated version of *The New American Poetry*. But what is surprising is how the same rigid distinctions that govern Allen's anthologies have been appropriated and naturalized by most "alternative" anthologies since *The Postmoderns*, and how slight those anthologies have deviated from the literary history proposed by Allen. Even Cid Corman, in his *The Gist of Origin* (1975), seems to have succumbed to the force of the *New American Poetry* since his anthology disavows its own history—becoming merely a pale echo of *Origin* the magazine—in order to propose a literary history more in line with a one-sided poetic history centered around Olson.

The *Origin* of the1950s and 1960s was, in fact, more eclectic than programmatic, and Corman described his overarching editorial philosophy as being,

> devoted to giving adequate outlet
> to those new/unknown writers
> who have shown maturity/insight
> into their medium
> to giving
> the push to creative minds, to
> demonstrate the going concerns, di
> rections of contemporary
> creativity [51]

As opposed to a mere polemic realignment of taste, *Origin* was a window for recognizing and studying the nuances and directions in contemporary poetry. For this reason, Corman began "offering work by writers, no matter their age or even if long dead, who seemed to me 'alive' and inadequately, if at all known in America." [52] This editorial policy is repeated in a 1994 interview with Corman as well when he remarks that,

> *Origin* meant most in giving me a chance to present the best new work/new poets that came my way (& I went out looking for them, not waiting), poets of no particular movement or trend, but for the freshness and savor of their work.[53]

Some of the poets published in *Origin*, subsequently, were the passed-over "patriarchs" (Stevens, Zukofsky, and William Carlos Williams) as well as other figures considered but excluded from *The New American Poetry*—Ted Enslin and Lorine Niedecker, to name the two most prominent examples aside from Bronk. In this sense, *Origin* was less affected and constrained by the ideological issues that circumscribed the American poetry scene.

Moreover, the first issue of *Origin* offers a rather interesting and diverse pastiche of poets that are representative of both "open" and "closed" verse. Olson, Creeley, and Williams are "open"

poets; Morse, Emerson, Hoskins, Hatson, Eberhart, and Bronk work in "closed" verse—although such a labeling of Bronk as "closed" is narrow. In this light, *Origin* was not merely a "projective verse" vehicle, but was in fact a "coherently shaped dialogue between a central and a marginal poetics." [54] The editorial scope for *Origin* was much broader (at least as suggested by its earlier manifestations) than its current mythic image, and *Origin* in the 1950s reveals Corman's sustained efforts to clear a space where Projective Verse could be placed in dialogue with more "mainstream" poetry.[55] Yet, what became embedded in cultural memory was not the dialogue initiated in and by *Origin*—as weighted and perhaps fixed as it was in favor of Olson—but rather the sustained recognition of the validity of "projective" poets that *The Gist of Origin* reifies. Certainly Corman himself contributed to the image of *Origin* as a vehicle of "projective" verse; for example, in the introduction to a special issue of *Contact* (1952) focused upon the works of Olson, Bronk, and Morse, Corman proclaims that Olson is "the key figure" behind his magazine's poetics—thereby placing Bronk and Morse within a projective verse tradition.[56] Furthermore, the centrality of Olson was not merely a "retrospective" gesture but rather the original impetus for the magazine. In a letter to Olson, Nov. 6, 1950, Corman remarks, "I don't think it's farfetched to say that all the work I've accepted for inclusion for #1 [of *Origin*] is PROJECTIVE."[57] The advancement of projective poetry was a central motive behind *Origin*, but that advancement was to be contextualized within a larger arena of poetries that accentuates points of comparison and contrast.

That dialogue as well as poetries disappears in Corman's *The Gist of Origin*. The anthology includes no poetry by Morse, Hoskins, Everson, Hatson, Eberhart, Wilbur, and Merrill. Gone is the center, in other words, against which the "projective" is to be read. Furthermore, despite the fact that poems by or essays about Wallace Stevens are included in five issues of *Origin*, only one poem, Wallace Stevens's "Long and Sluggish Lines," is included in the anthology; and Samuel French Morse, a staple of the first series of *Origin*, is represented in the anthology only in the Appendix (II), "Major Works Not Utilized," which mentions Morse's essay "The Motive for Metaphor" from issue number five of the first series.[58] Morse's poetry is all but denied. While *The Gist of Origin* was published in 1975, fifteen years after *The New American Poetry*, it is difficult not to read Corman's "realignment" of *Origin* in response to the precedent of Allen's anthology and the literary history it helped to establish. *Origin* (and not its revised anthologized doppelganger that reads with a few key exceptions such as Bronk, Zukofsky, Enslin, Niedecker, and others, as the shadow of *The New American Poetry*) was an important moment in literary history because it attempted to fuse together two crowds that regarded each other as the enemy. The image of *Origin* that is reified by *The Gist of Origin* is not one of dialogue but the programmatic hierarchy of "open" poetics over the "closed." In this light, *The Gist of Origin* bridges the content of Allen's *The New American Poetry* and *The Postmoderns*, but it is also symptomatic of a trend that continues into the 1990s as evidenced by Paul Hoover's *Postmodern American Poetry* (1994) and Douglas Messerli's *From the Otherside* of the Century*: A New American Poetry 1960-1990* (1994)—namely, the unquestioned status of Donald Allen's canon, and the fact that both anthologies are admittedly and self-consciously derivative of *The New American Poetry* and *The Postmoderns*. Perhaps predictably, neither anthology, like its ancestral father, *The New American Poetry*, includes the poetry of William Bronk.

Hoover not only re-enacts the ideological impetus of *The New American Poetry* by arguing that "this anthology shows that avant-garde poetry endures in its resistance to mainstream ideology," [59] he reifies the centrality of Olson by placing him first in the anthology (both in the poetry and poetics sections). Furthermore, Hoover explicitly designates Olson as the originator of

"postmodernism" as a concept, and the introduction to *Postmodern American Poetry* begins "The poet Charles Olson used the word 'postmodern' as early as an October 20, 1951, letter to Creeley from Black Mountain, North Carolina."[60] Hoover's anthology, thereby, synthesizes Allen's *New American Poetry* and *The Postmoderns* in terms of structure (i.e., poetry and a separate poetics sections), ideational tautology ("projective" poetry is "postmodern" poetry), and, cumulatively, the post-1950s/postmodern poetry tradition that does not deviate from the canon established by Allen.

Douglas Messerli's *From the Other Side of the Century* also draws upon *The New American Poetry* as the paradigm par excellence:

> The model for most of us has been Donald Allen's groundbreaking *The New American Poetry*, published in 1960, but no major volume has served our own generation [...][61]

From the Other Side is an extension and updated revision (the revised "revision" of *The Postmoderns*) of *The New American Poetry* with the emphasis falling upon the shoulders of Olson. Even though Olson's position of authority in *From the Other Side* is dispersed among a range of other poets, most of whom are central figures in *The New American Poetry* (Ginsberg, Duncan, Spicer) as well as the Objectivist poets overlooked by Allen as pre-Olson, the patriarchs and "aunties" (Reznikoff, Niedecker, Rakosi, Oppen, and Zukofsky). Despite the democratizing of the hierarchy of importance with Olson sharing the position of power among others, Olson's position of importance is asserted rhetorically by the title of the anthology, a point that is reinforced by the first epigraph for the anthology, which are lines from Olson's *The Maximus Poems*: "[...] from the other side of time, from a time/on the other side of yourself."[62] While avoiding the critical (and academic) apparatus of Hoover and before him Butterick and Allen, Messerli maintains that the time of the anthology, the time of "our generation" that this volume serves, is the "other side" of Olson, his "self" that marks the beginning of twentieth-century poetic time. Olson, while being surrounded by a collection of others, remains the poetic gauge of the anthology, and *From the Other Side*, like Hoover's anthology, is an expanded echo of *The New American Poetry*.

Marjorie Perloff and Jed Rasula both have discussed the "belatedness" and "buttressing" of the Hoover and Messerli anthologies in relation to *The New American Poetry*. Rasula caustically observes that,

> In the case of these anthologists [Weinberger, Messerli, and Hoover], it is a nostalgia predicated on a "recuperation" of New American poetic dissidents, but the logic is flawed because they've come too late to get in on the fruits of first acclaim. All aspire to huddle with Donald Allen. [63]

In a more generous reading, Golding remarks that,

> Among the editors of these recent anthologies, Weinberger and Hoover especially apply a center-margin model in their representations of post-World War II American poetry, in a way that openly derives from Allen's *New American Poetry* [Yet] Weinberger, Hoover, and Messerli, unlike Allen, are engaged not just in presenting new work but in historicizing its precedents [a] buttressing [that] involves far more than mere repetition. [64]

When elements are repeated—as the textual assertion of Olson as the pivot of post-1950s poetry—a literary history is reasserted, but the concept of historical precedent allows for some variation upon an unwavering center. That is, remaking and expanding the field of the past in light of the present, which simultaneously and diachronically remakes the present out of the past, allows for variations in the canon, but within certain pre-established limits. As Golding observes, "No matter how tentative an anthology's organization is intended to be, it is likely to become reified, as *The New American Poetry*'s did, in the mind of reviewers."[65] Not just for the reviewers, but *The New American Poetry* also was reified in the minds of anthologists (and hence literary historians) as clearly evident by the comments of Hoover and Messerli in regards to their stated perception of the anthology as well as in their textual rendering of "our era."

Allen's "vision" of poetry has become the unquestionable gauge against which all anthologies are measured. An anthology might add poets (thereby offering an extension of literary history) to the original webbing of relationships Allen proposed by his "communities" of poets—such as reconfiguring the Objectivists into the scene by noting their "re-emergence" after 1960 and their ties to Robert Creeley—yet the original problem still stands: What is to be done with poetry that doesn't fit into the tidy and homogenized package of anthologized literary history? Most anthologies, except those committed to a diversity of poetries, follow Allen as well in his desire to minimize differences and avoid "pointless confrontations" in favor of presenting a unified front that maintains the us versus them binary image of literary history. In this sense, canonical debates waged within the pages of anthologies have repeated ad infinitum the battle between new poetry and new poets, or the raw versus the cooked, and have not deviated "from accepted patterns of literary representation."[66] That "accepted pattern" depends upon its ingrained dichotomy, which has implications beyond the pages of the anthology and has extended into the publishing world at large. As Bronk himself noted,

> Anyone doing serious writing at this time or concerned with serious writing knows that publishers are less and less willing to print or even look at it unless they can be assured of a fast large sale. There is good work being done which will remain hidden and lost unless a new way can be found to make it known. In Russia, where only the officially approved literature can be published, unofficial art, the work of real merit, is privately copied and passed from hand to hand. Here small regional presses can accomplish this otherwise suppressed publications more easily and efficiently. And now it is also necessary because commercial suppression can be just as deadly and stifling as political suppression.[67]

Bronk turned to a number of small presses—Origin, Elizabeth, North Point, Moyer Bell, and most recently Talisman House—in order for his poetry to continue to make its way. Because of the limited resources of these small presses, Bronk's "way" was hampered by small print runs, non-existent marketing budgets, and extremely narrow market distribution. Within the publishing world of poetry, commercial suppression is rooted in the debates over canon formation (as the list of poetries that are "marketable"), which, therefore, gestures back to the hegemonic force of *The New American Poetry* that has defined American poetry.

The case of William Bronk is, therefore, illuminating both in terms of the late 1950s/early 1960s poetry scene as well as in the canonical debates that have occurred since then and rendered materially at the level of the anthology. What hadn't been anticipated was how powerful the poetry collective of *The New American Poetry* would prove to be in shaping future canon

formations, and how quickly the categories that Allen proposed would crystallize, opening the field for many of the poets of *The New American Poetry* while effectively closing the door for those poets, such as William Bronk, who didn't fit into the prescribed categories easily enough or weren't "representative" enough of "open" poetry in its battle against the closed. What hadn't been imagined was that the field would open, that *The New American Poetry* would be, as Allen Ginsberg foresaw, a "great bomb [that would] clear the air." But it has proven to be a bomb with its own rigorous boundaries and categorical imperatives that have relegated many of its own—the allies and innovators of "open" verse—to the margins, thereby silencing certain voices. In much the same manner that Projective poetry was barred from mainstream journals and magazines in the 1950s and 1960s, many writers have found the poetry world closed even forty years after the original publication of *The New American Poetry*. What such historical precedent calls into question is "the narrow range of 'new energies' and 'new representations' that are allowed between the cover of the "'new' American Literature."[68] Further, what the rendering of literary history by poetry anthologies demonstrates is that to "canonize is to discipline through repression, to render literary history static as the status quo, rigid as rigor mortis."[69] And given the University of California reprint of *The New American Poetry* (1999), how ironic the opening lines from Charles Olson's "The Kingfishers" now prove to be: "What does not change/is the will to change."

Notes

1. Quoted in Jed Rasula, *The American Poetry Wax Museum: Reality Effects, 1944-1990*. (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1996), 233.
2. Allen, Donald. *The New American Poetry 1945-1969* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), xi.
3. Ibid., 387-388.
4 Ron Silliman, "Canons and Institutions: New Hope for the Disappeared" in *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*, Charles Bernstein, ed. (New York: Roof, 1990) 152.
5. Donald Hall, et. al. , *New Poets of England and America* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1957), 95.
6. Marjorie Perloff, "Whose New American Poetry? Anthologizing in the Nineties." *Diacritics* 26. 3-4 (fall-winter): 107.
7. Charles Altieri, *Self and Sensibility in Contemporary American Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 205.
8. Hall, 12.
9. Donald Allen, Letter to William Bronk, 20 July 1958. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
10. William Bronk, Letter to Donald Allen, 21 July 1958. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
11. According to Alan Golding, though, Donald Allen's "thinking about the contents seems to have been in process up to the last minute" even after the manuscript had been delivered to the printer on the 6th of November, 1959 (185). In addition, Allen told Robert Duncan on the 29th of October, 1959 that "I've had a long visit with Sanders Russell [...] "I plan to include him in the collection" (Golding 185). Russell, though, was not included, but such last minute editorial changes and considerations for inclusion further problematize the exclusion of William Bronk.

12. Donald Allen, Letter to Robert Creeley, 8 September 1959. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
13. Donald Allen, Letter to William Bronk, 29 December 1959. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
14. David Clippinger, Interview with William Bronk, 14 August 1998.
15. Yet the fact remains that Bronk was invited by Allen and his lapse of memory is not indicative that his exclusion from the anthology was of no matter to him. In a letter to Cid Corman one and a half years after his rejection from The New American Poetry, Bronk remarks upon the stinging effects of "a succession of three people who professed to be enthusiastically interested in my work and then decided they wanted none of it—Sweeney at Harvard, Allen at Grove-Evergreen and someone whose name I forget at Beacon" (6 April 1961). Letter is housed at the University of New Hampshire Library.
16. Allen, *New American Poetry*, xiii.
17. Ibid., 448. The patriarch of the academic poets, Robert Frost, was not considered part of this lineage of writers and was, obviously, passed over—as was Wallace Stevens. Allen clearly valorizes the Pound tradition and places under erasure the presence of either a Stevens or a Frost tradition as the valorized poetic paradigms.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Allen Ginsberg, Letter to Donald Allen, May 1958. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
21. Charles Olson and Cid Corman, *Complete Correspondence 1950-1964* (2 Volumes). George Evans, ed. (Orono: National Poetry Foundation, 1987, 1991), Volume 1, 183-185.
22. Cid Corman, *The Gist of Origin* (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1975), xxxvi.
23. Ibid., xxxvi.
24. Cid Corman, Letter to Donald Allen, 15 March 1959. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
25. Donald Allen, Letter to Robert Creeley, 8 September 1959. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.
25. Hayden Carruth, *The Voice that is Great Within Us* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970), 527.
26. Allen, *New American Poetry*, 15.
27. Ibid., 114.
28. Perloff, 116.
29. William Bronk, Letter to Charles Olson, 16 January 1962. The Charles Olson Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, University of Connecticut Library.
30. Donald Allen, Letter to Robert Creeley, 8 September 1959.
31. Robert Creeley, Letter to Donald Allen, 11 September 1959.
32. http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/ documents/obits/bronk.html
33. Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* Michael Hardt, trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 85.
34. Alan Golding, *From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 123.
35. Alan Golding, "The New American Poetry Revisited, Again." *Contemporary Literature* 39.2 (1998): 196.
36. Rasula, 23.
37.Ibid., 227.
38. Robert Duncan, unpublished Letter to the Editor of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, June 1960. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego.

39. Carruth, xx.
40. Edward Field, *A Geography of Poets: An Anthology of the New Poetry* (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), xliii- xliv.
41. Eliot Weinberger, *Innovators and Outsiders: American Poetry Since 1950* (New York: Marsilio, 1993), xii.
42. Cary Nelson, *Modern American Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), xxix.
43. It is, though, difficult to argue that William Carlos Williams, H.D., Ezra Pound, Charles Olson, William Everson, Denise Levertov, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery, Gary Snyder, Jerome Rothernberg, and Amiri Baraka, all of whom are included in Weinberger's anthology, are "outsiders." Some poets included are clearly outside the margins: Kenneth Rexroth, John Cage, Nathaniel Tarn, Ronald Johnson, Robert Kelly, and Clark Coolidge strike me as some of the most significant outsiders.
44. For a list of the anthologies published between 1950 and 1994, see Appendix One of Jed Rasula's *The American Poetry Wax Museum*, 485-492.
45. Donald Allen and George Butterick, *The Postmoderns: The New American Poetry Revised* (New York, Grove Press, 1982), 10.
46. Perloff, 110.
47. This "buttressing" was, of course, happening simultaneously on other fronts, such as the appropriation of "new poetry" by "mainstream" anthologies such as the proto-typical Norton's as well as these poets being offered academic positions and, thereby earning cultural cache within the ranks of those who control canon formations.
48. Allen, *The Postmoderns*, 12.
49. Ibid.
50. This line of argument concerning "postmodernity" is troubling when thinking explicitly of the exclusion of David Antin, John Cage, Ronald Johnson, and Nathaniel Tarn since each utilizes a "revolutionary" poetics that is in keeping with Allen's and Butterick's definition and each were within the poetic circle of Olson. Moreover, Bronk's "tightly controlled" line, would also seem to fit into the sweeping definition of postmodern poetry, yet, despite the desire to read his exclusion as a "fluke," the misreading of Bronk as a "neoclassicist"—the label with which Olson tagged Bronk—disallowed for a wholesale revision of the postmodern in any other way than as "open" poetics. The most compelling argument for Bronk's "postmodernity" is Joseph Conte's description of poetics in his Unending Design.
51. Corman, *The Gist of Origin*, xxii.
52. Ibid.
53. Cid Corman, "An Interview with Gregory Dunne." *American Poetry Review*. July/August 2000, 25.
54. Golding, *From Outlaw to Classic*, 136.
55. The "mainstream" quality of those poets included in Origin as representative of the "center"—namely, Morse, Bronk, Hoskins, Emerson, Hatson, Eberhart, Wilbur, and Merrill—is perhaps not accurate since only Wilbur and Merrill are included in New Poets of England and America as well as Donald Hall's follow-up, Contemporary American Poetry, both of which are definitive "center" books. Corman's representative poets of what is happening out there proved to be mostly "marginal" figures from the stand point of the mainstream.
56. Golding, From *Outlaw to Classic*, 132.
57. Charles Olson and Cid Corman, *Complete Correspondence 1950-1964*, Volume 1, 54
58. Corman, *The Gist of Origin*, 514.
59. Paul Hoover, *Postmodern American Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1994), xxv.
60. Ibid.

61. Douglas Messerli, *From the Other Side of the Century: A New American Poetry 196-1990* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon, 1994), 31.
62. Ibid., 32.
63. Rasula, 461.
64. Alan Golding, "New, Newer, and Newest American Poetries," *Contemporary Literature* 39.2 (1998): 9, 12-13.
65. Golding, "The New American Poetry Revisted, Again," 194.
66. Hank Lazer, *Opposing Poetries*, Volume 1: Issues and Institutions; Volume 2: *Readings* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996), Volume 1, 127.
67. William Bronk, Unpublished Manuscript, c. 1988. Butler Library, Columbia University.
68. Lazer, 133.
69. Maria Damon, "Poetic Canons: Generative Oxymoron or Stalled-Out Dialectic?" *Contemporary Literature* 39.3 (1998): 474.