

## **Prynne & Doctorow**

Notes on J. H. Prynne 03.07.2008

[from N. H. Reeve & Richard Kerridge: 'Nearly Too Much – The Poetry of J. H. Prynne']

DP Note: this could read almost like a manifesto for art in the city, particularly when read in reference to the Doctorow quote below.

...disconcerting and unfamiliar in form and diction, the sheer range of vocabulary and reference, the scope of the connections they make, the shifts in scale and the frequent multiplicity of other types of discourse (e.g. computer language, languages of neurology, geology, stockmarkets, etc.) that interrupt any sense of dominant narrative.

A question often asked of Prynne's work can be extended to the process of regeneration – what happens at the edges of these discourses, as they are forced together?

Prynne's poetry is difficult because it is committed to a notion of the public sphere which is extraordinarily democratic. His work switches constantly between the emotional, the aural and the material, and these switches deny the possibility of a hierarchy, the establishment of value or cause and effect.

Prynne wants a poetry neither useful to some manipulative power, nor providing musical accompaniment to a commodifying culture. It avoids or side-steps a hoped for coherence or totalising reading.

E. L. Doctorow quote:

"...there is a universe of totally disparate intentions with everybody going about his or her business in the silence of their own minds with everybody else and the street and the time of day and the architecture and quality of light and nature of the weather as a kind of background or field for the individual and the drama it is making for itself at that moment. If you think about that, that's what happens in the city, and that somehow the city can embrace and accept and accommodate all that disparate intention at one and the same time."