

THEMES IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY

1. The individual coming to terms with various revolutions 1945-1985:

nuclear energy
the cold war
psychoanalysis
the sexual revolution / birth control pill
the educational revolution
theology / god is dead
the generation gap / nuclear families
race
the urban revolution
affluence / poverty
cybernetics / silicone chip
paperback publishing
the population explosion
ecology and the vanishing wilderness
communications / media image / tv & satellite
transportation
outer space exploration
the drug culture
literacy / illiteracy
the neutron bomb

2. The individual coming to terms with a sense of acceleration associated with all these revolutions going on simultaneously.
3. The man / woman relationship, the problem of sincerity in love.
4. "Contingency" - chance and randomness, the breakdown of logic and grammar - happenings - the happy accident - the I Ching - Andre Gide and gratuity.
5. "Haecceity" (Duns Scotus) - "that incommunicable nature which constitutes the individual difference, or individualizes singular beings belonging to a class; hence the principle of individuation" - "thisness" - Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274: "this flesh, these bones" - existentialism and the coordinates of time and space.
6. "Nominalism" - theory that abstracts or general terms, or universals, represent no objective real existence or existents, but are merely words or names, mere vocal utterances, "flatus voces" - W C Williams: "no ideas but in things" -

