

lots of mixed up thoughts here, and i drank coffee a minute ago for the first time in days so i feel a little cracked out.

first of all, i really don't know anything about this new sincerity debate, or the people claiming the genre, or the arguments around it. i'm sort of willfully ignorant in some ways. i shouldn't be. or maybe i'm ok with the way i am, with my spotty and inconsistent knowledge re. contemporary poetry/poetics.

i don't understand or have any desire in participating in a rhetoric of attack, from any direction. it offends my sensibility. i also don't see sincerity as being at odds with conceptualism, nor do i see confessionalism as being in any way inherently sincere, just because you're laying your shit out there in some way doesn't make you sincere.

i mean, basically i can relate to the things that you're saying, but you're entrenched (intellectually at least) in this whole world that i think i'm entirely outside of. i'm sort of content to be so, but maybe that's stupid. maybe i should know more about these things.

when i say i'm sick of irony and detachment and cynicism i think i mean in our culture at large, not really in poetry. and when i say i'm interested in new sincerity, i think i just mean "sincerity as i conceive it."

i like the idea of language being ironic, but i don't know if i agree with it entirely. words are not the things they signify, but neither are they their opposites.

the question that i want to ask of you, or the question that i ask of any work of art that i'm taking in is "what's at stake here?" i think something that's true of a lot of art that i see these days is "very little." which is what i think i'm responding to in my own work. which is why i've been working so hard to fold in something that feels sincere to me. something that somehow raises the stakes.

why would conceptual poetry not be sincere? how is a concept not sincere? i've found often that working with a concept allows me to get at something more real/sincere than if i were just to spill my guts on a page. i live in a bubble called my own head.

i mean, let's take the last thing i shared with you, those 5 poems i call "grimoire." they are possibly the most sincere thing i've ever written, but they aren't not conceptual, they also aren't exactly confessional, but they aren't not confessional. i think that what propels me here is knowing my own process, intimately, i know the self-censoring that happens when i write one certain way or another. like, this desire for sincerity comes out of knowing how often i've been insincere, or hidden behind some certain kind of language, does that make sense?

i do relate to what you're saying, though, about allowing the reader to project their own emotional experiences onto your work. i've described my work in a similar way quite often, that it's a screen or a filter for the reader to think/feel through.

and i am obsessed with conceptual poetry/art. i also find it to be highly emotional. i would like to share with you some of [redacted]'s work that highlights this, when he read to me while i was in [redacted] recently i almost cried.

what if those tendencies could be integrated?

