the story of my writings from 1950 to 1979
and attempts at publishing
in microfiche and xerox

with a catalog of texts
and details of where & how to get them

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written for Allen Fisher
for inclusion in Spanner 17
Allen Fisher has asked me to supply a list of my recent writings and to describe my attempts to publish them using new media such as microfiche and xerox.

The 98 pages of this microfiche, when enlarged to readable size via a suitable gadget (a fiche reader), comprise half of a book which I wrote to explore my records and memories of twenty-five years of writing. The complete book, in microform, can be manufactured and mailed to any place in the world by the fastest airmails for between 50p & £1 (between 1 & 2 US dollars). And this can be done within a week or so of completing the typescript. Its typed 'camera-ready'.

My alternative form of publication is to make xerox copies of the typescript to order, to get them bound by a bookbinder or by a cheaper plastic binding, and to mail them, air or surface, to the persons placing the order. Each book made in this way can be a unique selection of pages from my two thousand-or-so pages of writings: the reader is invited to select the material, and the book is made, and inscribed with the reader's name, as an edition of one. The cost of making and mailing a book by this means is £20 to £50 (40 to 120 US dollars). Again it can be done within weeks of completing the text and avoids many of the discouraging difficulties and delays of publishing a book via a printing press.

In proceeding in this way I am ignoring the obvious objections (few people have the gadget to read fiches: the cost of xerox facsimile copies is far too high for most readers). These new ways of publishing do not preclude doing so by cheaper, but slower, and more impersonal, methods: the new ways precede the old ones, in the sense that anyone can use them immediately the typescript exists, and before submitting to the delays and restrictions which a conventional publisher is bound to apply to what is to be accepted for publication. With these new means of transmitting copies to readers: once its typed, its published. To put one's thoughts into the world, visibly, one has only to get them as far as one's fingertips, not to the far side of a publishing organisation. Surely this principle is so right that its worth trying for its own sake. It is, I believe, an inherently correct way to use technology, free of many of the alienations and inhumanities that are unavoidable when, between the writer and the reader, exist a host of heavy machines and expensive employees and investors all insisting that 'it cant be published unless it fits their standards and will sell in quantity'. The lighter and faster technologies of photography, computing, etc, are not physically tied to the alienations of mechanisation so why not make a start at using them in more personal and human ways? To do this one has to begin by ignoring the responses and assumptions we have inherited from centuries of mechanisation. The small press movement has, I believe, taken the first important step in this direction, with its use of the partly de-mechanised (ie automated) process of photo-offset. But, for the book-length texts I have written, it is still too
subject to limits like investment-in-copies—before-they-are-sold, and the laboriousness of retyping, binding, etc.

As these pages are to be transmitted under the limitations of small press publishing (thanks to the generosity of Allen & his helpers) there is not space to explain in detail the many practical reasons why, and how, in trying to re-think the process of printing and publishing, I came to these conclusions. But one day I hope to put it all in words. It could easily become a book, a fiche, a... The guiding principle is to share, between writer and reader, all the functions which are at present borne by the middle-people, professionals, ourselves in paid & limiting roles. So that, eventually, anyone may write what anyone may read, and the term 'writer' will come to mean, not that one has written a commercially published book, but that one can write at all, that one is literate, in touch.

My first move, in becoming a self-publisher, was to get an electric typewriter (this one) which is of just enough quality to produce camera-ready pages. Then I went to a typing school and learnt enough of the skill of touch-typing to be able to write-and-think as one process, not two. Now, when I write anything for publication, this for instance, I work without drafts direct onto the machine knowing that it is to be seen by the readers exactly as it looks to me, with no re-writing. While a page is on the machine I allow myself to correct, with tippex or liquid paper, anything I want to alter, but after a page is off the machine I treat it as 'in the world', published, visible, just as my spoken words are, beyond recall. With this discipline, new to me (I'd previously written about a hundred short pieces and one book by the tedious process of drafting, redrafting, proof-correcting, etc) I find myself enjoying a more adventurous style of write-think and often am able to make a so-called 'mistake' into the inspiration for 'what to write next', as in speech. And now, as with the book Writings Remembered, I can write a book in a month instead of a year. That speed, risk, and enjoyment, plus the feeling that now I can begin a book regardless of there being no publisher committed to it, is, I think, a sign that this is the right way to go?

My transition from planned-writing to this more improvised style was helped by my friend Edwin Schlossberg who, while I was still writing with pen and paper, encouraged me to write my ideas about communication, and related topics, as a series of weekly letters to himself. 'Just write something, to me, once a week, whatever's in your mind!' he said, when he heard I was completely unable to get started with this book, drafts of which had been rejected by several publishers. His advice worked. We each wrote 32 letters, in 8 months, discovering much that would never have emerged, I feel, with a more conscious plan, or theme. It was not until after that I realised we had indeed written a book, Letters in Communication, which now awaits completion of the typing-of-it out from handwritten into legible typing. I am awaiting the energy to do this typing, energy which would perhaps be triggered by a response to this notice of the book's availability via Jones Family Editions.

That name for my imprint was suggested by Eddie Schlossberg as a way of implying the attempt to combine the personal with the automatic. So far I've registered it as a company name and published Writings Remembered in both microfiche and handbound xerox facsimile. Now, in this text, I am taking the next step.

Another book on my shelf, which has so far been published in an edition of 30 by Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Department of Architecture, is Dear Architects (and Others Who Imagine How). This is composed of fifteen letters to students and teachers of architecture while I was visiting scholar at that college, in reply to their questions about such topics as environment, hierarchy, software, toys, myths and functionalism. It has been rejected for commercial publication, probably because most of the letters include unexpected inclusions, selected by chance process, from sources outside myself. ALL OF WHICH PROVES EVERYONE WOULD BE NUTS ABOUT THE NEW YORK LITERARY ESTABLISHMENT IF ONLY IT PUT IN AN OCCASIONAL AFTERNOON ON PUBLIC RELATIONS.

I got onto fiche publishing, in the first place, with the
thought that it would be a nice gesture to mail microfiches of new writings from the west to the national libraries of
eastern countries that are probably cut off from this
writing. I imagined some pleasant accidents in which people
who did not know of the existence of experimental literature
were happy to find it in some disregarded archive of the
national library in Peking, Java, or Wales. (I was born within
sight of the Welsh national library.) When I realised that
the medium is suitable, in principle, as a next step in self-
publishing, I canvassed several friends, such as Allen,
for reactions to the idea. Their replies let me see that,
though it already a real inspiration to writers, it is not
yet very attractive to readers, for the reasons of cost, or
access to fishe-readers, that I am for the moment ignoring.
This set me to making some fictional designs for the social
organisations, not yet existing, which would be needed to make
the idea work. I wrote a page, describing the books available*
from Jones Family Editions, for the fictional Writer's Catalog,
which I supposed would offer a page to any experimental
writer (or perhaps, if the catalog were accessible on tv
screens via computer, to any person whatsoever) to describe
their works and to say how readers can get to see them. I also
envisaged, and began to try to organise, various half-way
houses to this ideal. A method of circulating expensive
xerox books on a borrow-or-buy basis, the reader sending the
price but getting most of it back when the book is returned,
the next reader paying that much less, & so on. A Readers &
Writers Gallery where one could read & sample microbooks and
buy or borrow fishe-readers, or kits to make them oneself, and
where most of the worlds new poetry etc is available in
a few small boxes of microfiches. But these schemes, I
realised, are outside the range of what one can do as a
writer for one's own works: they require some collaborative
effort & much devoted work & some funds.

So now, having used much time & energy myself, to produce
several texts that were a joy to write but which have as yet
reached very few, I am encouraged, and re-energised, by Allen's
request to make this progress report to the readers of Spanner.
I'll end with a list of my recent writings and indicate their

accessibility via Jones Family Editions or by other means.
EVERY DAY THE URGE GROWS STRONGER TO GET HOLD OF AN OBJECT
AT VERY CLOSE RANGE BY WAY OF ITS LIKENESS, ITS REPRODUCTION.

Jones Family Editions:

(1) Letters in Communication. About 300 pages. 32 weekly letters
by Edwin Schlossberg and Chris Jones about communication & life.
Ed's letters are brief, poetic, profound. Mine are lengthy,
exploratory, and written not knowing which way the book was
going. (1973-4)

An experiment in education: fifteen letters to students, teachers
and others who posed questions about hierarchy, software, toys,
utopias, etc. (1974-5)

Random quotations from 100 or so writings over 25
years with a continuous text of my present reactions. Ranging
freely over design, ergonomics, poetry, ideas, memories of

Plays. About 150 pages. Most of these plays were written in
place of papers for conferences on design, north sea oil, the
future, etc. Some were composed automatically, by chance
process, others are more spontaneous. Some were composed as play.

(4) Is Designing a Response to the Whole of Life? 1973. An
imaginary conversation with Kant, Jung, Whitman, Graham
Stevens & EDRA. 5 pages.

(5) Superman Has Had His Day. 1973. With The Sun, Bucharest,
Kipling, Buckinghamshire & Me. 8 pages. (with a theory of
performance)

Plastic Thoughts. 1974. With Confucius, Thoreau, McLuhan,
and various modern views about oil, plastics, and local
life and rebellion (Eric Hoffer, William Burroughs) 12 pages.

35 Wishes. 1976. Performers choose which lines to speak
and act thus creating the characters out of a text comp-
posed of words and thoughts suggested by an exhibition of
design for need. 16 pages.

* published in Alembic, spring 1978
(6) Arch: the artificial church. 1976. An essay, on theatre, that became a play, to be performed in an art gallery.
With characters like preachers, Bob Dylan, angels, Pope John, politicians, actresses, represented by both effigies and actors. A play of atmosphere & occasion. 16 pages.


(9) Voices at the Conference Conference. 1977. A conversation between a Chinese gentleman, international man, John Cage, the designers of conferences, and the writer. 25 pages.

A Place of Being? 1977. A chaos of voices trying to get away from mechanical thinking: Martin Heidegger, a Japanese person, Edwin Schlossberg, Will Petersen, the voice of technology, and myself. 15 pages.


Public Questions. About 160 pages. Essays, letters, interviews, etc. about the place of communications, design, and future studies in public life. Questioning the status quo of specialization and professionalism, and continually enlarging my view of design. (1970 to 1979):


I Never Think About Europe. 1977. 4 pages.
TV I Love It. 1977. 2 pages.

The Future of Broadcasting: A Debate That Never Happened:
Thank Goodness. 1977. 9 pages.


(13) Beyond Rationalism. An Interview by Marina Waisman. 1978
20 pages. (Also published in Spanish.)
Composing by Chance. How To Do It. 1978. 3 pages.

(14) Designing Designing. 1978. 16 pages. (also published in
a conference proceedings as Designing as a Creative
Activity.)

(14A) "....in the dimension of Time." 1978. 18 pages. (also in
Opus One, Number Two, Designing as Process. 1978. 15 pa
Difficult to give an idea of what these are like. The last on
for instance, is a rethinking of the nature of designing in the
light of David Miller's poem The Story, chinese poems, and a
remark overheard on the radio.

in which each person tries to copy what the last one did. A
book of emptiness. A film of street life. And pictures com-
posed of machine words, design words, etc. Some in Spanish.
1975-9:

Copy Can. 1975. Evolution of a can drawing copyed by
thirty people. 32 pages.

From Lisa Wilson. 1975. An evolving series of copies
by different people of a face drawn by Lisa Wilson.
About 80 pages so far.

(15) Copying: some examples of collective intelligence. Copies
of a cup drawing by 25 people, with explanatory text.
(Made for the cover of the poetry magazine The Wolly
of Swot) 4 pages. 1977.

Diywiliannau Hynafol/Ancient Cultures. 1977. A bilingual
book of ancient emptinesses made for the Welsh Nation.
Eisteddfod. 24 pages.

Tigers Permitted. 1977. Audience text for an 8mm colour
sound film of street events and sunlight with words
from one of the Letters in Communication with Edwin
Schlossberg. 2 pages.

Joanna's Design & John's Letter. 1978. Invitation to
those who want to participate in pure design, namely
the inventing, and making, of sculptures, buildings,
etc. from a drawing made by Joanna, aged 3, and the
ideas of John Suter for non-functional buildings.
6 pages.


Juan. 1979. A picture composed out of the first word in my book Design Methods to begin with my initial. 1 page.

(16) Numeración Buenos Amigos. 1978. Illustrations for an issue of the Argentinian magazine Espacios Césped, composed from typical words taken from my writings on design. 25 pages.

(17) 25 for Somarios. 1978. Illustrations composed from words in my design writings and from rubbings of architectural details of my house. In Spanish, for the Argentinian magazine Somarios. 26 pages.

(This catalog is getting to be far longer than I'd imagined it could. I've never listed these things before and I'm amazed to see that these last few years, since I left full time employment, have been more productive than I'd thought. Time to get them off my shelves and into view. In my efforts to devise a means of publication that is right in principle I seem to keep my writings out of sight, my own included. Time to compromise a bit?)

Collected Writings 1950-75. About 1000 pages. I have copies of most of the articles I wrote on topics like design, ergonomics, futures research, education, automation, and communications, while I was working in the electrical industry and in universities. These are listed, and sampled, in Writings Remembered. The bibliography for this period

(18) Christopher Jones: a bibliography, 1950-1972 is available from Council of Planning Librarians, PO Box 229, Monticello, Illinois, 61856, USA. $1.50. It is reprinted in WR.

Copies of these articles can, I suppose, be supplied in xerox or microfiche via Jones Family Editions but I am not yet quite ready for the effort of trying to get copyright permissions, etc., etc.

Unfinished Books. 1977-79. I had not meant to mention these but now that the impulse to list everything is upon me I might as well. Who knows what it may lead to? Its one's perhaps impulsive acts which sometimes lead, I'm finding, to the best accidents. These books were all begun thinking not of my own publishing but with commercial publishers in mind, and with thoughts of balancing the budget. And they were abandoned because I felt the flow to be a bit choppy, or too diffuse, or what not. Motives too mixed, perhaps? But, as topics upon which I might well write again, in a better frame of mind, they interest me a lot:

People of The Book. 1977-78. An attempt at a philosoph novel. Four people, in Wales, attempt to rethink industrial life through an experiment in examining their everyday experience, for a year, as 'people of the book', living a life planned and patterned on paper before it can be experienced.

Meditations on Technology. 1978. About sixty short meditations of what seem to me to be the important entities, or myths, in industrial life, eg work, skill, education, automation, mind, culture, dualism, scale, software, energy, information, bureaucracy, mass media, etc. With the recurrent finding of ways in which the social status quo gives us incentives to use technology that go against what is human and what is natural.

A Twentieth Century Education. 1978. An account of my education, or re-education, in twentieth century thought having being brought up, as most of us have, to see modern forms of art & thought as freakish, and to see the inherited forms of hierarchy, control, centralisation, etc, as the norm. A close look at some chance-chosen pages from 7 minds I respect and continue to learn from: Jackson Maclow, Wallace Stevens, John Cage, Gertrude Stein, David Miller, Marcel Duchamp, Edwin Schlossberg, in that chance-chosen order and with quotations pre-selected by chance so that the writing-thinking process is in the form & spirit of the texts I hope to learn from.
In addition to these unfinished, and meant-to-be-commercial, books there are two others not so much abandoned as in process:

Notes In The Dark, 1973-79. Not a typescript but a mass of hard-to-decipher notes made while experiencing about fifty films, plays, or other performances. These, when I've found how to communicate them, will I think amount to a detailed disentangling of exactly why it is that the sensations, thoughts, etc, engendered by realistic plays & films block all possibility of there being a poetic theatre, and a poetic use of film & tv, in the west just now. There are more encouraging notes made while experiencing eastern performances such as kabuki, javanese shadow plays & Hamlet in Korean, and many starting points for the making of a poetic theatre in the west. My own plays are attempts in this direction.

Murami Theatre: The First Book of Conventions, 1978. Murami is an as-yet-untried blending of music, radio & mime. This book is intended to be an example of inventing new conventions (such as exist in games & sports and without which I don't think a poetic mode of attention to plays is possible). Given some examples, other conventions could be invented and, in each new convention, it should be possible for everyone, regardless of lack of theatrical training, to write plays and to perform them. But the skill that has to be learnt, I think, is that of being an informed audience, responsive to poetic atmosphere and not searching for meanings or attempting to 'judge' the performance but being, in one's responses & thoughts, the play itself. (That, in brief, is my view of theatre. Of play as mind.)

But never mind how long it takes: the process will determine that. The situation.

AVAILABILITY of Jones Family Editions:

Of the items described only Writings Remembered is as yet available in microfiche. The price, including airmail postage, £1 or 2 US dollars for the two fiches, 200 pages in all (2 times 98 = 196, to be exact).

A small demand for some of the other items would encourage me enough to invest in the making of fiches for these too, over the next year or so, i.e. 1979-80. (50p or 1 dollar/100 ps)

All items described, except those not yet typed, eg Letters in Communication, are available in xerox, at the price of my getting this done at a commercial bureau and bound either by a quality bookbinder or in a cheaper plastic binding. The price, per 100 pages, is £7.00 for copying, about the same for quality binding, and several pounds for postage. Total: about £20 or 40 US dollars, less with cheaper binding and surface mail (which takes many weeks overseas). Write asking for a quotation, specifying what texts you want and what binding & postage rate, air or surface. You can order short texts, even the one consisting of only one page, bound or unbound.

Write to:

Jones family editions
facsimile texts
microtexts tapes etc.
173 walm lane
london NW2 3AY
britain
phone 450-4270

or phone or visit if you wish to know more of the material before ordering, or if you are interested to see it anyway.

Fiche reading machines can be found in some public libraries and in many technical libraries and in computer companies. The Fuji portable reader costs about £70 in the UK.
Many designs of fiche reader, and a wide range of fiche books of historical, archival, kinds, are available from microtext publishers, the best known of which is Oxford Microform Publications Ltd, Telford Road, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 CUF phone Bicester (08692) 44441 (Mr Peter Ashby, Director)

Writings available from other sources:

Extracts from books, and whole articles, of each of the items marked thus (1) have appeared under various imprints and may still be available. I can supply addresses and refs.

A complete set of Collected Favers 1950-75 is available at the Library of the Department of Architecture, Virginia Polytechnic & State University, Blackburg, Virginia, 24061, USA (librarian Robert E Stephenson, who compiled the bibliography and who gave me the idea of doing Writings Remembered. The incentive to write it was provided by Loris Essary, editor of Interstate and organiser of The Noumenon Foundation, Austin, Texas.)

The book Design Methods, a textbook of design methods & theory, is published by John Wiley & Sons, New York, Chichester, Australia, etc, (1970) and is available mail order at £6.25 plus postage from the co-publishers, The Design Centre, 22 Haymarket, London, SW1, phone 01 839-8000. It is also available in Japanese, Roumanian, Polish, Spanish, and soon in Italian.

Printed copies of Diwyliannau Hynafol/Ancient Cultures (pri- by the Welsh Arts Council) are available from Jones Family Editions for the cost of postage (approx £1.00 air £0.50 sur

Offset printed copies of this text Once Its Typed Its Public are available from Jones Family Editions for the cost of postage (approx £0.50 air £0.25 surface) were printed by Erik Vonna-Michell and are also available from Spanner, Allen Fisher, 85 Ramill Close, Brixton Hill, London, SW2 5DQ, Britain,(included in Spanner 17).

DEAR CHRIS

THE PHYSICAL/BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BRAIN SEEM TO HOLD TO A PATTERN WHICH IS IN TOTAL IN FEELING SUCH THAT A THOUGHT THINKING IS THE SUM OF ALL THOUGHTS THINKING AND THEREFORE TO HAVE A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON AN ALREADY PATTERNED EVENT IS THE MOST THOROUGHLY NEW ACT ONE CAN PERFORM I BELIEVE. IN WORDS WE FIND THE UNCONSCIOUS HISTORY OF OTHERS REACTION TO EXPERIENCE AND SO BY REARRANGING, USING NEW METAPHORS, TRYING TO AWAKEN A SENSE OF THE REAL EXPERIENCES CONTAINED IN THE ABSTRACTION WE ENLIVEN DELIBERATE OURSELVES. WE BECOME MORE SENSING.

The chance-selected quotations IN CAPITALS come from these sources:

