

## Forum on Women Writers

### Aodhán McCardle, Piers Hugill & Stephen Mooney

Randomly Interpreted refrains:

That's a good point

Oh, I never thought of that

Yeah but that's not what I meant

This isn't me beginning (well I guess it is now) just to forward Aodhán's origins by way of a start.

I'll begin shortly!

P From: aodhanmcc@tiscali.co.uk CC: "hugill piers" <piershugill@hotmail.com>

Subject: yeah but that's not what I meant

Date: Sun, 9 Jan 2005 18:14:54 +0000

Piers I haven't got stephens addresses on this web mail so please frward to him

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>That's a good point

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>Yeah but that's not what I meant

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>

>Oh! I never thought of that

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>

>Good intentions are not enough.

>

>

>There's no point in holding the middle ground in this.

>

>

>We need to take a position that risks offending people....well not

>offending

>people... you know what I mean

>

>  
>  
>I don't know that I've got anything to say-  
>I mean I've got lots to say but it's not grounded.  
>  
>  
>Not necessarily how it should be  
>how it could be  
>blah blah blah     blah  
>  
>  
>but this is how >this is how we are related to it  
>  
>  
>  
>none of these are very helpful  
>  
>none of these are the answer  
>  
>  
>I like that.  
>

well, with, you know, LUC we've been looking for ways to avoid what we see as an inevitable reduction to the 'Droning Male Voice Choir' phenomenon (as Doug Jones, one of LUC puts it) without action on our part - in a now context that particular progression in 'being know as' represents a solidification and a lack of progression. - without action on our part - as looked at, in both senses - an external action that to develop - one idea was to have a woman writer (or writers) watch one of our LUC performances with an eye to a 'Response' , to which LUC would likewise produce a 'Response', a performance oriented taking up. That hasn't happened yet, but we hope it will.

another to hand over LUC, in its entirety, to a grouping of women writers who would be interested in 'doing LUC' as not what it has been, but what could have/should have been (done) and could be done, with the commitment from us that LUC would move forward from that series of points, not so much having taken account as being in account of a defining LUC - no reneging - & to which an already fluid approach to membership would aspire not to a taking back of LUC after the event, but an opening (not a relinquishing) of ownership or platform to those involved (and the

principle of 'those involved') as and if desired - LUC is not conceived as, or internally viewed as one thing (or indeed an 'other')

more later ....

I'm not sure I understood you right. I don't know what your terms of reference relate to, but I'll try and respond positively to what I took to be your line of argument.

After all how to make a gift without wanting to take it back immediately, with interest? Who's interested in second-hand merchandise? To write back not asking for something, no begging letters, no begging questions.

A conversation ferociously open to misinterpretation. And yet open, which is, after all, an invitation to a free lunch. There may be tears before bed-time, but I shan't wear my heart on my sleeve.

Simply a question! Who are you? No. Perhaps, who would you have me take you for? Still no good. What do you want me to believe of you? Too aggressive. Where are you going? Wrong direction. Why am I still asking? Why don't I let you speak?

P

that should be enough,  
it should be enough,  
enough is enough,  
good intentions however are not enough,  
trust should be enough,  
in fact or not trust is the basis from which all else may grow,  
why should i trust you why shouldn't i  
this isn't a conversation,  
it needs to be a conversation,  
I don't need/want to know both sides, I just need to meet you in the  
middle,  
not the middle ground,  
in the conversation,  
not in the meaning,  
in the action of each other,  
I'll meet you in the action of each other

as involved in organisation - the getting of response from women writers has often been difficult - its not as if, contrary to specific allegation, efforts have not been made to broaden the scope of the CPRC's activities (which really are of as much relevance to women writers in this field as to writers who are, by accident of birth, men) to include more from women writers

- certain difficulties have arisen, such as contacting (or sometimes locating), prior commitment, too busy, other areas of interest, the environment we're framing our activities with, uninteresting questions, unsympathetic scheduling/deadlining, unwillingness to commit, male agenda, male agenda, male agenda (education, education, education), no response.

That all of these apply to writers who are men, as well as to those who are women, is worth also noting - it perhaps 'appears' more prevalent in our and other organiser's promotional and recruitment foci - there is no shortage of women writers in and on poetry, (just look at the mainstream poetry 'landscape') but it has proven difficult sometimes to find them (no, for *us* to find them) in relation to contemporary poetry (that's not complete

- that sort of idea is open to the same criticism as not being found), or to create interest in what we are doing, or that a position

is this 'field' becomes an inaccessibility in a different way than it does for a non-woman writer

Yeah but that's not what I meant

- that there is a 'we' doing things badly or incorrectly is certain  
- I'd say that there is more than a hint of heteroglossia in this though, and it may well be that what said 'we' is looking for, or indeed at, is itself part of difficulty.

>>>we're talking about 10 minutes here!! Anything to say on LUC, CPRC<<<

Later,  
Stephen

To move forward we may need to  
Give up what we have held

in order to keep what we need  
Which we don't know

Who owns the speaker? To whom is she beholden? A question of dues, also. No right to speak, at least no right to have an audience? No, not the right question!

So, between us, providing a place in which to fail, to let our words falter and die, acknowledging that fragility. Not a neutral space, uncoordinated, but a place, here, that enables speech, an ethics of listening, where there is no obligation. Listening is an activity valued in and for itself, with its own aesthetic.

Only then do the words stand a chance, even when they fail. Especially when they fail.

Only then can the speaker step forward and fail well

Yeah but that's not what I meant

### **postscript**

We would hope to continue the dialogue opened by this and other forums on the issues raised in relation to women writers in the field of contemporary poetics through the activities of the CRPC In Birkbeck and in other ways - clearly we three have much to learn and engage with - as I hope is evident from the above (and from the CPRC Birkbeck's hosting of this event and others) we are completely open to suggestions on how to further this engagement, both as individuals and within the various structures we also engage with. The aim has got to be the recognition and promotion of Innovative writing by women and by men that deserves both attention and value.

'doing LUC' !!!! - well, I certainly didn't mean it like that!  
'Being' sounded so 'becoming'... at least doing suggests a potentially active state ... that said its not a decision that relates to 'our' anyway.

London Under Construction (a wider grouping than is represented here) is interested in recompositing itself with/through the involvement of women writers interested in the LUC project in whatever relationship the

participants are happy with - we (as 'we' is constructed at present in LUC ) would like to hand over LUC to a group of women writers who would be interested in including in a performance some of the problematics and issues around a contemporary poetry grouping that has only very recently added its first woman to its number - LUC would thereafter commit to moving on with this point as a basis, in whatever makeup follows on from that performance - we anticipate a new approach to 'we' after this event, in whatever sense that develops.

An LUC drag performance has not been entirely ruled out, if no response is forthcoming... you have been warned!

(Stephen Mooney)