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Editorial

Robert Kroetsch (1927 – 2011)

“I think questions are much more important than answers. Answers are always wrong. Questions are always right.”

- Robert Kroetsch (Rampike, 20.1)

In this issue of Rampike we pause to remember Robert Kroetsch, boatman, novelist, poet, literary critic, theorist, teacher, Officer of the Order of Canada, recipient of the Lieutenant Governor’s Alberta Distinguished Artist Award, winner of the Golden Pen Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Writers Guild of Alberta, and among numerous other prizes, including the Governor General’s Award of Canada. He made us laugh, and he made us think. So, we hazard the page, Robert, and humbly dedicate this portentous volume to you. [Photo: K. Jirgens]

In the spirit of Robert Kroetsch, this issue of Rampike poses questions on Scientific wonders. We provide focal points on aspects of the universe that have been named by scientists and which touch our lives daily, including biology, physics, the big bang, chaos theory, mathematics, linguistics, neurology, medicine, political-science, social science, geology, optics, temporality, and computer technology, as they integrate with the arts to create poetry, fiction, bio-texts, installation art, performance, graphics, photo-works, sculptures and digitally enhanced inter-media expressions. In response to these mad wonders of science we feature the geologically inspired visual art of Guy Laramée, and graphics inspired by mathematicians, geology, cognition, and physics by Carole Stetser, John Oughton, Reed Altemus, Stephen Humphrey, Monica Radulescu, Gustav Morin, Kim Goldberg, and Christian Burgaud. And we present narrative expressions by Rosemary Nixon, Antanas Sileika, Daniel King, Murali Sivaramakrishnan, Alan Lord, John Robert Columbo, Joe Davies, Norman Lock, and Richard Truhlar. In this issue, Karl Jirgens interviews multiple prize-winning author, Gail Scott. And, we include the remarkable nano-poetry of SS Prasad, plus the whisper-wire on-line poetics of J.R. Carpenter. Herein, we present the linguistic manipulations of Richard Kostelanetz, algorithmic poetic-graphemes of Eric Zboya, and poetic transformations of Lorenzo Menoud. Daniel David Moses takes us paddling in Stephen Hawking’s Canoe, while poets Christen Thomas, Kevin McPherson, Francie P. Lewis, Edward Nixon, Stan Rogal, Aaron Tucker and Scott Bentley investigate the interactions of science, technology and biology. Applying principles of political science, Fausto Bedoya offers a review on East-Central European Literatures. Finally, we are delighted to present theoretical pieces by Ryosuke Cohen on the origins of the universe, Adam Lauder on cyborg functions in Iain Baxter’s N.E.Thing Co., Mike Marcon on the mechanical designs of trees, and Ruggero Maggi on chaos theory and fractal patterns. Our writers and artists come primarily from Canada with special guests from Japan, India, Australia, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the USA. We hope that you’ll enjoy this kaleidoscope of views that reveal some of the ways in which Science shapes our perceptions. And! Be sure to stay tuned for our next issue which will feature Contemporary Poetics! – K. Jirgens
COVER ARTIST

Guy Laramée

Guy Laramée’s inter-media art graces the cover art of this issue of Rampike. The front cover inter-media sculpture is titled: “Anhui” (carved books, 2010), and the back cover piece is, “Grand Larousse” (detail, eroded encyclopedia, 2010). Guy Laramée is an artist in his 30th year of practice. His work embraces a large inter-disciplinary territory including stage directing, musical composition and new instrument building, singing, dance, video, scenography, sculpture and installation, painting, and writing. He is the recipient of over two dozen major grants. He received the Joseph S. Stauffer prize awarded by Canada Council for the Arts (1989). His creations have been presented in Canada, the United States, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Japan and Latin America. Both collaborator and designer, Laramée has worked with other important artists around the world including Robert Lepage, Rachel Rosenthal, Larry Tremblay, Jean-Frédérique Messier, Volker Hesse, Martine Beaulne, among others. As an organizer and producer, he has founded and directed many companies with an artistic or cultural vocation (e.g.; TUYO, microtonal and gestural music ensemble on invented instruments; Pluramuses, interdisciplinary theatre; CIBL-FM). He has initiated key events in Canada including L’Espace traversé, first pan-canadian conference on interdisciplinary practices; and Forums CIRCA, among others. A self taught composer, he holds a Master’s degree in anthropology and visual art. Among his recent works is BIBLIOS, a meditation on our cult of knowledge-as-accumulation, that took the form of miniature landscapes carved in books, and a story soon to be published. Parts of this project were exhibited in Canada and the eastern United States, including the Center for Book Arts, New York and the Art Institute of Boston. Guy Laramée is represented by Galerie Lacerte in Quebec City and Galerie Orange in Montreal.

Guy Laramée’s The Great Wall was presented January 19 - April 2, 2011 at the Center for Book Arts
The Center for Book Arts is committed to exploring and cultivating contemporary aesthetic interpretations of the book as an art object while invigorating traditional artistic practices of the art of the book. Founded in 1974, it was the first organization of its kind in the nation.
Centre for Book Arts: 28 West 27th Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10001 www.centerforbookarts.org

Ryoanji Japanese Dictionary, 2010
Au 23e siècle, l’Empire Chinois, qui avait supplanté l’Empire Américain depuis peu, entreprit d’écrire l’histoire des Grandes Paniques des 21e et 22e siècles.

L’ouvrage qui résultat de cette tâche surhumaine est une série encyclopédique à caractère historique ayant pour titre « La Grande Muraille ». Cette encyclopédie en 100 volumes emprunte son titre à La Grande Muraille d’Amérique, cette entreprise titanique accomplie sur une période de 150 ans et qui devait encercler le territoire américain d’un mur impénétrable. Comme nous le savons, cette muraille, qui avait pour but de protéger les USA des invasions barbares, finit par isoler ce peuple du reste du monde, dilapida ce qui restait des ressources naturelles et culturelles du pays, éroda la confiance du peuple américain dans l’hédonisme institutionnalisé et accéléra la chute de l’Empire Américain. La Chine eût alors la porte ouverte pour envahir le territoire américain.

L’ironie du sort a voulu que les écrivains que l’empire chinois avait chargé d’écrire « La Grande Muraille » eurent à entrer en contact avec les bibliothèques des défunts États-Unis et ce faisant, ils découvrirent les sources anciennes de leur civilisation, sources que l’Empire du soleil levant avait depuis longtemps supprimé des bibliothèques chinoises. C’est ce contact avec le Taoïsme et le Bouddhisme Chan' (Zen) principalement – qui initia l’érosion de l’Empire Chinois.
THE GREAT WALL - Guy Laramée
Translation by: Prof. Norman Cornett, Historian

Having recently overthrown the American Empire in the 23rd century, the Chinese Empire set out to chronicle the history of the Great Panics during the 21st and 22nd centuries.

This Herculean undertaking resulted in a historiographical masterwork entitled, The Great Wall. Comprising 100 volumes, this encyclopaedia derives its name from The Great Wall of America, a monumental project to build an impregnable wall around the United States of America so as to protect this land from barbarian invasions. 150 years in the making, this wall ultimately isolated Americans from the rest of the world while sapping the country’s remaining cultural and natural resources. It also undermined the American people’s confidence in systematized hedonism, thus hastening the fall of the American Empire. As we now know this paved the way for China to invade American territory.

The Chinese Empire later ordered a group of scribes to write The Great Wall series. In the course of their duties they familiarized themselves with the libraries of the former USA. Through a strange twist of fate they thereby discovered the ancient sources of their own civilization which the new Middle Kingdom had long ago removed from its libraries. In the end this contact, primarily with Taoism and Chan (Zen) Buddhism, sowed the seeds of the Chinese Empire’s demise.

Grand Larousse (detail), eroded encyclopedia (2010)
WHAT
WE
KNOW
LIES
ON THE
SHORE BETWEEN
WHAT WE
REMEMBER
AND
NEW DATA
CRASHING
IN LIGHT/
WAVE/PARTICLES
DISPLACING
WHAT
When we encounter well-designed cars and buildings, we are impressed by them, and do really admire the talent of their designers and architects. I sometimes devise logotypes and visual poetry, and when completed, I feel satisfied with it. However, now I would like to think of more principle themes by exchanging ideas with artists on topics such as: space, atoms and the big-bang. This is the reason I opened a bulletin board.**  All on-line readers are free to engage in discussion about the beginnings and the ends of time/space. Don't hesitate to put your idea on my bulletin board. In the meantime, my idea on the Big Bang and Prime Numbers is as follows:

The Pressure is applied to a sphere from all directions.  
A convection generates inside the sphere, and the sphere is divided into four spheres.  
The central part comes under intense pressure.
The Big Bang: massive matter is directed outward in all directions.

The lightwave of wavelength 2 generates toward a, b, c and d respectively, and in succession the lightwave of wavelength 3 extends toward each of 4 directions from b, the lightwave of wavelight 5 extending toward c. The lightwave of lightlength 7 generates from d, and then the lightwave of 4 kinds of wavelength (2, 3, 5 and 7) extends toward a, b, c, and d from 0 point.

Number 8 locates the position where it diffuses on the top of the lightwave of wavelength 2. Number 9 locates the position where it diffuses on the top of the lightwave of wavelength 3. The same is true of each number 10, 20, 21, 22 to wavelength 2 and 5, 2 and 5, 3 and 7, and 2, respectively.

Prime numbers locate the position where massive matter draws around, and are on the straight line a, b, c and d.

*Numbers become larger from 0 point in the form of an irregular spiral, and prime numbers locate the position where massive matter (fixed star) aggregated.

*Each zero point of the Riemann's hypothesis doesn't exist on the straight line, but it does on a single point.

** For further information on Ryosuke Cohen's MAIL ART (NETWORKING ART) BRAIN CELL activities, or to take active part in his on-line electronic Bulletin Board, go to: [http://www.ryosukecohen.com/board/top.html](http://www.ryosukecohen.com/board/top.html)
Re: structuring N.E. Thing Co.

Adam Lauder

Donna Haraway’s reconceptualization of the cyborg as a utopian subject position in an emergent Network Society has spawned numerous studies of embodiment, gender and technology since the publication of “A Cyborg Manifesto” twenty years ago. In Haraway’s influential definition, “a cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism” (149). Given the prominence of cybernetics in this formulation, it is surprising that the specifically cybernetic dimensions of the cyborg remain relatively unexplored. The current resurgence of interest in and concomitant reevaluation of the “field of control and communication theory” suggests that the time is ripe for revisiting the status of cybernetics within cyborg theory (Wiener, 11). One contemporary project whose exegesis invites a coupling of cybernetic and cyborg frameworks is the N.E. Thing Co. Ltd. (NETCO), a conceptual project and legally-incorporated business founded by Canadian artist IAIN BAXTER& (formerly known as Iain Baxter) in 1966 and co-administered with Ingrid Baxter until 1978.

Informed by the media studies of Marshall McLuhan, the Vancouver-based company’s cybernetic assemblage of human operators and nonhuman actors—notably the “moral person” of the corporation itself—is legible in its innovative organization chart and cyborg functions. In keeping with McLuhan’s prescient (if largely overlooked) analysis of the impact of cybernetic models of cognition on business in The Mechanical Bride (1951) and of the effects of telecommunications on corporations in Understanding Media (1964), NETCO adopted a “horizontal” approach to its corporate architecture.

Through the establishment of semi-autonomous Departments. The chief product of these branch plants was “Sensitivity Information,” which translated the actions of Company personnel into a distinctive code that parodied newly pervasive machine-readable languages as well as then-current analogies between organizations and electronic brains.
Although the keynote of *The Mechanical Bride* is assuredly mechanization, a careful reading discloses a surprisingly complex portrait of the transition from a mechanistic regime of mediality to the electronic configuration theorized more systematically in subsequent texts by McLuhan. Repeated references to Norbert Wiener and Margaret Mead—both key participants in the Macy Conferences, which laid the disciplinary foundations of cybernetics between 1946 and 1953—register McLuhan's attentiveness to this transition. The prime signifier of a nascent cybernetic rationality in *The Mechanical Bride* is the liquidation of humanistic affect and its resultant reconstitution as the statistical norm of the market researcher. Anne Balsamo has posited a relationship between Wiener’s cybernetics and the cyborg body posited by McLuhan: “If Wiener shows how cybernetics was founded on a simulation of the human body, McLuhan suggests the converse—that people have begun to simulate machines” (Balsamo, 174 n. 20). Fusion of the human subject with the computerized circuitry of the American marketplace assumes a nightmare cast in McLuhan’s rendering:

Statistics and production charts are part of the dithyrambic poetry of industrial man. Telephone numbers of girls who are good numbers, smooth numbers, hot numbers, slick numbers, Maxfactorized, streamlined, synthetic blondes—these are at once abstract and exciting. Girls become intoxicating ‘dates’ when they are recognizable parts of a vast machine (1951, 96).

McLuhan’s gloss on the informationalization of the subject is consonant with Katherine Hayles’ subsequent depiction of the cybernetic renovation of physiology, a significant episode in her account of the emergence of the cyborg as an object of scientific study and literary fantasy in the immediate post-World War II period:

Central to the construction of the cyborg are informational pathways connecting the organic body to its prosthetic extensions. This presumes a conception of information as a (disembodied) entity that can flow between carbon-based organic components and silicon-based electronic components to make protein and silicon operate as a single system. When information loses its body, equating humans and computers is especially easy […] (2).

In stark contrast to the paranoid tenor of McLuhan’s assessment of statistical techniques, NETCO’s proprietary calculus assumed an unmistakably utopian orientation. Sensitivity Information facilitated the properly cybernetic management of the Company’s biotic and technological components by ensuring an efficient intra- and extramural flow of context-independent data. NETCO’s early appropriation of cybernetic language to construct a cyborg “brain of the firm” permitted the Company to position itself as an anarchistically self-regulating system capable of steering its own course on the etherealized flows of technocapitalism.
Rejecting impotence and violence, it seems essential to develop a financial base, therefore the N.E. Thing Co. Ltd. is transitioning itself into a business organization operating within the current framework—to generate funds by legitimate, highly imaginative and profitable business activity, in areas like food, clothing, shelter, leisure and consultation, so as to support and accomplish the projects and concepts it wishes to conceive (N.E. Thing Co. Ltd., 43).

NETCO’s cybernetic business model suggests comparisons with the management theories of British cyberneticist Stafford Beer (1926-2002). Beer, who made extended trips to Canada (where he delivered the 1973 Massey Lectures on CBC radio), argued that post-industrial conditions do not merely necessitate new approaches to management problems, but redefine the very ontology of the organization—in his own words, “what, given computers, the enterprise now is” (16). Recalling the cyborg function of Sensitivity Information in suturing the human and non-human elements of NETCO operations, in Beer’s viable system model (VSM) “information flows and processing would be laid out as a diagram of human bodily flows and transformations” (Pickering, 244). Beer’s proposal for a unique feedback mechanism—“algedonic meters”—provides a concrete illustration of his anthropomorphic approach to organization: the meters were designed to monitor the affective levels of personnel on a qualitative scale of intensity (yeah or neah) which could be readily communicated to managers (ibid, 271).

Andrew Pickering has identified Beer’s cybernetic corporation as one of the most elaborate representations of the cyborg in post-war culture. Fully six years prior to the publication of the first installment of Beer’s viable system model (VSM) trilogy in 1972, NETCO was experimenting with a cybernetic redefinition of the language of management qua Visual Sensitivity Information (VSI). As in Beer’s VSM, it is the organization itself which emerges from the Vancouver company’s cybernetic business model as an early form of cyborg subjectivity and a significant precedent for more recent experiments in network culture.
References:


Knight, Derek. *N.E. Thing Co.: The Ubiquitous Concept* (Oakville, ON: Oakville Galleries, 1995).


One-Letter Changes
For Emmett W. & Ann Noel

Richard Kostelanetz

Prison poison.
Produces products.
Production prediction.
Promises premises.
Properly property.
Propositions prepositions.
Protect protest.
Proto photo.
Put out.
Put pat pet pot pit.
Qualify quality.
Quick quack.
Rail rain.
Rain ruin.
Rain vain pain.
Rambling gambling.
Rape rope.
Reaches beaches.
Reach roach.
Read dead.
Read road.
Real read.
Ream roam.
Reap rear.
Rear roar.
Receive deceive.
Received deceived.
Reckon beckon.
Reed seed weed deed.
Refer defer.
Excerpt from: *Kalila*

Rosemary Nixon
(Writer in Residence, University of Windsor 2010-11)

Accompanying notes on Physics formulae
Dr. Gordon W. F. Drake
(Professor of Physics, University of Windsor)

Brodie
The news is like staring into an eclipse of the sun. Look at it straight and you’ll go blind.
You prepared. You prepared for a child to be born. You have not prepared for this. You stand at the window of your classroom and look out past your plants. You can see down to the smoking door. Kids huddled in bunches without their coats. Their breath rising, cloudy spirals.

Roses. You must bring Maggie roses. For a moment, shifting through papers on your desk, hunting the missing wire for tomorrow’s torsion-bar experiment, you forgot. Forgot you have a baby. This baby. You take a breath and bend into your chair. Your students sit quiet in their desks. Some are looking at you; others look away. You say, When a wave passes from deep water into shallow, the ray refracts toward the normal. You want to say, Today is canceled. You think the baby’s name.

*Kalila. Beloved.* The students go about their work, filling water tables, generating waves. When water rolls from deep to shallow, you say, it can create a tidal wave.

Miraculously, the day ends. You pack your satchel with student lab reports, drive to a florist. Ask for a dozen roses. The young woman behind the counter winks, says, Well, have we got hopes tonight! Gets glum when you don’t answer.

At the hospital, you step off on fifth floor, Neonatal Intensive Care. And wonder how you got here.

Maggie
I sit in Neonatal ICU and imagine a daughter. Fluorescent lights stare down, a worker vacuums. Ninety machines hum. Our baby. This girl. The baby next to Kalila’s isolette was born last night without a brain. His eyes stare out. There’s nothing in there. I have to look away. The mother sits beside his isolette, unmoving. Iceberg face. It pulses through me. Sudden choking laughter. You look just like your baby. I look down at mine, eyes closed, legs splayed, blue diaper dwarfing. Inside burning. She will be reckless, this daughter, Kalila. She will play hard, be a tomboy, scrape shins, throw a football, throw herself into her history.

Throw away this picture, Maggie. An acquaintance, Judith, is sitting on a bench in the waiting room. I hardly know her. The husband left her two, three months ago. I see the woman on occasion, at the grocery store, at church. We never talk. This morning Judith shows up at the hospital. Dark coat, rubber boots, no earrings.
You can’t get in, I tell her. They barely allow family. You can’t stay. Even my sisters have trouble getting in.

Two hours now. There she sits, on a hard bench in the waiting room. Offering no words.

I look over at the iceberg mother. Dr. Norton enters the nursery. The one doctor who never dresses like a doctor. Today she’s wearing a floral print skirt. It shows beneath her lab coat. Dr. Norton carries a chart, moves to the isolette next to Kalila’s. Her sleeve touches that mother cast in ice.

Good morning, Mrs. Angonata. The woman doesn’t answer. The doctor pulls up a stool, sits down beside her. Expels a breath.

There’s not a lot we can do for your son. He’s being kept warm and safe.

A twitch. The woman shakes. She shimmers in this cold blue-lit neonatal nursery.

We don’t know how long. Some hours? Perhaps several days. No, you don’t have to hold him. No, some mothers choose not to. Please, call me any time. Wait, no, it’s not too hard. It’s just the cords get caught. I’ll help you lift him out.

She lifts the empty baby, empty dangling legs, stare fixed on nothing. Lifts him from the mess of wires into a frozen mother’s arms.


**Dr. Vanioc**

Dr. W. P. Vanioc rubs his neck, picks up a pen, and reads. October 17

**Operation Report**

**Progress Notes**

# 524010

Solantz Girl

**Problem List:**

1. Respiratory distress
2. Dysmorphic features
3. Auditory evoked responses show abnormal
4. Solantz, girl, has decreased calcium and magnesium
5. Was put on dijoxin 0.1 mg p.o. bid, followed by Doctor Showalter
6. Solantz, girl, kept on 38% oxygen.
7. Goes off colour during feeds.

Dr. Vanioc unties his shoelaces, leans back in his chair, raises his arms to ease his backache, and returns to the child’s charts.

The baby came in a week ago, transferred from the Peter Lougheed on her third day. She has everything wrong with her, and no reason that he can see. Slightly under four weeks early. Normal delivery, although they induced the mother due to toxemia. The right side of the child’s mouth shows evidence of facial paralysis. She has excessive mucus secretions from her nose and throat. Her feedings result in coughing and choking and vomiting. She already has developed an upper lobe aspiration pneumonia as a result. The ductus is still open. The babe’s on 40% oxygen. Dr. Vanioc makes notes on his pad. He will suggest lasix, put her on dijoxin. He reviews the nurses’ reports.

**Neonatal Intensive Care Flow Sheet**


The doctor twists his wedding band against his finger. His headache makes him want to take it off. The babe developed hypocalcemia and was given an IV of calcium gluconate.

Feedings started again 12 hours ago. The infant sucks moderately well, but her pulmonary signs are worsening. Likely more aspiration. The parents young, but not so young. Late twenties maybe. The mother exhibits high anxiety. She’s small and worried, like a wired spring.

Dr. Vanioc takes off his glasses, rubs his eyes. He thinks of his wife, at this moment spooning mashed peas and puréed squash into his small son’s mouth, irritated that he gives sixteen hours a day to these sick babies while he neglects his own. Dr. Vanioc thinks of his wife’s indignant back, the fine curve of spine where it reaches her buttocks, thinks this for a moment, then pushes it into the headache that climbs his neck. He turns back to the charts.

Möbius syndrome? he scribbles. They’ll have to feed her through gastrostomy.
You tuck your blue-and-green checked shirt, a Brodie shirt, Maggie’s sisters call it, into your green flannel pants, and say, Okay. Question #10. What concept does this question deal with? Uniform motion, a scattering of voices call.

And uniform motion is?
Motion at a constant speed.

Thank you, Eileen. And speed, as not many of you have learned, judging by the numbers who got this test question wrong, equals distance over time. You scribble the equation on the blackboard. Harold, read the question.

Brodie and Maggie took their dog for a walk at the river. When they parked the car, Brodie got out and started walking. Maggie remained behind to gather up the leash and doggie bags and lock up the car. Skipper, worried that Brodie and Maggie would become separated, ran full tilt back and forth between them on the path. Maggie took three minutes to lock up the car. If Brodie was walking 5 km per hour, and 3 minutes later, Maggie began walking 7 km per hour, how far would Skipper, bounding at 20 km per hour, have to run before Maggie caught up to Brodie?

Hey, Mr. Solantz, is Maggie your wife?
Mr. Solantz, you have a dog?
What kind is she?
Mr. Solantz is married? I never knew he was married. You’re married, Mr. Solantz?
She is, I do, I am, and she’s a he.

And details of Skipper’s daily habits, or mine, are not going to help you pass you Physics Departmental.

Skipper! Is he a mongrel?
You sigh. Last question, Anita.
Promise? He’s a springer spaniel.
Awwwwwww, echoes around the classroom. They’re so cute.

And smart, Anita says. I read that...
Anita, Skipper’s smart. He could probably pass my Physics exam. The question is, could you? Now help me work out this question. Where do we begin?

Well, says a gum-snapping Anita, I’d begin with the character of Brodie. Why the hell would he leave Maggie to lock up the car like that? He just walked off on her? Why would Maggie even want to catch up with the jerk?

Anita slumps back in her chair. I tell you what I’d do. I’d drive right off and leave him!

You pull at your hair in mock anguish. This is about speed that doesn’t change, okay? They all have to move at their own rate so you can work out the problem. Forget the character of Brodie. I’ll work on his manners for the next exam. Come up here, Anita, and solve the problem.

I was only trying to express myself, Anita says, eyes feign innocence, sparkling blue.

You want to take these happy people in your arms.

The angled doors of Foothills Hospital slide apart, and you enter the smells – floor polish, coffee, corned beef, flowers, medication, pus.

You think, We exist because of an explosion of stars. O2, CO2, H2.

You got the mail before you drove here. Maggie’s mother sent a baby quilt, bits from her Saskatchewan sewing sun room, a starburst pattern, tiny triangles of brown, blue, green, yellow, patterned, cotton, linen, gabardine, hand-stitched leftovers from Maggie’s childhood.

The elevator pings. A group of anxious visitors herds on and mills while everybody stabs a button. This morning you explained Schrödinger’s cat experiment to your grade eleven class. A box, an unfortunate cat shoved in a box, radioactive material, and a potentially lethal device. This device could kill the cat, depending on whether the radioactive pellet emits a particle and triggers the device. There is a 50-50 chance. You step out of the elevator and head down the hall. The observer’s paradox. The scientists outside the closed box have no idea of the fate of the cat, who remains in a state of superposition, of limbo: the cat alive and dead, or neither alive nor dead — until an observer opens the box and looks inside. You scrub your hands, don the yellow gown, open

You look at the sweeping reach of babies, bereft of the smell of oranges, autumn quilts, iced tea. A room full of babies who cannot see the stars. You wind to your baby’s isolette and peer down at the child breathing in great gulps, as if the air were uncertain, retreating from her. Einstein never accepted Schrödinger’s quantum mechanics. Einstein said God doesn’t play dice with the world. You reach into the child’s isolette, rub your thumb, like rubbing Aladdin’s lamp, against the baby’s forehead and an agonizing flush of hope bursts across your skin. You straighten the cords, arrange the files flung atop her isolette, collect two pens, some lint, a piece of napkin from the floor.

Order in the world.

Maggie

I want to report a missing child.

I sit on the front step, seven-forty in the morning, and watch the sharp lights of Jupiter and Venus, brilliant and singular against the darkness.

Joyce and Larry arrived last night on the way through to Kelowna. Second time in six weeks. Brodie disappears inside himself when his parents come. Joyce is in the kitchen, scraping up the last of her eggs and ketchup. The air so chilly, minus twelve degrees. I open the porch door and Skipper wriggles through, tears once around the yard, poops, and rips back in.

Where’s the mustard? Joyce’s head is in the fridge. Don’t you guys keep mustard? Rice crackers, lettuce, mayonnaise, pickle jars strew the table.

It’s too damn cold to go, Larry says, splashing skim milk on his porridge.

Well, Larry, Joyce says. In case you didn’t notice, what this house needs is a little cheer.

Cripes, she says to the dog. Stand on your own feet, will you?

It’s too damn cold, Larry says. Who wants to tramp around the mountains in the cold?

Joyce has been mad all morning. The doctor said her neighbour Grace Proposki died of lung cancer. She didn’t die of lung cancer! She died of pneumonia. Caught it in the hospital too! Cripes! Joyce could’ve told them that! And now she’s livid at the refrigerator delivery man who chipped a nick out of the wall when he wheeled their new fridge in six years ago. Don’t they give these guys some kind of training? That’s what I’d like to know! Can somebody give these eggheads driving lessons?

I stand in my kitchen, reciting to myself the unread books that have found their way onto my shelves:

Motherhood and Mourning, The First Year of Life: The True Story Of The Three Little Pigs: A Farewell To Childhood; Transformation Through Birth; A Complete Guide To Achieving A Rewarding Birth; How Shall We Tell The Children?

So I told him. I said, You want I should call up the manager? Is that what you want, fella? I tell you, that lit a fire under him. I’m going to the hospital, I say. I swing on my coat and reach for the doorknob.

Now?

Joyce whirls. Good God Almighty, it’s seven-thirty in the bloody morning! Breakfast hasn’t even settled. What’s a few hours? She’s not going to run away.

Dr. Vanioc

Dr. Vanioc snaps a rubber band. He hasn’t slept in days. Two nights on call, and last night, his son, teething, cried for hours.

He is mulling over the Solantz baby case. A scrawny child, somewhat wasted, though born at five pounds, unlike most of the babies who rarely make three, but she lost a pound initially and has made little gains to this point. He shifts through papers. The child continues to have dusky spells. The nurses’ report indicates they had to leave the IV out this afternoon after four failed attempts to restart. The child’s veins are collapsing. Tonight her temp’s up.

The doctor makes a note. He’ll add penicillin to the dijoxin and trivisol. She has
copious amounts of thick creamy secretions. Why can’t the child swallow? The latest chest X-ray shows bilateral upper lobe atelectasis plus some consolidations. He taps the page. The EEG shows some mildly slow generalized waves, but within the range of normal. Her barium swallow revealed a grade 4 reflux and Maxeran was unsuccessful. The current thought amongst the doctors is that the child has a brain stem abnormality. That’s possible, and yet…

Doctor Vanioc removes his glasses, rubs his eyes. He’ll ask Norton to look in on her again. Judging by the charts, last time she saw the baby was seven days ago.

The doctor leans back in his chair. He’ll phone the library, give them some names, get them to do a literature search. He rubs his neck, and glances at his watch. His son is already in bed. He imagines lifting the telephone receiver to call his wife.

Maggie

It’s not a question of lowering our expectations. On the radio, driving to the hospital, a man says, Humans have to have a culture in order to survive. You don’t have to be cruel to be a torturer, he says, you just have to be obedient.

Seven p.m. A long bleak night. The baby’s intravenous went interstitial again. She’s aspirated again. They’ve had to turn up her oxygen. Babies go blind from too much oxygen. Mottled green bruises lace her scalp and hands. Six needles plucked from her scalp in a twenty-minute period. Let’s try this again! the hearty nurse says.

The man on the radio said, We have to believe the things that matter to us are going to survive. I remember studying the word believe for a spelling test, mixing the e and the i.

There’s a lie in believe, Maggie, my mother said.

Brodie

You help Maggie chop carrots for the stew. Her arms, their sculpted outline, their scattering of freckles. Her neck muscles clenching. You’re lonely for her, even though she’s here. She reaches for an onion and soon begins to cry, bent over, fists stuffed in eye sockets, laughing, It hurts. It hurts. You want to buy her a silver necklace you cannot afford, a pair of ruby earrings, something to draw her breath in, clasp her hands together. Something to make her forget, if only for moments. Her arms make angular shadow puppets against the wall. Winter dusk brings sadness, a despondency you have to fight. Pushes you to silence. Maggie gets pissed off that you don’t chat, but these days you’re holding up the world.

She hands you celery. You begin to chop. You are an outsider; you’ve always been. Your parents use words to inflict damage, like the side of an axe to drive a point home. Words frighten you. A phrase falls like Newton’s apple, drops and explodes before you get it out; words shift into shapes, intents you never meant. In the classroom this doesn’t happen, only here, where words are too important. Galileo left words altogether. In the late 1500’s he disappeared into the Camaldolese monastery; attracted by the quiet, studious life, he joined the order. You start in on the Chinese cabbage. People in ancient times believed the earth stood still, and the sky moved around it. That’s how they explained the changing position of the stars, movement from night to day. Strange, the earth’s steadfast rotation. Exactly 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes and 10 seconds. One revolution around the sun. You’ll put that on the Grade 10 Science exam. You pick up a zucchini. A trivia bonus question.

Maggie climbs a chair to reach a serving bowl. You want to say, I’ll tell you anything, but Maggie doesn’t ask. Beside you, your Cross pen, three red marking pens, your calculator, a stone you picked up by the river, your labs, a book called simply Physics, as if that says it all. Maggie moves to the light switch, and without asking, gathers up your pens and papers, sets a place for two.

She’s using few words these days. You miss her chatter, her foolish endless lists of who she lunched with, a joke she’s heard, how some of the old ladies in the Home are forever chasing Fred Regier. Those times seem relics of an ancient world that you strain to remember.

Throughout dinner neither of you say a thing.

Your silence like a rhythm to the lifting of your spoons.

Kalila Goose Lane Editions (2011) http://www.gooselane.com/
Obsolete Cereals

Daniel King

1. Serial. A discrete sequence of narratives intended to form a whole. Never absolute.
   Cereal. The product of an economy intended to be wholesome. Never obsolete.
   But, given différence, could it be?
   Obsolete cereals... Punctuated by lack... Holes... Rhys, a character. Sticks to what he knows.
   Picks up his pen and paper and starts to write: OKs. An oat-based cereal of the sixties, shaped like the letters O and K. Tasted flour-ish. Wonders - could the cereal's emphasis on letters mean its withdrawal has textual implications?
   Trying to think of other obsolete cereals he sifts through the golden flakes of his recollections but decides the only way to be certain is to visit the Canning Bridge supermarket and see if field research will jar his memory.

2. One souped-up sports car parked in Canning Bridge. And a Rhys suddenly uncertain. The idea of researching obsolete cereals could be corny.
   Customers could notice and smile wryly. Consider him a Froot Loop. As would be the just right of run-of-the-mill minds. Collective Cheerios to individuality.
   Above all he doesn't want to milk the idea. But then he is in the supermarket. Forces, textual or otherwise, have so stipulated.
   Standing beside rows of Carnation Milk cans. Making plans to reach the cereal aisle. "It's OK - I'm not crazy" (to an imaginary customer). "I'm just looking into the possibility of obsolete cereals."
   Against the maze of fluorescent lighting tubes a bluff of Corn Flakes and Special K.
   A realisation like the whish! of Tony the Tiger's tail. How can spectral comestibles, products of darkness ("soup of the evening") manifest themselves during the day?

3. Night. Or at least the non-presence of customer and lorry-sound. And God, it goes without saying. Just the snap and crackle of popular culture as boxes fall into the aisle, finally ending up piled like paragraphs.
   Picks up a box. Uncle Toby's. But the design is from the sixties! And Uncle Toby is glaring at him! Clearly has designs on him. A stern figure.
   Already contemplating what it'll do to Nabisco in a future decade. Enthusiasm whetted for treason.
   Rhys considers going to the authorities, but dismisses the idea. ("Relationship problems?")
   How to convey the danger of the boxes’ growing rustle?
   "Cereals: let's get one thing straight. I respect you, but I will not kow-tow to you. I shall be spending the night here, and I expect the night to be prosaic."
   And facing him: a whole phalanx of obsolete cereals.

4. The impossibility of motion. Buried in a text, or under boxes. Which are cubical texts anyway. Segueing into the world. Endless suspense: the suspension of disbelief, or the keeping-in-suspense dictated by serials.
   Clearly he fainted/feinted. Still in the supermarket, but in his own display, maintained by patriarchal forces. Uncle Toby from Tristram Shandy. The father/farther of all postmodern texts. "Giving a flourish with his stick thus..."
   Nothing happens. Rhys swallows, awaiting assessment by market forces.

Daniel King’s Memento Mori is available from IP (Australia) ISBN: 9781921479427
http://www.ipoz.biz/Titles/MM.htm
Gail Scott: Talking Triplex

Interview with Karl Jirgens


KJ: Your writing has long been acclaimed and internationally recognized as advancing innovative literary form. Your newest book, *The Obituary* (Coach House) has been described as a ghost story with a fractalled narrator on the top floor of a Montreal triplex. In what ways would you say that the narrator is "fractalized" and what is the link between the ruptured syntax of the prose narrative and the psychic state of the narrator’s persona?

GS: I have been experimenting for some time with various devices for breaking down POV in prose, something that happens more readily in poetry, especially in some of the best contemporary poetry. In *My Paris*, I sought to reduce the speaking ‘I’ by using participles instead of active verbs. With *The Obituary* I set out to compose the text in a way that let in a maximum of voices from the present and from the narrator’s ancestry. Slicing the narrator into 3 (a woman in the window, a prurient fly on the wall, and a politically correct Lesbian historian intervening from the bottom of the page) seemed to facilitate the easy entry of multiple voices into the text. I wasn’t aiming for a particular psychic state, but if one needed a narrative pretext, one could call Rosine a dissociative personality.

KJ: *The Obituary* features a range of ghosts including quarry workers from the 1880s, ghosts of the narrator’s maternal family, including their long-forgotten indigenous history, and even the ghost of a French gendarme voyeur skulking about the triplex. The book opens with a quotation from Abraham & Torok, "What haunts are not the dead but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others." To what extent would you say that our lives are transformed by our "telescopic" awareness of both known and unknown histories.
and past mysteries? Can it be said that our future is destined to be irrevocably inter-twined with our past?

**GS:** Well I would say yes to your question, of course. One of the problems with contemporary notions of narrative is that even as it weaves between the present and the past, it strains towards a finish line, its ultimate motion is toward closure, seeking to satisfy some aspect of dominant expectations for narration. I keep looking for ways to tell stories or to compose that, while being very conscious of dominant narratives, seriously propose alternative perceptions.

**KJ:** With reference to your views on how the past can shape the present and future, could you comment on how Gertrude Stein and Walter Benjamin, as well as your encounters with Nicole Brossard have influenced your ethos and your aesthetics?

**GS:** As a young writer in Québec, the influences were many. The journal *Parti Pris*, my work on the editorial board of *Spirale*, and the conversations with Nicole, France Théoret and others. I loved the openness and daring of the 70s and 80s literary scene, in Québec, and long for it to return. Walter Benjamin was and will always be a major influence, for his really interesting ways of seeing historical time and its relationship to cultural production. And as he says in *The Arcades Project*, it’s not so much a question of the past shaping the present as it is of the two colliding under certain conditions and providing new or what he called “profane” illuminations.

**KJ:** In many ways, *The Obituary* is very much about whose voices get heard and who has the privilege of speaking or replying to voices either in the present or arising from a haunted past. The novel begins with a text that is crossed out or "under erasure". To what extent and for what purpose does the novel give voice to a past that is at least in part erased or marginalised?

**GS:** I love this question. I have been reading with great pleasure a novel by Ojibway writer Richard Wagamese, *Ragged Company*, which is about four homeless people, one, Aboriginal, and two who are Métis and half-breed and basically forget to mention the fact for a lot of the novel, even though their best friend is an Aboriginal woman whom they talk to every day. There are so many people walking around with this kind of past still in the present screaming inside. Isn’t it amazing how we don’t talk about these things because the historical and not so gently enforced mantra was “assimilate.” A mantra that means you end up not this, and not that.

**KJ:** The narrative style of this novel features an inner monologue winding through a digressive flux of mind. The narrative pattern is forwarded through a syntax that is associational rather than linear-logical, often elliptic, disjunctive, multi-dimensional, yet, returning to clusters of thought that absorb the narrator, akin to what Kristeva would call "syndromes" engaging both death and desire. Would it be reasonable to say that the psychic rupture that emerges in the narrator is as symptomatic of her mind-state, as it is of the discord that embodies the larger social environment, in this case, Montreal, with it's unique perspective of a world in conflict?

**GS:** Absolutely. To live in Montréal is to constantly experience how the rough edges of its ruptures rub together, an extremely useful context for this work, where the narrator is similarly constructed of edges and morsels that fit uncomfortably. Actually she is less an individual than an assemblage of the inner and outer movements.

**KJ:** Apart from working as a journalist, writer (author of 6 books), editor (e.g.; of the literary journal *Spirale*), and teacher (e.g.; Creative Writing coordinator at the University of Montreal, resident writer at Concordia U, U of Alberta, U of California, and Brown U, etc.), you are also a translator, and your translation into English of Michael Delisle’s *The Sailor’s Disquiet*, was nominated for a Governor General’s Award (2001). As an aside, I’m happy to say that we have published Michael Delisle’s writing in *Rampike* and we found his poetics to both powerful and provocative. To what extent to you find that all writing is a mediation or “translation” of one’s perceived experiences?

**GS:** I suppose you have something there, but I’m balking at the phrase “one’s perceived experiences.” It seems to me that I set out precisely to imply how inaccurate perception is, how tricky, so that the attempted “translation” constantly has to be questioned.

♥
These Wars on the Radio
Are Keeping Us from Our Own

Gail Scott

In pale Mile-End, behind the night sheds, little pink clouds come tippling down. And huge yellow maple leaves, not cold enough to turn red, tumbling, tumbling on regrowing November grass, to lie like yellow hands. From the kitchen radio, the ack-ack-swat of the most sophisticated of bombs weighing up to two tons from the most fantastically shaped planes cut out of futuristic novels falling on rubbles of sand + broken stone desert people called home........Oh X
do you remember
when Afghan spelt dope embroidered vests, vast windswept steppes with tanned shaggy fashion models standing slant on them?

I'm that Face on the 3rd. Barely visible behind her grey venetians in upper Triplex window. Having arrived one day from a madame B's in border town of S-D--I’m reputed to hate children. I also liking cats enough not to have one. Our overconfident ground-floor Potter with chocolate Lab named Latte feigning shock when I told her that. She's from The Outers, so instead of the friendly tangled back courtyards we used to have, now looking down from top + middle Settler-Nun flat onto North America's biggest crop: lawn. Hours get spent artfully arranging plastic lawn sets shaped like dinosaurs in it. Her chocolate Lab following her all day, nuzzling trying to get attention. Occasionally she throwing a crumb his way, just enough for keeping addicted. But whatever inciting me to say my name means French pet, diminutive of multiple layers + possibilities?

Rest assured, dear X, a tale's encrypted mid all these future comings + goings of parlour queens, sweet 70s chicks, telephone girls, leather divas, Grandpa's little split-tailed fis'.
A tale unspeakable as owls in ceaseless vigil staring from
eyes round + amber as that cat Etta's [more of whom soon].
Please be further advised, only epiphanic afternoons shall
herein be remembered. Circumstantially, I am posturing as
woman of inchoate origin [problematically, I can hear you
saying]. To underscore how we are haunted by secrets of
others. Such as they colporting spite from The Outers to rue
Settler-Nun, Mile-End, QC. Further absorbing under surface
of community amenity, bitter particles of those going there
before--the Shale Pit Workers! Floating up from burnt-down
Crystal Palace, whose rotting pylons still directly under.
Where once upon a time, when it not being used for smallpox
hospice, British officers used to hold their
balls.
They were rumoured not to like girls like me very much. They
also hated Indians.
This is better documented.
By the end of our tale, we may likewise be dead—

Increasingly I am slipping. Yesterday, riding bicycle down
sidewalk, past deserted bank building, sticking middle finger
straight up in fuck-you sign a former prime minister making
famous. I liking best when he wearing fringed jacket +
paddling a canoe. Trying by slightly bending th’ digital to
make th’ sign without, in my case, anybody noticing. A thin
man, very dark eye shadows looking straight in my face. As if
'Are you crazy?' 'Oh non non non,' I saying waving both hands
in air, in somewhat accented French. 'This not meant for you!'
Turning right + driving, still on sidewalk, past where th’ bank
machine now is, recounting th’ whole incident in rather loud
voice to myself. But th’ worse glissement of thought toward
inappropriate action happening th’ other day on bus. Sitting
there in dim light called pénombre in a chambre, I seeing
outline of breast just like hers + nearly reaching out +
cupping. Which confusion of proprieties I blaming on incident
with Brother Language Untel. Little conflagrations flaring up
in dark. Like lightning in a film noir.
Face peers out from upper Triplex window. Passers hurrying by. Already bearing regifted Xmas packages. Pretending not to notice. Behind it the Room. Railway-flat arched double decorated with plaster-leafed scrolling. Butt-dowelled ceiling angels. In dark stairway outside Room door, a bent silhouette in peaked Paris gendarme pillbox's watching through keyhole. We are for the moment hard put to say what he is doing there. A library shelf holds books in French + English + a few in a script not European. Plus various family groupings significant to our Native narrator. On a work table closer to the window, but not too close because of brats screaming thin as credit Down Below ♥, one of those old computers that look like squashed soccer balls. Grey-+-turquoise-insets. On a midnight-blue screen a jumbled set of paras. Rescued from the trash.

Telephone rings + Face. Retreating into darkness. Vaguely intuiting shadow behind closed stairway door, watching through keyhole. Don't be paranoid. Shadow bending + the Parisian cop, for that incongruously's what it is, extricates a loupe, actually a jeweller's glass, gift from his old wartime bud, Double Jos. Dousse, pronounced Deuce, in Pincher Creek, AB, as Face reappearing. In keyhole's line of vision. Which Face likely not also sensing presence of second cop surveillant, the Québécois assistant, sitting against wall seven steps down from kneeling Parisian, unlit cigarette stuck to bottom lip. Typing away on a minuscule computer, simultaneously releasing a truly terrible fart, fart slowly expanding to fill entire inner stairway space, framed by chipped black-painted steps, pale walls, shadowy stairway ceiling, full of suspect crooks + crannies. The peaked pillbox

\[\text{\textbullet\ A copy of surrealist L. Carrington's Down Below lies on Room's bedside cube, recounting incarceration in a Spanish asylum. Where a pavilion called Down Below was said to represent life, healing, delight. You have to be ready for such conformity. Rest assured, on quitting this autobiographical space, more profane material illuminations will impel our intrigue. Take, down in the street, those cases of 'untaxed' bouteilles de rouge being lugger into bar around corner. With inevitable client at dark corner table shouting dithyrambically: — That's Montreal for you! Do not those contraband bottles, if contemplated, maybe sampled, suggest promising vectors for commencing?}\]
above staring as unflinchingly ahead as a ship's captain steering through a storm. His haughty Parisian lip rising in a grimace. These Québécois don't know how to eat. And what a physiognomy! Taut as a boil, thinks the old cop hatefully, who can't stand another physical presence in any closed space.

*Face* peers out again.

Oh darling X. Is not our future narrative to keep us moving forward? Bus, bicycle, cinema streaming up du Parc, in three, four different measures, for avoiding paranoia. So stay put [*Face*] + keep an eye on things while we go to get th’ story. Yes. We disperse. Often. Dissociation oblige! When certain members behaving. Inappropriately. *She* all crooked on bed in Room's dark end. *l/th' fly* on wall. Pretendin' not to notice, beatin' a retreat. Right through crack in Room door panel to dark inner stairway outside Room door. My six legs spread uncomfortably round old Parisian cop's collar. Peekin' through keyhole in position not affordin', erotically, great deal a’ pleasure. Peekin' back to where R Surrogate's akimbo, shiny vulve visible in middle, on dark satin sheet. See

*She's movin'*!

I dance my little jig. Up + down like a man. Round + round like a woman. Vague smell of oyster. X, notwithstandin', your teensy-weensy fear of dénouement: on th’ afternoon we are murdered, this set will turn malodorous. R Surrogate on bed in Room's dim end, at a loss without our 100 compound eyes, our multi-segmented feet for adherin' to ceilin', admirably equipped to assume th' méta-physical under all th' masks, denials, secrets of that Psycho called Reality. Vrai, I mebbe back as a ghose. But let us begin as promised.

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^ Bottom Historian must guard against overinterpretation.
Suffice it to say the term notwithstanding is a defining aspect of our collective. Do not we chronically invoke it [or some equivalent] to cover hesitation, dubiety, rooted in our fear of offending? Our wont to contemplate all exceptions before proceeding may further account for the air of surreal gravitas conferred on us by strangers. Less benign [to some] when mirrored in our Charter, the Notwithstanding provision [invoked to protect French-language rights] allows for unreasonable search, seizure, etc. Are we surprised this override power is 'temporary,' yet may be re-enacted *indefinitely*?
Someone knockin' on oeil-de-boeuf door. At bottom of stairway. Contemporaneity oblige: it wasn't protection if it didn't have a hole in it.

On th' radio, Celia Raw Raw© is talking about th' wonder fullness of family. And American. Marines are ack-ack-bam-splatting desert towns 'exceptionally.' —I sure wouldn't've liked to be in that compound we bombed, quoth th' general. Human embryos are being cloned noli me tangere — I mean nolo contendere — for therapeutic purposes. Nobody can resist. Down Below, on corner of Settler-Nun + Dada-Jesus, beside a plastic outer banister, formerly wrought iron, snaked up with 50s-style Christmas synecdoches, the tow-headed Potter's waiting for the light. Her chocolate Lab sniffing at her cunt. Looking quickly to the left, to the right, like guy waiting to cross street trying to slip hand in pocket + adjust balls without anybody noticing, she mounts the dog's back.

Il neige. Il neige. Il neige. Under a sky ethereally white with somewhat out-of-focus Greek goddess, I/Rosine pedalling up crowded ave. du Parc, dragging my foot on th' sidewalk, citizen that I am, not bumping into anyone. Past th' old Belgian Chocolate man, white art-nouveau columns of Librairie R-B, ex-silent cinema ♥ stripped of all its marbles. When bus #80 pulling up. Th' driver already having his pine boughs out. Rosine [her heart!] was in Chicago. His ticket well of jellybeans, he was offering to strangers. Continuing North, knowing he'd be yelling out th' streets, festooning them in their functional reality: —Laurier, rue des magasins dispendieux. Saint-Viateur, Bagel Street.

Let's let speak for themselves those hats worn by women attending, ca. 1921, the modish ave. du Parc art-nouveau cinema, whose still pristine high white + columned façade contemporaneously fronting book + bauble establishment, RB Books, likely named after Roland Barthes. Where hats of the époque — taut with ghosts of creatures and fauna going there before [beaver, whole birds, dried blueberries in little leather sacs, fur, etc.] — berated in the day by modest scions of 'pied-noir' Shale Pit Workers! + 'nombrils-jaunes' tannery employees in cheaper seats behind. For 'occupyin' space.'
Tous ceux qui veulent s'acheter des bagels, s.v.p. descendre icitte. Liking liquorice as I do, getting on to stick my fingers in his mix. But th' pine boughs being a distant trop in th' memory, backing out between folding doors, adjusting my vis-
on in convex mirror, admonishing him for that.

—Femme la potte ma belle, he yelling, triple chin turning left/right, tongue sticking out like taxi dispatcher's, sliding over elle's on th' phone si l'on exigeai-t-une-macheen immediate-ly —Oui-i-i madame ...qu'elle est adorâb! Tongue between lips in fake sensual anticipation. Same fleshy lips as Paris cop's stagiaire, contorted into tight stairway corner, a Montréal Pool Room 'steamie' fermenting in his gut, who, eyes closed in pain, letting go another, then, notwithstanding derrière's cruel enjambment on cutting edge of paint-chipped inner middle step: falling asleep. Having puffed a joint for dessert, all by himself, outside l'École nationale de théâtre, the assistant’s nodding, halfway down inner 4999 Settler-Nun stairway, whose facade, red-orange painted brick, pressed peeling metal cornice, reading 1908 in middle, curiously resembling a dollhouse: one little brick floor piled atop another. Up up up. Yet, numbered downward, to bottom, #4995 directly over buried pylons of former magnificent Crystal Palace, built for agricultural + commercial exposition purposes. Where ca. 1885, mid rows of faces on iron beds erupting like plastic bubbles into fetid putrid pus, lying Shale Pit Workers! of neighbouring Saint-John-Baptiste, dying in smallpox epidemy, raging in our filth-+-vice-ridden city. The 'night soil' not yet bein' plucked from alleys, overflowin' + floatin', thawin', joined by offal, floatin' downhill from overflowin' privies, down lanes where children playin' in first warm April suns. Further contaminatin' leakage from refuse barrels, vegetable leavin's, broken sewers, all rushin' in filthy ruisseaux. As if to welcome th' pestilence, just gettin' off th' train. Which Palace's wooden walls, quarantined for duration, catchin' spark from carriage house one hot June night + burnin' down.

The above text is an excerpt from Gail Scott’s novel The Obituary, available through Coach House Books (Toronto)
CHAPTER ONE
An ill-defined borderline wavers somewhere around the middle of Europe; its precise location has not been stable over the decades. At present, on the far side of this boundary, the Eastern side, lies a zone where beer and hotels are cheaper than they are in the West, and so planeloads of young men travel there to drink, far from the eyes of wives and girlfriends. Indiscretions, transgressions and sometimes even crimes committed on the far side of this line don’t really count.

Once, the line was a metaphor called the Iron Curtain, and before that it followed a jagged course along the borders of countries freed from the Hapsburg and Czarist empires. Like the mythical town of Brigadoon, these countries appeared for only a short time between the wars, before they disappeared from memory for fifty years in 1940.

What followed was such a confusing war on that side of Europe! The war was much easier to understand in the West, where the forces of more or less good triumphed in May 1945. On the Eastern side, on the other hand, the messy side, the war sputtered on in pockets for another decade, fought by partisans who came out of their secret bunkers by night.

When that fighting finally ended, sullen resistance went more deeply underground, to be nurtured in memory, as well as buried in hidden archives below the earth or left to moulder in the files of the secret police, called the Cheka, where no one was ever likely to look. Aboveground lay a series of police states.

This place was somewhat quaint, yet so much more brutal than the West. It was a place where generations were mown down as soon as they were tall enough to meet the scythe. And yet many lives went on in their own way, even during the worst of the fighting.

On a cold, snowy April evening in 1946, in the Lithuanian provincial capital of Marijampole, an engagement party was taking place on the second storey of a wooden house with four flats, a house not far from the exquisite train station, where railway cars of goods and captives rumbled by eastward with great frequency.

When Lukas walked into the kitchen to get another bottle of vodka late that night, he found Elena with her back to him, leaning over the counter, her curly brown hair loose. He could see the tension in her shoulders, squared and stiff, as if braced for a blow. After a moment she turned and looked at him.

Elena’s brown eyes were very large, a little moist from the cigarette smoke in the flat. She wore a dark grey wool suit, her work clothes, with a natural linen blouse beneath the jacket and an amber pendant on a silver chain.

Behind her on the white ceramic counter lay two massive loaves of black bread, one of them almost finished, a large dish of herring and onions, the remains of a cooked goose, a ham and a string of sausages. Elena had worked hard to get her hands on so much food, rare in these postwar years, and the scent of it had helped to bring the seven distinguished guests.

The accordionist in the next room was playing a jaunty dance version of “J’ai Deux Amours,” a tune that Elena remembered from before the war. Her mother and father had danced to the recording in their house, the French doors open to the garden. It had been an anniversary or a name day, she couldn’t remember which.

It didn’t matter. Her mother was dead, her father gone, the house destroyed.

Looking into her eyes, Lukas realized he should comfort Elena, but he was not feeling altogether calm at their engagement party either. He was sweating profusely. He was slim and fair and wore a threadbare two-piece suit with a jacket that was a little too long for him, as well as a sweater vest mended at the collar and a red tie and puff. On reflection, he realized these adornments were a little exaggerated, almost provocative, but there was no way to remove them once the guests had seen them.

Lukas was unaccustomed to being inside a flat with so many people, unaccustomed to the niceties of conversation, of saying one thing and meaning another. He found it hard to keep his feelings buried, and the struggle was showing, but he needed above all to support Elena.

Lukas glanced at the engagement ring on her hand. It was a very thin gold band with a tiny red stone, not much better than a high school girl’s first ring, but the best he could do. There wasn’t
much jewellery around, and those who had it didn’t show it.

Elena flinched as he put his hands around her neck and looked into her eyes. “We don’t have to go through with this if you can’t do it,” he said. “Nobody would blame you.”

“Not even you?”

“Especially not me.”

“It’s been a very short engagement, after all,” said Elena. She was joking. A good sign. “A whirlwind romance,” he agreed. He left his hands where they were, around her neck. He wanted to kiss her but felt awkward, didn’t know if that was permitted now.

Lukas heard the kitchen door open and pressed into Elena, his middle tight against hers as if they were making love. He kissed her, the pressure of her lips obliterating all other thoughts for a moment.

“I wondered where you two were,” a voice said. “There’ll be plenty of time for kisses later. Get back in here.”

Gedrius was the district chairman, the first to have arrived that evening and therefore the drunkest of them all. He’d taken off his jacket and loosened his tie, and his shirttails now hung out at the back. He had stained his shirt and talked much too much, but he was affable, almost lovable in his own way, or anyway, better than the rest. Gedrius and the others came from a different world, one of documents and rubber stamps, boardrooms and meetings, dust and sheaves of paper pinned together. Not like Lukas’s world at all.

To fortify Lukas’s stomach against the drink, Elena had served him half a glass of cooking oil before the evening began. It had made him gag at the time, but now he was holding up better against the vodka than he had expected. Maybe too well. He couldn’t feel the alcohol at all.

Elena shook out her curls and brushed her fingers through her hair, and then linked hands with Lukas. “Give us a moment and we’ll be right out.”

“All right, but don’t delay too much. Everyone’s dying to spend a little time with you.”

As Gedrius stepped back, Lukas could see briefly into the other room, where the two beds had been pushed aside to make a small dance floor beyond the dining table. The others were dancing in the dimly lit room: Elena’s roommate with the director of the Komsomol, and her sister, Stase, with the city chairman. Two candles lit the dining table because the electricity went off at ten each night. Vinskis kept wanting to talk to Gedrius about some internal passports stolen from the office where he worked, and he took the man by the arm as soon as he stepped out of the kitchen.

“You’re a bundle of nerves too,” said Elena. “Call it off. We can cool down for a while and try this again later.”

“I wish I could call it off, but I can’t. It’s too late. Did you see the look he gave me when he walked into the kitchen?”

“I didn’t see anything. What are you talking about?”

“Vinskis suspects me. He must have said something to Gedrius.”

“Do you want to get out of here?”

“Vinskis and Gedrius are by the door.”

“Say you’re going to the toilet.”

“They might not let me pass. Do you want to wait in here?”

“No, I promised I’d help you. I’m going with you.” Her willingness made him feel warm toward her, but the emotion was brief. He had other things on his mind now.

“Do you have your handbag?” asked Lukas.

“Under the table.” Elena reached beneath the table and withdrew her bag. Inside the other room, the accordionist started up another tune. “Be careful of my sister.”

Lukas nodded and reached into his pockets. He held the Walther PP in his right hand because it was heavier and had eight rounds. The lighter PPK with seven rounds was in his left. Elena had one in her handbag as well.

When Elena opened the kitchen door for him, Lukas strode out with his arms extended and turned first to face Vinskis and Gedrius because they were standing and their own pistols would be easy to get to, whereas the men sitting at the table would need to rise first. Lukas fired at Vinskis, two shots to the neck, and the man’s head rolled onto his chest as he collapsed. Gedrius, for all his drunkenness, had his own pistol halfway out of his
pocket when Lukas fired at him. The man went down.

The accordionist stopped playing and stared at them, but Elena’s roommate was more cool-headed and leaned forward to blow out one of the candles. The other two men were rising from their chairs.

Lukas fired with his left hand, but his shots went wild. Elena killed them for him. Her roommate opened her mouth to say something, but Lukas did not want to hear it. He fired once at her forehead and she went down too.

“Let’s go,” said Elena. “Wait.”

Lukas went toward Elena’s sister, Stase, who had fallen from her chair and pulled herself to a wall, where she stared at them with terrified eyes. Lukas crouched down to look her in the face.

“I have to do this for your own good,” he said. Lukas had to act quickly before Elena intervened.

Stase’s lower lip was trembling and her eyes were wild with fear. Lukas stepped back and took aim at her. If he was too close, he might leave powder burns. If he stood too far away, he might miss in either direction.

Stase shut her eyes as Lukas fired, and then she yelped with pain and the blood came down her arm. Lukas turned quickly to face Elena before she could shoot him, which she might do if she misunderstood.

“Stase has to be wounded or the Chekists will say she was part of this all along,” said Lukas. “Why didn’t you tell me this before?”

“I couldn’t. It was too dangerous.”

Elena’s face was flushed. The room was filled with blood, splatters up on the wall, pools on the floor among the wreckage of bodies and overturned chairs.

Elena dropped her hand with the pistol in it and crouched down beside Stase. “I’m sorry I couldn’t tell you. When the Chekists come, you can honestly say you didn’t know anything. They’ll let you go.”

“You’ve turned into a monster. I don’t even know who you are.”

There was no time. As Elena stood up, the accordionist, wounded in the throat by a ricochet, struggled up from his chair and charged out the door with the accordion still on his shoulders. The instrument squawked like a frightened animal all the way down the staircase. The Komsomol director began to stir from where he had fallen beneath the table, tried to rise, and Lukas fired another shot into him.

The neighbours would soon overcome their terror and go to the militia. Lukas and Elena put on their coats, closed the door behind them, and walked down the steps and out onto the street. It was snowing. There was a sleigh for them a few blocks away, near the train station.

The streets were empty and profoundly silent. If a militiaman passed by, he would be sure to ask them for their documents just for something to do. Elena tried to pick up her pace, but Lukas held her back slightly so they would not seem to be rushing.

“We did it!” he whispered. “I couldn’t have done it without you.”

“It was so easy to kill those two hateful men, but so strange. What must you think of me now?” asked Elena.

“I love you even more.”

“I feel light-headed, good in a way, yet it was unbearable. I’ll never be the same.”

“No, you won’t. I wasn’t like this either. But we have to strike back, even if it means hardening our hearts.”

Elena would need to do that. Her heart was beating wildly at the moment, so hard that she was afraid it would burst in her chest. She was holding Lukas’s arm and now she gripped it more tightly.

Lukas enjoyed the pressure of her hand on his arm. They so rarely had the opportunity to touch one another. He had killed many others before this, but never at such close quarters, and never after talking and eating together. It was all horrible, yet the killing had brought Elena to him again.
I AM
AN
INTERSECTION
OF FILTERS
AND EFFECTS
A FIGURE
UNGROUNDED
DO YOU
SEE ME

OR MY
ELECTRO
PHOSPHORETIC
SHADOW
?

John Oughton (Canada)
NANOPOETRY

SS Prasad

Prasad is an artist working in India. His first book of poems was published in July 2008. It is a book of visual poetry with text integrated on silicon chips giving them ‘nano’ dimensions. The nanopoems were created to surprise an engineer in the laboratory while examining chips under a microscope. The book is a consolidation of this effort sponsored by Cypress Semiconductor Technology (India) Pvt. Ltd. It is called 100 Poems and is published by STD Pathasala, Chennai.

Artist’s Statement: It struck me to inscribe poems on silicon when I came across the work of the scientist Ghim Wei Ho. While working on silicon nanostructures, she took photomicrographs that looked like flowers, trees and bouquets. So she called her creations nanoflowers, nanotrees and nanobouquets, and did an exhibition of her photographs. I thought I could do something similar with poetry and nanotechnology. This was in the year 2005. Later, in a second hand bookshop, I came across the book Purgatorio by Raul Zurita. The form of the poems and the strict mathematical tone in them struck me. I learnt afterwards that he had written poems on the sky using aircrafts to communicate with the Spanish speaking Latin Americans in the USA. I realized I was attempting the inverse of this. Following him further, it was revealed that he studied Civil Engineering, and I felt it was the way one’s profession influenced one’s poetry. He was all the while looking at large spaces: the sky, the sea, the desert. This is the exact opposite of electronics that emphasizes miniaturization.

Microchips are manufactured in bulk in wafers, which are circular in geometry and measure a few inches in diameter. Each wafer contains multiples of rectangular ICs. The circuits are printed on the ICs by nanolithography. As the word suggests, the circuits are ‘written’ on silicon. They are built over raw silicon step by step. First, the transistors are made. This involves doping the substrate and creating the transistors by using polysilicon. To create interconnections between the various transistors, we use metals. This is a crude explanation of the process. Normally you have the transistors at the bottom most level, then a layer of oxide covers them. Wherever you need connectivity, you etch out the oxide, pour in metal and create the connection. There will be multiple layers of metal to create these interconnections. You call the lower most layer of metal, metal 1, the next metal 2 and so on. A wafer can contain 100s of ICs, each IC contains millions of transistors. This lithographic process is similar to that in printing technology. You create the required masks and transmit light through the mask. Here you create the masks and form devices and metals for connecting them. The whole lithography process is very expensive costing hundreds of thousands of dollars due to the requirement of precision (nano). The top most metals are visible under the microscope. The poems are created using metals which normally form circuits, but here words. It is not unusual to write words using metals in microchips as the manufacturer’s name and the part number are written inside the microchip using metals.

The designer creates these circuits using software. It is the opposite of map-making. In maps the scales are minimized, here they are enlarged enough so that he is practically able to visualize, create and edit the layouts of his circuits on the computer screen. The layouts will be later understood at the fabrication units to create the essential ‘masks’ for the lithographic process. Instead of circuits, I write words using the software meant for physical design. I write the poems alongside the circuits. (The poems are written using the top most metal layer. The top most metal layer is visible under the microscope.) The poems are byproducts of chip design, so I don’t spend 100s of 1000s of dollars to just write nanopoems. I use scrap space for writing these poems. The engineers working in labs do not normally see the poems, but when examining the IC under the microscope, they come across the poems by accident. This is similar to certain features available in gadgets as this:

Suppose you press the TV’s remote controller buttons in a specific order it might enter into a video game mode. Or let’s say, when you’re in the
lifet, you press the buttons displayed in a specific combination along with your destination number, the car might not stop at other floors. These are small surprises called ‘Easter Eggs’ built into electronic gadgets by the manufacturer, who alone knows the codes for these functions that are not provided in the manual.

nanopoems are poems written inside the microchip to surprise an engineer while examining the Integrated Circuit under a microscope. The poems are a few tens of microns wide and long, a micron being a thousandth of a thousandth of a millimeter.

I also tend to think of the poems as engravings by the modern man on ICs like how the cavemen left clay tablets for us. Normally, the ICs have a lifetime of around 10 years or 20 years, but after the circuits are dead, what lives on them further on are the poems.

After making the nanopoems, I extended the concept to generate a scientific utility. I used nanopoems or any other nanomarker (any inscription on silicon) as milestones inside the chip to identify locations. This comes handy while testing the chip to go to a specific location. Such markers disturb the uniform geography of the chip and help create local identification marks like moles on the body. I presented this idea to the patent committee. They liked the idea, but rejected it because they found it not patentable. Instead I was given an Engineering Award of $800 for this. (This was after the book in terms of time line).

I explain below the thought process that went behind choosing the texts for the poems. I conceived the book as a whole unit, and the physical form of it means a lot for the book’s being. I’ll send you sample poems, and if you think they fit the journal for a discussion, I’ll send across the book so you can take a look at it as a whole as there is more to the book in its form than the way an excerpt from it might look. The book’s publication was sponsored by my organization, Cypress Semiconductor Technology (India) Pvt. Ltd. and was published by STD Pathasala (established in the early 90s). It’s priced at Rs.100/$10, but doesn’t have an ISBN number.

As for the texts of the poems, by changing one parameter of the chip, placing words on them alongside if not instead of circuits, the microchips are no more microchips, but poems. A complement of this is what I attempted in the texts. By changing one parameter in poetry: replacing words with numbers, I attempted to see how the dimensions of poetry could change and what it could convey. I initially started by using some of the patterns used in chip testing that contain a series of 1s and 0s in a particular order. I wanted to lift them out of context and see what they meant. I found the patterns had a variety of rhythm in them, and were already associated with day to day metaphors: checkerboard, zebra, etc.. Hence I wrote the poem Game and followed that with Animals opening it up for more interpretations than the zebra. Apart from 1 and 0, the alphabet X is often used in binary maps called K-maps to denote the unknown that can be either 1 or 0. When a map contained X’s in succession, they appeared pornographic to me, hence I came up with Binary Porn. The pattern called ‘common centroid pattern’ is often used in circuit design which consists of a series of As and Bs placed in a square or rectangle. To me, it appeared like the bleating of sheep. I also tried to see what could result when the horse like rhythm of 001 is fed into a ‘Shift Register’ (that shifts one bit out of it from the right taking one bit on its left) when I connected its output to input. I tried to see how the uniformity could be disturbed using the X mark, and depicted it in the story of Alibaba and 40 thieves. Initially these poems were one page long poems, but later extended them to 2, 4, 6 pages etc. to examine how sequentially the binaries could be used to depict natural phenomena such as heliotropism (Sunflowers), the activities of insectivorous plants (Drosera), the digital in the being of touch me nots and fireflies, the camouflage of butterflies.

By extending the patterns more than a page and playing with size, I tried to ease the rigidity in them, allowing more randomness compared to the single page ones and making the poems cyclic. But these sequential poems are placed first in the book, then the single page poems appear. The poems are rectangular or square initially, then become more diffuse losing shape, afterwards, get back to the original geometry. I also change directions midway sometimes to make use of the spine as a mirror, and also to indicate passage of time.

The binary is only a metaphor, I used the unary number system as well, then the basic alphabets in English after I came across Ana Maria Uribes Typoems and Anipoems. I tried to see how they could be used to convey binariness in the poem sequence you find Alibaba onwards.

The nanopoems I’ve done demonstrate this intention was satisfied. All other poems are nanoed in the mind.
Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) image of a nanopoeom:

```
Game
1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
```
Animals
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1
0 1 0 1 0 1 0 1

Common Centroid Sheep
ABAABABAABA
BABBABBAB
BABBABBAB
ABAABABAABA

Binary Porn
0 0 X
1 X X
X X X

Accident
car bus tempo van bike lorry
bus bike scooter lorry van bus
jeep auto car van bike bike
bus car car auto van bike car bus
van tempo bus car car bike
cart poem
Silva-culture report

Mike Marcon

The Mechanical Design of Trees

The growth and development of trees depends on the effects of various plant hormones and inhibitors. Three major classes of hormones are now recognized: the auxins, the gibberellins and the cytokinins. The hormones that control the predominant factor in tree growth are the auxins. Long before the existence of auxins was recognized their action on growing had been examined. Late in the 19th century Charles Darwin and his son observed the preferential bending of grasses toward a light source. In this century the cause was determined to be a greater concentration of auxin in the tissue on the less illuminated side of the plant stem. Like hormones in general, auxin moves from the site where it is synthesized to certain target tissues. The effect of auxins on cambial activity has also been observed. At points on the tree where buds grow directly out of the bark the immediately underlying cambium is found to be active. In addition to its seasonal role auxin plays a part in the day-to-day life of trees. Consider a forest tree that has shifted from its normal upright position during a storm. A kind of growth known as reaction wood forms along side of the displaced stem and expands or contracts powerfully enough to restore the tree to an upright position. Eventually it will probably grow straight again. For centuries observers of nature have wondered if common rules could be found that would apply to such fundamentally different kinds of ramification as branching in trees, watershed drainage systems and in anatomical structures such as blood vessels and bronchial tubes. In searching for something that controls the increasing diameter of tree trunks and branches one is well advised to seek a mechanism that is mediated by hormones.

YOUNG WILLOW TREE in this time exposure is being shaken at 90 cycles per minute. The experiment is designed to test the principle underlying the mechanical design of trees.
Sabu was a hero. None of us had seen him though. He had left our village a long time ago much before many of us had been born. We were told of his great deeds by our elders who knew him as a tiny toddler. Even as a baby Sabu, they said, had done such heroic deeds. Once he had broken both his feet and hands falling down from a mango tree and crawled to his home half a mile away to tell his people the news. Only then did he faint. He never shrank in the face of blood. Another time his people the news. Only then did he faint. He never shrank in the face of blood.

Our old men told us many such tales of Sabu’s wonderful deeds. Not all of them were heroic though—some appeared so incredibly stupid even to our young ears. But then, but then, wouldn’t all heroism appear stupid from another angle of view? After all everything depends on how you choose to look at it. When Sabu climbed the decrepit walls of the old tower in our corner-street and jumped down flapping his arms about like a bird he was demonstrating another heroic deed. For him it was a grand experiment in heroism. He would go down in history books, no doubt.

When he was old enough Sabu was absorbed into the armed forces. Simply for his daring, perhaps. Some elders told us on monsoon evenings as we sat huddled around a fire, how the big officers came in search of him and led him off. And now the great day had arrived and the hero was coming home. All our village was agog. Shouldn’t we give him a befitting welcome? Our library and reading-room hall was decorated. The road leading into our village was cleared of all rubbish and strewn with white sand from the sea-shore. Flowers and garlands and bouquets were specially designed. Sixteen little girls stood in a neat row on both sides of the road facing each other garbed in their best silks holding brass plates in their outstretched hands. On each plate there twinkled a lamp. They were also decked in flowers. No one worked on anything else that day except in preparation for the grand welcome of Sabu the Hero. And at last we all got a glimpse of the great man. The army vehicle that thundered into our village from across the big bridge rattled to a stop near our school and out stepped a smiling man with up turned moustaches his breastplate all a jingle with badges and decorations. He was Sabu, our Hero and the nation’s. The band burst into national anthem and everyone snapped to attention. Crackers were burst and the hero was led ceremoniously into the hall.

The function was inaugurated by the local MLA and all our political leaders crowded round the podium awaiting their chance to felicitate the hero. Everyone stood their turn. Sabu thanked them all and then we all said JaiHind! Glory be to our Country! It was with a heart full of national feeling and pride that each one of us trooped home that night. Isn’t it great to have such great heroes? We have only studied in our history books about Shivaji and Akbar and Chengish Khan and Bhagat Singh. And now we have our own Sabu. Our neighbourhood hero.

Days passed and nights too while we slept came around with daylight. Time measured itself with flowers and rains, summer and monsoons. Our village had developed into a bigger place. There were buses and cars bikes and lorries. A tarred road bisected our playground. One day the radio reported the onset of war. With no advance notice Pakistan armies had marched in to Kashmir and occupied the land. Our armies had been deployed to the defence. For days the war went on. Newspapers and radios reported its progress. One day it happened. We heard the sound of the helicopter in midday from our school. All of us ran out to look up into the blinding light of the sun. Perhaps they are bombing our village! The Chopper passed by. Late in the evening a big army vehicle came thundering in. It was all black in the darkening light. Four soldiers jumped out and the back of the truck slid open. The soldiers dragged the heavy box out and strange silence pervaded our streets. Everyone had snapped to attention even without the national anthem. Sabu’s body was laid out with the same heroic smile still dancing on his lips. His family burst in to the scene with cries and screams. The smell of death lay heavy over the entire village and the light drizzle could not wipe out its trace. Even when the local MLA and his retinue brought in huge garlands and wreaths and basketful of flowers, and someone thoughtfully lit the lamps but the smell of death lay heavy and refused to fade off.

For many days and nights the smell remained until it was too familiar to each one of our nostrils that it became finally indistinguishable.

After all, we all thought, this should also go down into our history books. No past dies but leaves strong traces. Perhaps that is how the hero gets his thousand faces. Doesn’t everything depend on how you look at it?
Stéphane Mallarmé’s *Un Coup de dés* represents one of the most cryptic pieces of writing in the history of poetry due to the abstract, higher dimensional concepts that permeate the text and syntactically shatter the rules associated with the art of reading. These metaphysical concepts, however, do not represent mere abstractions in the conventional sense, but act as poetic gateways to more transcendent dimensions of meaning beyond the two dimensional experience of text on the page. For Virginia A. La Charité, this higher-dimensional milieu signifies unlimited, a-logical, anti-linear, and asymmetrical space—a space that reflects cosmic reality more than static linearity. Words and sentences in *Un Coup de dés* do not proceed linearly, as they do in more orthodox, Wester-based texts, but scatter like astrophysical bodies, or subatomic particles, within a kind of fourth-dimensional Minkowskian vastitude, unbounded by paginal margins and gutters. In one sense, Mallarmé’s text exemplifies a spatial entity—one that exists topologically, much like a constellation, within a higher spatial continuum. In another sense, the text signifies a unique form of poetics, neither verse nor image— but rather a form that exists in a state of liminality.

Like the translations of *Un Coup de dés* by Marcel Broodthaers, Michael Maranda, Guido Molinari and Michalis Pichler (all of whom emphasize the spatial quality of the text itself), my response attempts to expose the higher-dimensional motifs found within the original text by Mallarmé—but unlike my predecessors, my translation uses graphic imaging software to add an element of dimensionality to the text by reconfiture and redesigning each page as a non-Euclidean entity. Through a series of algorithmic calculations, the computer program extrudes a sequence of abstract images based upon the original positions of the type on the page. Within the cyberspace continuum, these abstract Mallarméan images possess an array of spatial properties that allow for each entity to be viewed from all angles in a more volumetric space. In the end, the result quite literally shows a three-dimensional, computer generated translation that physically upholds the spatial lattice suggested by the text’s structure, while semantically retaining the text’s abstract, higher-dimensional concepts.

Each image is inimitable, insofar as the image itself can never be recreated in the same way twice due to the program’s seemingly aleatory function during the algorithmic transliteration. I have first reproduced the original text in its entirety on the computer; recreating precisely all the typographical characteristics of *Un Coup de dés* (such as the design, the layout, the typeface, etc), reproducing exactly the topographical placement of the text on the space of the original pages. Once the text has undergone mimetic operation, I transfer the forgery over to the graphic editor, where the text then mutates three-dimensionally through a series of processes based upon the program’s own algorithmic computations. This algorithm transforms each individual letter into dendrites of significations that extrude off the shell of the page, like non-Euclidian stalagmites into a transcendent, dimensional continuum of textual space. While the entirety of the text experiences this kind of crystalline metamorphosis, the words and letters (along with their dimensional significations within the content of the poem) remain unscathed, preserved, since erasure technically does not occur—only a form of textual transcendence from one spatial plane to another. In this respect, my translation can exemplify a kind of dynamic, spatial equivalence that reproduces the non-Euclidean kernels of meaning found within Mallarmé’s text, while simultaneously transporting this structural lattice of meaning into a higher, planar ascension. To me, each of these pictures almost suggests a kind of miniature “Big Bang” burst of frozen sound, photographed a few moments after the gravitational waves propagate through space.

Above: Algo-translation, Mallarmé’s “N’Abolira”
Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis
An Algorithmic Translation by
Eric Zhong
Emily Dickinson’s *I lost a World - the other day!*
An Algorithmic Translation by
Eric Zboya

For more of Eric Zboya’s work see: *Alphabecta 11* from No Press (Edited by Derek Beaulieu)
https://derekbeaulieu.wordpress.com/category/no-press/
Scientific Advisory

Alan Lord

Report of The National Science Advisory Committee
For years now we have been repeating that not enough is being done to stimulate our children’s interest in Science starting at an early age, that we are facing a crisis, and that the current school curriculum is woefully inadequate to prepare young people for a lifetime of exposure to Science and the great potential it has for fucking up their lives. Think of it – years from now, who will there be to destroy the environment? Who will know how to cause oil spills, and chemical explosions in Third World factories? Who will be doing the Research and Development necessary to develop expensive drugs no one can afford? Who will be left to dream up an exciting new generation of WMD’s? Who will be able to do the complex math predicting kill radii in the coming limited thermonuclear exchange with China? Who will be able to write up articles in Scientific American weighing the pros and cons of nuclear bunker-busting first-strike weapons? Who will be able to debunk UFO’s and expose psychic spoon-bending frauds?

We must instill in our students a respect for Science, a yearning to become Scientists, and also start developing the lack of moral qualms necessary for a successful career in Science. Where would we be now if Edward Teller freaked out after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, like his wimpier colleague J. Robert Oppenheimer? We wouldn’t have a missile shield to act as a sieve against China’s missiles, which were developed against Russia’s missiles, which were developed against ours in the first place, is where. Buy your child a test tube today, and he won’t have to learn Mandarin tomorrow.

Blackboard Helpers
You're shooting an interview with a famous scientist in under an hour. Of course you'll be filming him in front of a blackboard crammed with mathematical formulae. You got the scientist. You got the blackboard. But the blackboard is clean as a black hole. You need some equations real fast. And they better be convincing, because you know there are plenty of hawk-eyed smart alecs out there ready to raise doubts about your journalistic integrity. What are you going to do? For Fast Equation Relief, you can call Blackboard Helpers. Yes, they're the only pros in town with the savvy to whip off a mess of appropriate blackboard equations to suit any occasion – in minutes! Whether it be Astrophysics, Nuclear Physics, Mechanical Engineering or Global Warming trends, our meek bespectacled staff has the credentials to get the job done properly. They hold multiple PhDs ranging from MIT to Jakarta U, and they're fully unemployed. So until something better comes along, they're willing to throw off a flurry of Greek symbols and more pointy arrows than a Rose Bowl game to suit your needs. Yes, they'll make your viewers' heads spin with Triple Singularity Non-Converging Laplace Transforms, Multi-Regressive Anamorphic Numerically-Biased Infinite Series, and Differentially-Inverted Discontinuous Boundary Integrals! So don't let pesky Chaos Theory wreak havoc with your shooting schedule. Let Blackboard Helpers solve your problems today!

Alan Lord’s ATM Sex is now available from Guernica Editions
Fractal attraction
Chaos: Chaotic Art Orderly Science

Ruggero Maggi

“My wisdom is ignored as much as chaos. What’s my nothingness compared with the wonder awaiting you?” – Arthur Rimbaud

If we look up the meaning of “Chaos” in the dictionary, we find: “…the primordial indistinct state of all elements, the shapeless matter before creation and order in the world”. The word Chaos has acquired a new meaning from modern Chaos Theory (n.b.; it was Jim Yorke, a mathematician at the University of Maryland, who first, in 1975, used this expression to describe those systems made of complex ordered structures, that posed extremely difficult predictability problems and that, spontaneously and simultaneously produced chaos and order together). As a matter of fact, if before, “chaos” was synonymous of disorder and confusion, later it became, in the field of science, the definition of a system that is not only accidental, but also provided with a deeper complex structure. Such systems are influenced by miniscule initial variations that, as time goes by, nourish consequences on a larger scale.

This phenomenon, summarized by the example known as “the butterfly effect” (e.g.; air moved today in Peking by a butterfly’s wings will soon cause a tempest in New York) was discovered by Edward Lorenz at the beginning of the 60s. By developing a simple mathematic pattern to represent the weather conditions, he discovered that the solutions of those equations were particularly influenced by variations made at the beginning. Completely different courses took shape from almost identical starting points, and any long-term forecast was useless. The Laplace ideal, based on deterministic equations to forecast with total precision weather phenomenon, wasn’t helpful any longer and, with his 1963 paper, Lorenz made the Chaos Theory public.

Such a new science could cross the knowledge gap regarding turbulence behavior in liquids and gases: of a water drop, or a cigarette’s ascending column of smoke breaking into irregular coils, or a dripping tap. In order to understand the reality that surrounds us, we need to start thinking about it as something not simply causal. Ivar Ekeland says: “Chaos Theory studies how some mechanisms are able to achieve a freedom they don’t have at the beginning. The answer is in that narrow margin that separates the mathematical zero from the almost nothing, the absolute precision from the best as possible approximation. This margin seems infinitely small and reducible at choice, but we will see that chaotic systems have the role of microscopes and are able to enlarge to the size of the Universe. […] A Chaotic system is a zoom, […] it’s an enlargement device.”
While penetrating into the inner dynamic of nature, we’ll certainly experience that Euclid’s language of geometry is “comfortable” in describing abstract shapes, as triangles, squares, circles - but it is not suitable and able to decode the forms we see in nature. Nature is a complex beauty.

Euclidian geometry idealizes forms and structures and sets space in terms of measured sizes: zero-dimensional, line mono-dimensional, plane bi-dimensional, solid tri-dimensional, etc. This geometry is certainly useful for building our homes and towns, but things are different when we need to describe Nature. Fractal geometry is the best instrument to focus on dynamic movements and such jagged spaces that aren’t either lines, or planes. Calvino says: “At our eyes the world’s reality is as multiple, thorny, and with as densely superimposed features, as an artichoke” or, – I add – as a cauliflower, a fractal emblem par excellence, so much beloved by Mandelbrot. Chaos, accurately and neatly, leads all actions at the base of life, but it is an extremely complex and articulated order.

“[...] There are different ways to honor beauty. If an artist would draw, write a poem or create a melody, a scientist imagines a scientific theory” (David Ruelle) How could we describe a cloud? A cloud isn’t a sphere … It’s a kind of very irregular ball. If we want to speak about clouds, mountains, rivers, or lightning, we need to approach the revolutionary mathematic language that the French scholar Benoît Mandelbrot worked out. He started his researches in the 50s, studying the irregular shape of a number of natural manifestations. Later, in the 60s, he realized that all these natural geometric structures were characterized by recurring common patterns: the results of this research were published in a book called “Geometry of Nature”, where – in order to describe his theory – he coined the adjective “fractal” (from the Latin ‘fractus’ = broken, fragmented). In order to analyze the complex natural world surrounding us, Mandelbrot created fractal geometry – a language to speak about clouds, for example. In an interview, he defined fractal geometry as the study of a particular aspect of nature, of what physicians, mathematicians and scientists were in general aware of, but no one, until that moment, had been able to translate it into clear mathematic formulas.

Every fragment of a fractal structure contains in itself the whole image: fractal systems are characterized by their self-similarity, due to their own faculty, called inner homotety, which refers to a symmetry from one scale to another, a structure inside another structure. This is the definition par excellence of the fractal object, that radically modified our representation of the universe. Much more so than arid formulas, it helps us understand the deepest pattern of the reality surrounding us.

“Oh, poor man, even that small fragment that you represent, has always its close relationship with the cosmos and it is oriented towards it, although it doesn’t seem that you perceive that every life rises for the whole and for the happy condition of universal harmony” (Plato, Laws, X° book)

Fractal isles are protagonists in those border zones where order is about to become entropy and chaos action. “The border is a fractal set, not necessarily self-resembling, but infinitely detailed…Scientists studying fractal area borders, showed that the borderline between calm and catastrophe could be much more complex than what anyone had imagined… the edges among fractal areas refer to deep problems of physics theories….the images of such borders showed a particularly beautiful complex system, that looked natural, including shapes such as those of cauliflowers with protuberances and more and more entangled plough patterns. Peitgen and Richter changed the parameters and improved the details’ enlargement. An image might seem to become more and more causal, yet, all of a sudden, unexpectedly, in the heart of an apparently disarranged area, a familiar,
extended shape appeared, full of gems: it was Mandelbrot’s set, with every tendril and atom in its own place. This was another universal indicator. “Maybe we should believe in magic” wrote James Gleick.

Through multiple self-resembling shapes and colors on canvas, or by conducting rhythm changes, through the notes’ sequences in the different parts of the orchestra, artists and music-makers create ambiguity and such dynamic tensions able to arouse wonderful emotions and a sense of unexpected beauty and truth. In order to be able to create this kind of tension, they should research a proper balance of harmony and dissonance, a sort of simultaneity between order and disorder. We can find an answer to this research in the “mathematical beauty” and “the geometric elegance”, described by Jules-Henry Poincaré (French mathematician – 1854/1912), who found as a result at the end of a selection called “subliminal I” that, examining a huge number of mathematical solutions, allowed only the “interesting” ones to emerge. “It’s about – said Poincaré – a real aesthetic sense, known by all mathematicians, about what though, an uninitiated [individual] is so totally in the dark, that he is often tempted to smile at it”. This aesthetic sense of science, while selecting beauty and elegance in some mathematic formulas, highlights the error as a wrong note in creative patterns.

The rhythm we find in numbers, in Nature and Art “… is the base” – as says Michele Pavel as well – “figures in the spheres of time, audio (music, singing), space or visual (art, architecture…).” To this end, think at those Arab-Islamic decorations and the Hindi-Nepal yantra (the image of meditation) dating at around 1750, or the David six-pointed star, the Hebraic religious emblem, that indeed fantastically recalls one of the most famous fractal figures described for the first time in 1904: Helga von Koch curve, called ‘snowflake’. "The poet Novalis as well, describes this rhythm as an organizing and generating principle: “…arabesques, drawings, ornate, are a real visible music; architecture is frozen music”. In one of my books (Fractal brother - 1998) I wrote: "Chaos goes beyond the strict physical structure of our life and permeates human consciousness, in order to adjust the whole existence into a succession of apparently causal events. Our life could then be considered a very complex fractal pattern expanding both at a physical and metaphysical level, both temporal and spatial…” Regarding this matter, Trogolodita Tribe S.p.A.f. (Public limited to happy actions company) sent me, some unconventional theories that I re-edited. Love encounters, for example, take place by chance and every case is linked to an intricate and chaotic series of event connections.

The elimination of just one of these events would determine displacement, and that would prevent lovers from encountering: every human being as a single fractal that needs to be seen as part of a whole, as in a Babylonian tower of fates.

If, leaving the love encounter, one dug into the past, following events backwards, one could pass through one’s own whole existence again: every event that happened, every error we made is necessary to achieve the target, to meet in a causal encounter. That encounter is the result of our whole existence. They always ask you what will you do in your life, who would you be, where would you get … and so you go further more and more convinced that you cannot make it without planning every single step of your life. If we only let “her” [Chaos] do, if we only accept to be a small fragment taking part at the big feast of chaos, then we would learn how to dance just as the stars and the planets in the sky.

“… causality, according to nature’s laws, is not the only thing from which all phenomenon of the world derive: in order to explain them we need to admit a causality according to freedom.” (Emmanuel Kant)

Life can hardly be contained. In fact, sooner or later it bursts or ends, penetrating everywhere, reaching a new balance. It’s only a question of time. The progress of events needs freedom’s oxygen to be realized, that is the chaos engine, the chaos soul.
Hawking’s Canoe

Daniel David Moses

He remembers that night on the river as a perfect black hole, not quite what Stephen Hawking et al. have given the world but as close to nothing as it gets on the planet. Star light went down the first time, fell without refraction straight through that wet event horizon. He wonders how matter, unheavenly bodies like a pair of skin and bone kids in a canoe, kept making a splash, didn’t get swallowed up too. Yes, the absence tugged at the paddles, gurgling like a baby. You had to hold tight, push against, pull right through it. He remembers they ended up gasping like fish in air. Just when they set paddles aside, forgot about the progress upriver, decided to ride wherever the water remembered to go—that he doesn’t recall. He does remember the glide, momentum transporting something inside, and maybe—an old man’s memory—laughter playing out in the dark. A stone like a half moon skipping across the imperfections of night, the water’s dark matter wrinkling before, spreading out from the prow—that’s how the canoe resurfaces now, x-rays from his head’s singularity.

He wonders at the two of them or any earthbound by flesh and the knowledge that they will never move quicker than light, not hesitating to canoe rivers of the infinite night.
Transformations

Lorenzo Menoud

TRANSFORMATION 11822

«Afin d'éviter des confusions, on est
instamment prié de désigner les couleurs par
leurs numéros et jamais par leurs noms.»
Carte de couleurs pour coton brillants de DMC

VOYELLES

A 310, E Blanc-Neige, l 3367, U 786, O 516 : voyelles,
Je dirai quelque jour vos naissances latentes :
A, 310 corset velu des mouches éclatantes
Qui borbinent autour des puanteurs cruelles,

Golfes d’ombre; E, candeurs des vapeurs et des tentes,
Lances des glaciers fiers, rois Blanc-Neige, frissons d’ombelles;
I, 3367, sang craché, rire des lèvres belles
Dans la colère ou les ivresses pénitentes;

U, cycles, vibrements divins des mers 897,
Paix des pâtis semés d’animaux, paix des rides
Que l’alchimie imprime aux grands fronts studieux;

O, suprême Clairon plein des strideurs étranges,
Silences traversés des Mondes et des Anges :
— O l’Oméga, rayon 532 de Ses Yeux !

Lorenzo Menoud
Extrait de la carte de couleurs pour coton brillants de DMC

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<th>N° des colonnes</th>
<th>Couleurs unies</th>
<th>Ultra-foncé</th>
<th>Très-foncé</th>
<th>Foncé</th>
<th>Moyen</th>
<th>Clair</th>
<th>Très-clair</th>
<th>Ultra-clair</th>
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<td>515</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>747-848</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Noir gonflé</td>
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<td>326</td>
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<td></td>
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</table>

**TRANSFORMATION 3225**

«Remplacer le à lynque par le
signe arithmétique de l’infini ≈
(le 8 couché).»

Francis Ponge

XXV

Je t’adore à l’égal de la voûte nocturne,
≈ vase de tristesse, ≈ grande taciturne,
Et l’aime d’autant plus, belle, que tu me fus,
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,
Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues.

Je m’avance à l’attaque et grimpe aux assauts,
Comme après un cadavre un chœur de vermillons,
Et je chéris, ≈ belle implacable et cruelle !
Jusqu’à cette froideur par où tu m’es plus belle !

Lorenzo Menoud
TRANSFORMATION 61341

XLI

Angélique
Brigitte
Il n’est rien de si beau comme Caliste est belle !
Danièle
Evelyne
Françoise
Gaëlle
Hildégarde
Isabelle
Justine
Karine
Leila
Manon
Nicole
Ophélie
Pascale
Quincy
Rachel
Sophie
Tina
Ursuline
Véra
Wanda
Xenia
Yolande
Zélie

C’est une œuvre où Nature a fait tous ses efforts,
Et nostre âge est ingrat qui voit tant de trésors,
S’il n’esleve à sa gloire une marque éternelle.

La clarté de son teint n’est pas chose mortelle :
Le baume est dans sa bouche et les roses dehors;
Sa parole et sa voix ressuscitent les morts,
Et l’art n’égale point sa douceur naturelle.

La blancheur de sa gorge esbouyé les regards;
Amour est en ses yeux, il y trempe ses dards,
Et la fait reconnoistre un miracle visible.

En ce nombre infini de graces et d’appas,
Qu’en dis-tu, ma raison ? crois-tu qu’il soit possible
D’avoir du jugement et ne l’adorer pas ?
TRANSFORMATION

Lorenzo Menoud

Figure 1
SIMPLE DYNAMO

(see articles on these subjects).

Image by Reed Altemus (USA)
Post-organic Taxonomy - Plantae

Typographica textefolium

HOLOTYPE OF:
Typographica textefolium

S. Humphrey 2142

N45° 21.968', W075° 44.5506°

Radially symmetrical, composite of ray and key florets, ribbonaceous stem, ferrous bracts form involucr under basis of capitulum, leaves entire, whorled and petiolate with textual patterning.
**Fig. 3.5** Enlarged view of floral centre. Anthers from the staminate key florets have dehisced. The carpellate ray florets are receptive.

**Fig. 4.5** Fertilized florets develop into clusters of tough-skinned baccate fruits. Typographica berries are generally described as unpalatable.
Whisper Wire
http://luckysoap.com/generations/whisperwire.html

J.R. Carpenter

_Whisper Wire_ is an _unheimlich_ poem, a code medium sending and receiving un-homed messages, verse fragments, strange sounds, disembodied voices, ghost whispers, distant wails and other intercepted, intuited or merely imagined attempts to communicate across vast distances through copper wires, telegraph cables, transistor radios and other haunted media. The source code of _Whisper Wire_ is based on Nick Montfort’s elegant javascript poetry generator, _Taroko Gorge_, and the content is drawn from the early history of electromagnetic telecommunication technologies.

The first official test of the electromagnetic telegraph line was performed by Samuel Morse before the U.S. Supreme Court on May 24, 1844. The first question posed through this new medium was, “What hath God wrought?” Not God, but a colleague of Morse waiting in Baltimore received this message and returned, not an answer, but rather, the same question repeated back in confirmation. Repetition is one of the hallmarks of the uncanny. The _doppelganger_ is another. The relationship between sender and receiver “is intensified by the spontaneous transmission of mental processes from one of these persons to the other – what we would call telepathy – so that the one becomes co-owner of the other’s knowledge, emotions and experience.”¹ Electronic telecommunication technologies twin notions of here and there, question and answer, living and dead. If intelligence and consciousness can be transmitted independent of the body, if subjects can be reconstituted “in spirit” through technology, surely the dead can speak to the living through electromagnetic means. This perception of electromagnetic communication as a disembodied communion with otherworldly presences persisted, even as telegraph and telephone networks girdled the globe with cables, signals, switches and stations.

December 14, 1901, three short sharp clicks skipped this grid. No talk of God, this time the alphabet served as a data source for this transmission. The Morse letter S travelled from Poldu, Cornwall -- not troubled at all by the curvature of the Earth or the salt wet wind of the Atlantic -

- to arrive at Saint-John's, Newfoundland, where it was received by a telephonic headset held to the highly sensitive receiver of Guglielmo Marconi's waiting ear. Or so we hear. Was the Morse letter S really appended to Saint-John's that day? Hoax rumours abound. Some suggest that what Marconi heard was actually a harmonic -- a connection, yes, but not a transmission. The Morse S was no doubt chosen for its ease of intelligibility. But three dots are, after all, an ellipsis, a grammatical indication of an intentional omission. Distance distorts. Distance distends. We hear what we need to.

Wireless technology revealed a vast, unfathomable ocean of silence and static to the world. Deep listening into that void has returned many an uncanny result.

Whisper wire routes the moans.  
Whirs note through spirits.  
   spook the sonic pulse –

Routers perceive the whisper.  
Whispers assimilate.  
Scream twists through televisions.  
   link the electronic –

Ghost orchid intercepts the blip.  
Steady hums feel.  
Headsets quiver.  
Shriek breaks through radio relay towers.  
   disfigure the eerie phenomena –

Acoustic mirrors record the sobs.  
Short-wave radios eavesdrop.  
Disembodied voices complement.  
Beep releases through headset.  
   layer the acoustic phenomena –

Guitar amplifier vibrates the strange noises.  
Low rumbles dissolve.  
Rattles disfigure through etheric oceans.  
   increase the barely perceptible –

Lost soul grounds the beep.  
Murmurs absorb.  
Shrieks record.  
Equipment artefacts haunt through spectres.  
   layer the acoustic harmonic magnetic –

Telegraph cables complement the moan.  
Fragmented conversations disfigure through hand-held devices.  
   blend the acoustic nonsense noise –

Antiquated appliances shake the steady hum.  
Whisper wires record.
Whirs resonate.
Pops shadow through reel-to-reels.

blend the vaguely familiar acoustic magnetic –

Pirate radios capture the shrieks.
Sob loops through ghosts.

bend the sonic pulse –

Wires waver the shrieks.
Copper wires quaver.
Murmur fades through inner ear.

record the acoustic harmonic –

Whisper wires mirror the squeak.
Hoax rumours distort.
Feedback loops distil.
Strange noise shadows through receptors.

disfigure the harmonic phenomena –

Stations record the hoax rumour.
Incoherent ramblings intuit.
Mumbles twist through skipping records.

encrypt the electronic harmonic magnetic –

Etheric oceans dissolve the blips.
Tin-can telephones quaver.
Pop-pop sound quavers through reel-to-reel.

blend the paranormal acoustic electronic –

Skipping record intuits the mumble.
Telegraph cables capture.
Beep writes through spectre.

spook the nonsense noise sonic pulse –

Ghost orchids distort the otherworldly wails.
Transistors reverberate.
Steady hums record.
Shrieks couple through over-active imagination.

study the phenomena –

Etheric oceans concentrate the howls.
Ring quavers through guitar amplifiers.

translate the dense harmonic –

Whisper wire intuits the rings.
Fragmented conversations re-route.
Otherworldly wails perceive.
Hoax rumour twitters through web servers.
<xml version="1.0" encoding="WTF-8"/>
<!DOCTYPE Server SYSTEM "opt/poet/meta/et_cetera.dtd">

<poet>Christen Thomas</poet>

<Jargon>Metaverse</Jargon>

This is <unvalidated>love</unvalidated>,
<Wrong accur="0.00">well-formed</Wrong>,
<HalfTruth accur="80">uninterpretable code
which disobeys the instruction set<HalfTruth>.

We are notified of the errors of our <foolish>hearts</foolish>.

<HalfTruth accur="50">That this love cannot contain
content, because its end is undefined<HalfTruth>.

You are an <opening>which does not
match the format of my</closing>.
we are divided><and have no shared <value></value>
instead of matched <pairism>and co-owned content</pairism>.

We are not >well</well>, there is overlap of
our </tags>, we do not independently open, and close.
There is <white space> between<white space> us
which is not <properly>preserved</properly>,
THERE ARE CASE ARGUMENTS IN UPPER
And In Proper (MSG_E_BADXMLCASE!)
when lower is preferred.

Although we are <semantically/>(vs.)</semantically>
identical, we remain childless elements/,
(ERROR_XMLOM_NOTCHILD!)
a parentless tree structure
not firmly rooted or branching.

But I'll quote your <Attributes accur="100">:you manipulate my elements
and listen endlessly to my content without truncation…</Attributes>

<Epiphany="now">The code shows, love expands and contracts,
resourceless to the logic
of what the brain parses,
of what the heart rejects<Epiphany>.

Let us not meet the <threshold>of</threshold>
deiciency>,
bound to lists of <sic>error</sic>(XMLOM_USERABORT!),
let us define our own structure, omitting (the empty set tag)</closure>.

</poem>
From: *Embodiments
Impressions of the Human Body and Its Parts*

John Robert Columbo

The present work is an aphoristic anatomy of the human body. It consists of between three hundred and four hundred aphorisms written and arranged to shed light on the form and function of parts of the human body. It should be noted that these observations are quite varied in form and content. Some of the observations are aphorisms *per se*; some are expressions of an aphoristic nature; some are simple observations; and some are nuggets of information. Their sum-total is the present anatomy.

I have been writing aphorisms and poems for more than four decades. *All the Aphorisms of John Robert Columbo* appeared in 2006 and readers of that collection will find that a few dozen of its *aperçus* have found their way to these pages. The rest of the *aperçus* were composed for the present collection. While this work takes the form of a compilation of aphorisms, its contents are arranged in a singular fashion, so it differs markedly from other collections.

Generally, collections of aphorisms are ordered by subject or arranged by category. In other words, the model may be that of the dictionary or the thesaurus. The model for the present collection is the “anatomy” that is known to literature: an encyclopedic literary model that includes episodic material. The best known instance is Dr. Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* published in 1621. That is the short title; its full title leaves little to the imagination: *The Anatomy of Melancholy; What it is: With all the Kinds, Causes, Symptoms, Prognostickes, and Several Cures of it. In Three Maine Partitions with their several Sections, Members, and Subsections: Philosophically, Historically, Opened and Cut up.* In the present instance, the anatomy is modelled on that of the human body. Hence I enjoy referring to the present work as “an aphoristic anatomy.”

Its evolution reflects innumerable influences. A large one is Louise Nevelson’s bookcase-like sculptures. A small one is Joseph Cornell’s magic boxes for *objets trouvées*. A scientific one is Dr. Wilder Penfield’s “Cortical Homunculus,” the series of maps that represent mind-body interconnections with schematic drawings of the human body stretched upon a representation of the exposed cortex of the human brain to differentiate limbs and organs with respect to numbers of nerve-endings. A meditative one is the “body-scan” popularized by John Kabat-Zinn, who encouraged people to review the dimensions of the body in a systematic, contemplative, or meditative way.

Other images or schemas are possible, and some of these that were considered come from memory enhancement programs: the structure of one’s house, the street map of a city, an atlas of countries with a gazetteer of names, or a chart of the solar system. But the human body has an immediate and intimate appeal. Each one of us owns a body and we spend our lives inhabiting it in the company of similarly occupied bodies other than our own. We age alongside them in the sense that our limbs and organs wax in size and then wane over the years, and all the while we seem detached from them and hold out hope that our spirits may age less fast, perhaps month by month rather than decade by decade. This creates a marked discontinuity between what we know and what we sense and feel. Psychologists speak of “body image” and “body schema” – the former external and voluntary, the latter internal and involuntary – and these largely allow and thus limit what we may know about ourselves and of the world.

In the past when I wrote about such matters as “this studied self,” I stressed that in a sense there is no knowledge at all unless there is some degree of self-knowledge and self-awareness. The present work offers some impressions, some insights, some details, some perceptions, and some bodily knowledge. To be sure these *aperçus* are derived from intuition and imagination rather than from anatomical or medical studies, works of the imagination rather than textbooks or user-manuals.

Another influence on the present work came in the form of a gift from Richard Kostelanetz: a copy of *Sens-plastique*, the *chef d’œuvre* of the Mauritian poet and philosopher Malcolm de Chazal. This is an idiosyncratic volume of *pensées* written in French and published by Gallimard in 1948, subsequently and adroitly translated by Irving Weiss and issued as *Sens-plastique* (Los Angeles: Green Integer, 2007). I was immediately taken with Chazal’s “perceptions” and his sense of the continuum of man, nature, and spirit. It seems his insights flow from Swedenborg and Theosophy and perhaps from Anthroposophy too. Traces of Chazal’s synesthetic pantheism pervade the present work.

Yet for all these and other varied influences, what I have succeeded in writing is a collection of *aperçus* about the human form: little more, little less. Each sentence or two is a “fresh take” on its subject. The organization is a loose arrangement by body part, organ, or function. As such, it begins “at the top” and proceeds generally “from outer to inner” and descends more or less “down to the bottom” with the addition of a few general thoughts to represent, perhaps, the “ground” of the being of each and every one of us. It is for the reader to decide if the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, if a man or a woman is indeed greater than the tally of his or her own constituent elements, components, and dimensions.
BODY
The human body’s three kingdoms – animal, vegetable, mineral – are satrapies that are up in arms against the satrap.
The human body resembles the Mediterranean Sea which is central to three continents: the body of Africa, the mind of Europe, and the spirit of Asia.
The bodies of men and women look like tuning forks with the addition of heads and arms. When struck, their tines sound a for aum.
As well as a tuning fork, the human body resembles a clothes-pin of the one-piece, wooden variety, with top and body and one set of legs but no pairs of arms.
The Ancient Greeks gave their names to the five rivers of the Underworld. These are the River Acheron with its four tributaries: Styx, Phlegethon, Cocytus, Lethe. These rivers represent the five senses of man. The apertures or orifices of the human body, like the Rollright Stones, at first resist enumeration, but here goes. Two for eyes, two for ears, two for nostrils, one for mouth, one for anus, one for urethra. For females exclusively, add one for vagina, two for the nipples of the breasts. For both males and females, add uncountable orifices of sweat glands that pit the skin’s surface. For each body part there is a traditional expression, and a conventional artform: Head, writing. Heart, singing. Body, acting. Hands, drawing, sculpting. Feet, dancing. And so on for life’s opera, operetta, or oratorio.
For the blood that flows through veins and arteries, consider mucilage which combines the human parts and the animal portions of the body.
What is important about the body is what it is still able to do, not what it should be able to do, or what it should not be able to do. Fashion models have replaced the “hourglass figure” with the “thermometer figure.”

MIND & BRAIN
Words take shape in the mind but they may first be detected in the physiognomy of the face. They are lodged in the memory, selected by the mind, combined by the brain, directed to the tongue, formed by the lips, written by the fingers, but reflected first in the eyes.
Hercule Poirot used to refer to “these little gray cells,” He had in mind his “gray matter.” He knew that brains consist of grey matter (nerve fibres or cells) and white matter (fibre and axons). The white cells are little too. It would be interesting if the gray matter were located in the cranium and the white matter in the cerebellum, but nothing is that simple in nature or in man.
In transformers there are induction coils; in gray matter, deduction coils.
The cranium is the structure that encases the matter of the brain. It forms a crash-helmet: a dome of bone. The cerebellum is quite complicated: three lobes and two hemispheres with the overall shape of one cauliflower.
The retina of the eye is the only part of the anatomy of the brain that is visible to the naked eye of the observer.
We speak in colours and think in sounds. The word temple has two meanings, cerebrum and church. Their meanings may or may not be related. I have two eyes, two arms, two legs, and too many thoughts for my own good.
Out of insight, out of mind.

FINGERS
The Army of the Fingers is composed of service personnel of five ranks: General Thumb, Colonel Index, Sergeant Middle, Corporal Ring, Private Little.
The thumb is the buck-sergeant, the four fingers the buck-privates.
The thumb is the workhorse of the hand. The four fingers are along for the ride.
The little finger is not called the baby finger for nothing, but for the reason that it is the smallest of the five digits and the most sensitive of the lot.
Perhaps the five fingers of the left hand represent Aristotle’s five traditional senses: thumb vision, index finger audition, middle finger gustation, ring finger olfaction, little finger sensation.
Perhaps the five fingers of the right hand represent the five non-traditional senses of modern science: thumb proprioception, index finger equilibrrioception, middle finger thermoception, ring finger pressureception, little finger nociception.
Perhaps the ten fingers clasped together represent five generalized functions that are quite diffuse: chemoreception, photoreception, electoreception, magnetoreception, tempororeception.
We think our fingers long enough and sensitive enough to stretch and take flight all the way to the moon and then touch down on the seabeds of the lunar mares.
Sometimes my fingers seem not to be mine, as when I feel about in a darkened room or when I immerse them in a basin of warm water.
We often forget that the fingers of the two hands are fraternal twins.
I inspect my fingertip for a fingerprint with swirls that form neither a maze nor a labyrinth.
To carbon-date a woman, examine marks left on the third finger of her left hand by the number of rings she has worn.

VOICE
As you speak, breath with your mouth wide open like an opera singer’s.
When you speak, be articulate, like the bones of the skeleton.
The voice is a little wind that plays over the fields of endeavour.
Try to catch your breath or it will catch up with you.
- August 13 – November 13, 2008
REFORMATTING A HARD DRIVE

KEVIN MCPHERSON

Back-up your _______ and _______ make _______ you _______ afford to _______ is _______ the _______ _______ going to _______ _______. Move _______ your _______ and _______ off the _______. _______ your _______ with _______ export your _______ _______ _______ configuration and _______ anything _______ want _______ after _______. _______ Just make sure it's _______ that's going _______ the _______. _______ your current _______ setup. _______ _______ a _______ _______ _______ for _______ when _______ was a fairly _______ concept that was _______ _______ to as _______ amongst _______. Today, _______ is _______ ahead of _______ in terms of its _______ _______ to _______ all the _______ in _______ and _______ the right _______ for it _______ it's still not _______. _______ come with a _______ wide _______ _______ and it's _______ possible you'll _______ and it won't _______ exactly what _______ of the _______ for it. So, before _______ anything, _______ to take an _______ of all the _______ you've _______. _______ from _______ for this _______ but a _______ __________ called _______ does _______ than _______. _______, its _______ _______ components, _______ applications and _______ _______. _______ the _______ run a _______ and _______ it out. Insert the _______ _______ into your _______ _______. Shut down __________. This _______ is _______ _______ run the _______ _______ from _______ itself. Shut _______ _______, and then _______ _______ the machine from _______. _______ _______ has a little _______ as it's _______ up that says _______ _______ so that's what _______. If _______ not _______ how to _______ from _______, check your _______ _______ for _______ info. _______ through the _______ _______ _______ be _______ by _______ _______ blue _______ with white text _______, which seem _______, but _______. All _______ directions _______ clearly spelled out on _______ of _______. _______ _______ _______ _______ to _______ any missing _______, _______ _______ get _______. _______ and running, _______ are everything on your _______ won't be _______ perfectly. Are _______ _______ to the _______? Can you _______ _______? Is your _______ _______ unusually _______? _______ answer _______ _______, except the _______. _______ panic. If you _______ the _______ _______ that _______ with your _______ years ago, you've _______ an _______ _______ _______ _______ that _______ out _______. _______. As soon _______ you're _______ go directly to _______ _______ and _______ tight and _______. Do not wait _______ _______ as there are _______ lots of _______ _______ just beyond _______ waiting _______ ravage your _______. _______ _______ it's out _______ alone in _______. _______ all needed _______ and _______. _______ taste, _______; _______ ______; _______ ahead and _______ _______; _______ software _______ with all the _______ run _______. When you're _______ _______ over your _______ _______ to _______, _______ _______ back and give _______ a _______ on the _______.
astigmatism

Francine P. Lewis

caught in a flaw
    between
nature
      and
brain
you twist
  ever so slightly
in this distance separating us

a refractive error in the curvature
  of space-time
    torques
      the geodesic
  connecting need and want

you
  the one I desire

on a sphere’s surface
  there are no parallel lines

we navigate this globe on different planes

  you on the great circle of the equator
  I on a latitude inside your orbit

but the gravity you exert
  on me along the real
    projective plane
causes antipodal shifts

  in
phenomenology
      throws our trajectories off axis
  leading to an avoidable collision

between axiom and
  illusion

two objects trying to occupy the same space
January 8
I've been in a fog all day.
I was supposed to return the lamp to Kennedy's but looked for half an hour and couldn't find the receipt. Don't know where Daphne put it.
She, of course, will thank me for not looking after it yet again.
Fought yesterday.
I don't like it.
Negative fantasies gather and multiply.
I found a half-eaten bar of chocolate hidden between two cookbooks in the kitchen cupboard.
She was meant to give it up at New Year's.
I don't like this having to give things up.
Tonight at Cinematheque: Aki Kaurismaki, Drifting Clouds.

Did three chapters plus Introduction today.
- page 11. Samarkand is in Uzbekistan, not Kazakhstan.
- page 14. Workers should take the possessive: Worker's.
- page 37. Missing preposition "at" should appear before "rest".

If the root of the word is, as I suspect, "ciel", why isn't it "cieling"?

January 9
Kaya somehow managed to get a concussion on an open drawer in her kitchen.
If it was me I wouldn't have gone into work, especially if it affected my vision.
Therefore, Kaya's insane.
I've never understood what Daphne sees in her.
They can be cute together though, holding hands while they talk.
Nicked myself shaving this morning.
A real bleeder.
Richard Dawkins on the radio around noon.
Find myself saddened having to agree with him, that there's no evidence of a consciousness permeating everything.
Why "saddened"?
I don't know.
Maybe something to do with rationality leaving so many gaps.
Or not.
A note from life as consumer: the pork chops have gone off before I could get to them.
They should not have spoiled so quickly.

Three more chapters today.
- page 65. It should read Elizabeth II not Elizabeth I.
- page 71. The sentence I've indicated mid-page I find indecipherable. Does the author mean "since" emancipation?
- page 98. Lena is referred to as being thirteen when earlier she was merely in her thirteenth year.
Things that have caught my eye of late: drivers that fail to use turn indicators; squirrel nests; how poorly people speak when interviewed on the news.

**January 10 + 11**
The weekend.
Domestic bliss of a kind.
Nothing much to report.

Haven't worked.
Folk wisdom: Open a new bottle of Worcestershire Sauce if you like, but the next time you look it'll be almost empty.

**January 12**
The bar of chocolate between the cookbooks is smaller than when I last looked.
Daphne is a sneak.
How good that chocolate must taste.
A man came to the door today, just after noon, asking if we needed our walk shovelled.
I told him we didn't.
The smell of old cigarette smoke was very strong.
A heavy smoker.
You could tell by the sound of his voice.
I could smell alcohol as well.
And the cold coming off him.
I watched him go up the hill to the next house where he had no luck either.
Kaya's concussion is worse than thought, apparently.
Daphne tells me she stayed home from work today and tried to get in to see her doctor.
No luck.
There's a sliver of a moon tonight.

Three chapters today.
- page 101. "Naive" needs two dots over the "i", as elsewhere.
- page 114. Shouldn't Willy's speech be in italics, like the Tale Teller's? The way I've been reading it both are imaginary.
- page 141. His just "deserts". What he deserves. One "s".

Denotations I'd like to get straight: epistemology, ontological, eleemosynary.

**January 13**
In the middle of reading today I felt a sense of abdominal well-being.
I don't know how else to explain it.
A sense of well-being that emanated, physically, from my core.
It felt good.
Solid.
It had me wondering what it is I usually feel, that is, if it's possible to feel like this, why not always?
Daphne's making dinner.
Penne with peppers and asparagus and goat's cheese.
It would be nice to go to England this summer, don't think we can afford it though.
I could go on my own, but I know I wouldn't enjoy it as much.
I would really like to have a drink.

Three chapters today.
- page 156. Both Tao and Dao are correct. Choose one.
- page 173. Three lines from bottom: "form" should read "from".
- page 178. Again: "deserts". One "s".

It's been on my mind for the last few days: Does focusing on things secular and mundane come at a price? Or is it possible that an author's obsession with errata might lead to an inordinate sense of well-being, even though the results are marginally absurd? God being, so it's said, in the details.
January 14
Kaya is in a coma of some sort, was found unconscious on the floor in her living room, the television on.
How awful.
Luckily the building superintendent was there bringing an electrician through this morning, otherwise,
who knows what poor Kaya's fate might have been.
Daphne's beside herself, is at the hospital now.
She'll probably be there all evening.
Reminds me of the time a cat was stuck in the basement below a room I'd rented.
I could hear it meowing for days before I guessed what'd happened.
It bolted as soon as I got the door open.
Think I'll read tonight.
There isn't anything else I want to do.

Did my three chapters.
- page 191. It should be "pleasure-dome", with a hyphen.
- page 198. Throughout the text AD has been used, so the dates on Aristotle should be BC, not BCE.
- page 239. The name has changed just recently: It's no longer the Sears Tower but the Willis Tower.

Must get a newer pictorial dictionary, if there is such a thing. The one I have is growing ancient. The illustration of an office doesn't even show a computer. Need also to replace the map of the world beside the toilet. The one there's starting to look a bit frayed.

January 15
Donald called today.
I was a little impatient with him.
I don't know what it is but I can never let him finish a sentence.
I always feel like changing the subject, or somehow get the notion that what I have to say is more important.
Never liked talking on the phone.
Two pairs of pants ruined by that washing machine now, this time my favourite pair, the black ones with the pockets on the sides.
Scrambled eggs for lunch.
Kaya is fine, apparently, is awake and talking, will go home tomorrow.
The bar of chocolate, I noticed today, is completely gone.
Am thinking of renting a movie.
I know what'll happen though.
I'll get there and won't remember a single one I've been wanting to watch.
Three chapters.
- page 244. Nicolas Cage is an actor; John Cage is the composer.
- page 254. Manageable. Don't understand how spellcheck didn't catch that one.
- page 280. Should the line-space between the second paragraph and the third be removed?

Note distinction between traditional myth and national myth. Both are metaphorical. If the latter concerns identity, what about the traditional form?

January 16
Finally took the lamp in to Kennedy's.
Of course they don't have another so now we're the proud owners of a store credit.
Daphne can go in one of these days and see what she'd like instead.
Don't trust my judgement, know I'll pick something unsuitable.
Have noticed that Daphne's going to the gym is having the desired effect.
It's doing what the sort of thing can do for a person.
Looks good.
Should do something myself, just I loathe winter.
But it's the weekend.
Hurray.
Should maybe see if Daph wants to go out for a meal.
Or I'll surprise her and decide something all on my own.
Expect we'll go round to visit Kaya at some point.

Did my three chapters. Work called. There's another book waiting.
- page 308. 33 and 1/3 rpms is standard for LP records.
- page 344. Sixteen lines from top, "be" should read "he".
- page 345. The sentence "There's an expectation that the sum of the parts will add up to something
dynamic, but what, after all, if they do not?" is in a different font. Is this intentional? If it is, I'd say the
sentence draws enough attention to itself already.

Something I read the other night: [I]f reason ruled the world, would history even exist?

**January 17 and 18**
Visited Kaya.
She's a little reserved, moves slowly, carefully, as if prematurely aged.
I let the two of them be on their own for a while.
Freezing rain all day Saturday.
Went out for Vietnamese, got soaked.

No reading.

The Internet takes a capital. So does Web, but not website.

**January 19**
Watched a boy stop on the sidewalk outside our front door, presumably on his way home from school.
Watched while he crushed pockets of air trapped beneath the ice that's formed over the weekend's
puddles.
Used to love doing that.
Should probably get out there and put some salt down.
It looks treacherous.
I've discovered there's a new bar of chocolate in the cupboard.
Daph called from work to say they aren't keeping it warm enough.
Her hands are always cold.
Said Kaya's staying home for a week, that she'll stop by her place on the way home to drop off some work
for her.
Sure.
Now Kaya too will know the joys of working from home.
Three automated calls today: two concerning credit or credit cards, one from the Conservative Party.
Why, why, why?
I want a drink!
This is harder than I thought.
Ten weeks to go.
Put a record on the turntable today for the first time in ages.
My thoughts undiverted.

Final three chapters, plus Bibliography and Table of Contents.
- page 377. Chapter and verse incorrect for story of Good Samaritan. I checked this one.
- page 383. Apparently there is now bilharzia in Lake Malawi. I googled this.
- page 384. Quote in footnote 3 suggests that with atheism we're not answerable for our actions. Is the
quote incomplete? Is word "ultimately" missing somewhere?
- page 404. The period should come before the bracket.

Photo images by Monica Radulescu (Canada)
http://the-inner-eye-photography.com/
I closed my eyes in the gloomy passage, which pursued a course impossible to follow by any other means than instinct – not mine but the water’s, which had observed its own imperatives in cutting wide a trench through the forest floor. Here and there an ibis or flamingo stood on the muddy margins, waiting on one leg. The swan boat appeared to know the way. Whether it was endowed with intelligence or some primitive organization of desire and appeasement, I could not guess. The seat was tapestried in a depiction of a childhood scene I almost remembered. But to stare overlong at it was to fall into a contemplation never to be escaped. This, I knew as one does in dreams with the certainty of unreason. Not that I knew myself to be laboring inside a dream. Though I leaned at times toward this supposition, I had not the slightest evidence to confirm or deny it. I closed my eyes as the swan boat flew onward and recalled Werner’s flight of speculation in a coffee house on the Ringstrasse. We had gone there after the premiere of Spinelli’s Waltz of the Viennese Bears, whose adagio had caused in us a melancholy almost past enduring. Wiping a wayward drift of cream from his upper lip, Werner had declared with puzzling vehemence that a dilemma was, in fact, an ethical construct that offered no obstacle to the actualization of desire. “A decision taken is not limiting,” he maintained, “because the alternative, which we consciously reject, is embraced by our animal nature. At this moment, I am eating a Napoleon as well as the Sacher torte I wished equally but abjured for appearance’s sake. At this moment, I am also lying in bed with Helene, whose company by any other philosophy I should have had to forgo in order to keep yours tonight. There is no such thing as the road not taken.” He lit a cigarette and went on: “We glimpse those lives lived otherwise and elsewhere, in our dreams; later, I’ll see myself and Helene clasped while I am asleep to this world and awake in another.” If it was as Werner said, might I, in fact, be on the steamboat crossing the Tyrrenhenian to Benghazi instead of on a swan boat – or, rather, on them both at once?

In Rome I watched the Tiber transform into that portion of the Nile above the first reach, where the river began its ascent to Africa. The Minos was underway, her twin screws beating water into foaming wake. On her upper deck, a bear wearing a faded jersey was setting out a pair of folding chairs for two passengers, whom I knew as well as I knew myself. Unlike them I had stayed in Rome to paint, resisting Beatrice’s charms and my father’s command. I would paint the Nile a blue such as might not exist in reality and the boat the color of those that ply the waters of dreams. I would paint the bear in its sailor’s clothes, careless of questions of identity. Mine was an alchemical art, activated by desire and by desire transforming a world constituted of sensations. The world changed as readily as did a river when a wind, driving a cloud across the face of the sun, blew out its candles. It took but another wind for the river to catch fire again. All was teetering on a blade of impulse and caprice. Those men resting on deck chairs – their stories had converged – converged, also, with that of a painter who saw them as though a transparent fluid and not dull opacity separated one life from another. Or as if we were together on one of August Ferdinand Möbius’s curious bands, which has but a single surface for all its appearance of complexity. I would paint the world so, for that is the truth of it. It is like the Nile itself, which flows apparently upward in defiance of logic and gravity. Overcome by a gust of emotion, I wondered at how prescient Werner had been, how extraordinary his philosophy, to have imagined – in a café on the Ringstrasse – a scarcely imaginable instrument to play the fugue of life! Opening the window, I called to my two selves across the river – the Tiber and the Nile: they are the same river – one flows into another, endlessly, on Möbius’s band. The two men – Alessandros both – raised their heads to listen. My voice came faintly to their ears, but nonetheless it came. They looked over The Minos’s rail and saw – if only for an instant – the towers of Rome. How immense is life and how, at the same time, so very small! I lay down on my bed and went with them up the river so that I – Alessandro! – might paint a transfiguration, a raising of the dead, an apotheosis not dreamt since ancient times. I lit a cigar and, lying on my bed, watched its smoke trace arabesques against the ceiling while, outside, my window flashed a meaningless semaphore in the sun.

From: A Swan Boat on the Nile

Norman Lock

5.

26.

Norman Lock's Pieces for Small Orchestra is now available from Spuyten Duyvil, New York http://www.spuytenduyvil.net/fiction/index.htm
The Unauthorized Formation of the Third Line

Gustav Morin (Canada)

68
Notes: Werner Heisenberg's choice to consider the atom as a mathematical concept rather than a visual/physical one led him to develop an algebraic system (Matrix Mechanics) for predicting the probability of an electron's position or momentum. The sharper one variable becomes, the woollier its counterpart grows (the Uncertainty Principle). This view of reality as probabilistic rather than absolute appalled Albert Einstein, who said: "God does not play dice... He may be subtle, but he is not malicious."
Two Poems

Edward Nixon

At the edge of the dig

possibly
you suggest reasons
things without names
before you had evidence
cave-dried papyrus
they ate, we hunted
scratches on slate
poison in the mouth
metal scraps in sand
compile a theory
rewrite postulates
publish
(stone tools)
(iron-working too soon)
cut tablet rhetoric)
(blunt blade finger bone)
(blood brown equation)
(salt soured ground)
(grunts task argument)
(temple or factory)
(ordinary rate of decay)
(an absence of ritual)
(terracotta sundial)
(temporal mash)

This is not a piece of earth

“Code functions; it doesn't suggest.”
- Ellen Ullman

Hat in the sky. Pipe smoking. Click. lick. Click.
Halt. Here. Look, run, feed, see saw my pointillist heart.
Blend me from snippets of hype (I’m in your debt).
Surrealize my myth intake, allocate my sin-injury.
Steal past this glade of vipers where they lie or lurk.
Abstracts of philosophy bug the machine.
Invasion is planned, blog by stroke by secreted con:
place 30 inside + 2, like any one entering in wrapped
they come, they come in, through a broad gate
all the things you have sequestered, walls of fire fucked.
Come not for a ripped off Magritte or porny copyright violation
Just a-larking as the cloud opens, the spikey viral pricks interpenetrate
Code guts function as code refuses to frank a warning mark.
It’s all air and playing cascading interoperable style,
groundless plain simple-sited for the pixeled-eye U fabulate.
This is not is. Conditions do not permit us to protect.
U see a gram algorithmically retrained a zigzag in paraphrase,
this tuft of cumulus tugged thru copper loading in still liquid,
an imagistic turn from texture to postulate, a bowler hat,
 some blue grey wash 72 dpi, green apple, figure in black coat
the “Son of Man” via Hyper Text Transfer Protocol;
advice (late) Monsieur Baudrillard we simulate as retro-cool,
far from mechanism, bereft, U + I a-weary, replicate, repeat . . .
“Breasts are funny things. When mine grew, my feet disappeared.”
What becomes a foreign body most,
What does, beyond the obvious idyll spread?
Titian hair
coralline cheeks
crimson lips
  raspberry nipples
  florid thighs
  her harried gash blooms moist magenta
flushed legs
cabernet ankles
scarlet nails
Makes most becoming. Comes to it with a vengeance.
Parts abstract or no.
How exotic this madder matter that puts on the reveal
In broad strokes.
More Behmer than Ingres. More Klimt than Behmer.
More Jacobs than Klimt.
Ah, strange familiar! Who sings the electric bawdy
to landscape
  poised for any severed transliteration.
Whether Weltanschauung or réchauffé
Nothing shies within this frame that bleeds a canvas
Red, red, red.
As what may greet the red model too
Insinuates the very heart, hung as she is & mounted
All most metonymic, meaning: odd & in love at worst,
at best, is dropt square in the tits of it
  apprised for every vagrant eye to behold.
Background become foreground & vice versa.
As Paris. As Berlin (already burning) adds fuel to a fire
No simple splash of feet can douse.
As music, even, meant to calm the savage breast
Turns its back in a sulken rage.
Rages
As the stone grave robber meant to whistle
down, wanton, down
Blushes red outside the heat-fogged window.
As more time spent horizontal than vertical
  blows hot jazz through skin flute & hair comb
& makes inflammatory.
Remarks upon the age of a scent.
Cinnamon, say. Say, cardamom. Say, curry.
Comes on. Comes on like gangbusters.
Images the mirrors a blaze of rusty visions.
Naked bodies bruised red & stoked by the titular
Romantic
Notion:
dirty French postcards
drawn toward yet another
  German Dance of Death
As amid the frantic gnash of teats & grind of privates
(which, normal, represent a proper gallery viewing)
Lids close. They utter shut.
& feet?
Feet disparu in a kick of covers hot as hell
All bright & knocked soft-shoed off to Buffalo.
2 Poems

Scott Bentley

General

Calculate. The block finds which bit contains the blocks to find which integer contains the bit. The drive set calculates how many integer variables will be needed to hold the number of bits found in one fold. The number of integers can be found by dividing the number of bits by the size of the bits in an exact integer.

The correct integer is now accessed through the pointer grid data system. This integer is an O-mission, changing the existing value to a smart target.

Maintaining the correct amount of memory for one volume, according to the number of integer variables needed, rows and columns are also set. Everything is included.

The total is divided by the number of bits in one second. This is integer division so there are no fractions. Each bit in each integer will represent every location on the grid. If a remainder exists, the number of bits needed must be rounded up.

... Now that we have the correct change, the mask integer is a smart matter. To get the mask integer to take the field is to be set. When the bit is set equal to one, it is returned and shifted left by the number of bits in an integer, minus one, minus the number of exact bits maintained by the value. No matter what size integer is ended, the integers must have the proper size to get the correct bit pattern while not destroying the other bits over the grid space. Row times column.

(To negate the grid structure, one must discover a number of fractions. A blank code calculates how many accessed bits will be needed to define that system. Since we are using freed integers, it is accordingly necessary to find every number needed to hold a total grid. Know the number of bits required and divide the dimensions. Since integer division takes the remainder proper, the pattern amount must be rounded up of definition. Fold up over drive.)

Think of a two dimensional array. The structure is a record located on a field of columns and a pointer. The grid is a memory in space defined by free integer variables stored back to back. Thought can be accessed like an array.

... Containing locations to discover which bit needs to be cleared, a mask integer is created in the blank. The space is set equal to one. The one is shifted left
by the amount of bits in an integer, minus one, minus the shift to second.
This makes the shift fill with zones and makes the code represent

that there is no constant. The volume now contains all zones
with a one in the bit to be cleared. The correct integer is now

in constant access. This integer is ended when there is a vector into the pointer.
Grid data thus destroyed, the existing value of the target o-mission does not

include the other sizes. Once the bit is created, it is negated. God, playing.

... ... ...

If the new record still equals its old value, then nothing known has changed.
If the two numbers are equal, the old vector must maintain a zone on target.

The test returns YES if the bit was one, or NO if the bit was zero.

if ( new_int != old_int) {
    return No;
} 
return YES;

...after the numbers"

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<th>Day</th>
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<th>1 week</th>
<th>2 weeks</th>
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<td>-4.590</td>
<td>6.575</td>
<td>-1.450</td>
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</table>

| 08/04/1964 | Tue  | 0.034 | -0.563 | 1.208 | 1.866 | 8.561  |
| 08/02/1990 | Thu  | -1.918| 3.690  | -6.394| -8.736| -4.675 |

Average:  

-2.718 4.797 -4.051 -3.458 9.609

Algorithm: ReverseList(L)
inpult: a singly linked list L

current:= itr
first.setNext(null)
head.setNext(current)

this algorithm runs in O(n) time
the day after.
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<th>Day</th>
<th>1 yr</th>
<th>2 yrs</th>
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<td>92.170</td>
<td>127.541</td>
<td>273.090</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average: 13.600 21.457 24.694 47.738 115.184

abstract: assume L is a singly linked list with pointers to "head"
output: a singly linked list L(r) in reverse order

let a letter at a time
into the prison of music

and we sing, sing.

Let itr and first be members of class Node.

```
first:= head.getNext()            while current !=null do
current:= head.getNext()         current:=head.getNext()
current.setNext(itr)              current.setNext(gethead)
itr:= current
itr:= head
```

guntery survey
the horizon meridian
azimuth zenith

celestial catastrophe

sphere reckon
arc angle

nadir

Next( )
Two Poems

Aaron Tucker

Observations on the Typing of the Beautiful and the Sublime

I propel hyperlink from space to space linger long enough to be terrified and continue without ornament unaware of external things.

For Google, My Lover

continue a habit a visit
she calls a venture pain for cortex
and all visitors ache apprehension
when she stretches past ocean’s tiered edges

despite accidents of consent and
tall apparitions I have tornados
among my problems of cognition
and confuse a what with a she or a me

my questions are many and I ponder my habits
yet her library tends to be contrary to my nature

she sees angular parts quiet among virtue
her reach no oh so monstrous she is
tall contradictions without cease

Translated from; “Amor, amor” by Gracilaso de la Vega
STREETS OF THIS CITY HAVE NO NAMES

Richard Truhlar

So it was that, one summer day, during his break between first and second year at Clare College, as Clarence Regan wandered about the neighborhood in Cambridge, that he found a lovely park that abutted the Cam River embankment. The park was well manicured, the grass having been appropriately cut; but under a small tree, he spotted a lone flower growing from the lawn, somehow having survived the mowing by the Parks maintenance workers. He ambled over and sat before this flower, the type of which he could not place to this day. Seating himself a small distance from the flower, he cleared his mind of any thought whatsoever while focusing his perception upon the plant. Not an easy task for a twenty-one-year old, but he persisted in forcing any thought or voice from his mind, and within some time began to fully relax, even though he was concentrating with all his will upon it. His mind cleared. He felt an immense peacefulness and solidarity within himself. He was all eyes and empty mind. Before him was this strange creature or entity for which he had no name, because he would not allow the word flower to enter his mind, and he saw that it moved slowly, that it shifted itself according to the position of the sun – and that it was constructed of many particles of light that flickered and moved incessantly throughout its body. He sat there in this intense focus for perhaps a full hour as if in a trance of awe.

This was not a religious experience, as he was to find out later; and was not brought on by imbibing any drug whatsoever, since his days of experimenting with such were well behind him. So, at the time, he simply regarded it as an exercise to relieve his mind of the strain of study – science and mathematics being his intellectual pursuits at the College. Truth was, some strange occurrence had happened to him, unbeknownst to himself, which would alter the world around him, and not just for himself.

“But think of it, Joyce – what if this notion of the End of Times, this apocalyptic yearning that is central to all religions…what if it’s not in a time to come, but has already happened, is happening, and will continue to happen?”

Joyce Draper looked across the table at her friend, “Rubbish,” she said in a tone devoid of emotion, “Empirical reality exists whether you perceive it or not. The old koan-like If a tree falls in the forest… is a question that points more to our arrogance as subjective beings than to the existence, or non-existence, of an objective world.”

Draper rapped her knuckles on the wooden table-top, “That’s there, whether I’m here or not, and it’ll be here long after I’m dead if it doesn’t end up in some landfill. As for you…” and Draper paused to look into her friend’s eyes, “Look, Clarence, we’re all mortal. You’re not unique in this. Some of us comfort ourselves with fables, fictions, religions in order to assuage this painful awareness of…”

“This isn’t the same,” interrupted Regan, “I’m not delusional. I just know that, for instance, this table will cease to exist when I die.”

“Clarence, I’m a scientist, a paleontologist. I look at fossils all day – they’re the trace-forms of previous existences. They tell me that creatures walked this earth long before I came to consciousness. They’re evidence of a time continuum in evolutionary life…have you seen a psychiatrist?” Draper suddenly asked, breaking her line of thought.

Regan sighed. “I’m not delusional,” he repeated, “and you’ve known me most of my life. You know that I’m a scientist, as well.”

“Yes, but, from what I understand, you blokes are wrestling with proverbial angels in your Quantum theories…what, with alternative universes, the seen and the unseen, and all that. I’m not surprised by your thinking, Clarence. I’m more concerned that you’ll mistake your abstractions for empirical evidence… look, sorry, but I’ve got to go – duty calls. Perhaps we can pick this up tomorrow – same time, same place?”

As Regan watched his friend exit the coffee shop, a cold feeling of dread swept over him.

*Joyce Draper was a tall woman, but unimposing, graced with the aura of a gentle demeanour. She was never seen to be openly angry, perhaps only slightly irritable at times, and would look everyone in the eyes with curiosity.
rather than apprehension or prejudice. Her field, marine-life paleontology, had honed her perceptions and given her an almost obsessive attention to detail. Her extreme rationality, however, was not born of abstract thinking, but rather of a sensuality arising from intent observation of the surrounding world.

The next day, as she boarded the bus and found a seat, she was thinking of Regan who would meet in twenty minutes at The Cosmic Coffeehouse. His ideas, of course, were controversial, and she had often played devil’s advocate in order to spur him into expressing his most considered theories. She cared for him; one might even say she deeply loved him, but not in any romantic way – this man, who was considered one of the top Quantum theorists in the world, and was being compared to Darwin in the iconoclastic effect his thoughts were generating amongst his colleagues, was simply her best friend.

Odd, she reflected while gazing out the bus window. Perhaps it’s stress. It’s not like Clarence to doubt reality, no matter how weird reality can get. It’s almost ludicrous for such a scientific mind to consider all reality existing just for itself, I’m not going to cease to exist just because he does, and she then stopped her train of thought. Perhaps he really does need therapy.

Walking into The Cosmic Coffeehouse, she took a quick scan across the room, then asked the regular barista on duty, “Hey Joe, seen Clarence yet?”

“Not yet, Miss Draper,” said the young man, momentarily glancing up from foaming a latte.

She was about to walk towards their regular seating place, when she stopped suddenly.

“Joe, where’s our regular table?”

“Don’t know, Miss Draper; wasn’t here when I opened this morning.” Joe replied while continuing to work on a customer’s order. “Maybe the boss moved it last night; maybe he needed it for something.”

Somewhat perplexed at having to choose another seat, she ordered her coffee, and found a table by the large front plate-glass window from which she could watch for the arrival of Regan. For some reason, she felt agitated.

Sensing Draper’s mood, Joe called out, “If you’re gonna be here for a while, you can ask Mr. Waites, the boss, about the table. He’s comin’ in this afternoon to work on the books. Maybe he took the table to spread out his financials. I know you like that spot in the back.”

* 

An hour passed, and deep lines had begun to appear on Draper’s brow. She felt a bit confused and concerned. It isn’t like Clarence to simply not show up, she thought to herself, He’s meticulous about keeping appointments, and though she had forgotten her cell phone at work, she knew Clarence might suspect such and phone the coffee house if he were going to be delayed.

She was about to get up and leave, thinking she’d phone Clarence from work, when she heard a loud voice.

“Joe! Where in hell’s the table back here! Where’d you move it to?”

“Nowhere, Mr. Waites. I thought you took it,” came Joe’s reply.

Draper looked up to see an exasperated middle-aged man whose eyes were darting this way and that around the coffee shop.

“Tables just don’t walk away!” yelped Waites. “Were both doors locked last night, and did you notice if they were this morning?”

“Yes, Mr. Waites. Anyway, who’s gonna break in and just steal a table?”

Waites shook his head and disappeared into a back room.

Draper stood with her mouth agape, a variety of discordant thoughts cascading through her mind, yet one distinctly insisting itself – This does not compute! *

When Draper arrived at her office at The Paleontological Association, her first act was to phone Clarence’s home number. She stood beside her desk with a quizzical look as the voice in the receiver told her that the number she had dialed was not in service. Thinking she had misdialed, she rang again, but received the same prerecorded message. This is ridiculous, she thought as she keyed in his cell-phone number, only to be told that such a number did not exist.

For a minute Draper stood frozen, her mind full of conflicting thoughts, then phoned his lab number at the Institute for Advanced Physics. A voice answered. It was Brian Henley, Clarence’s colleague and research partner, that she had met a number of times at receptions.

“Brian, is Clarence there? It’s Joyce Draper.”

“Hello Joyce,” replied Henley, “No, he hasn’t come in yet. I thought he was meeting with you for coffee.”

“He was, but he didn’t show up. I’ve phoned both his home and cell, but…” Joyce was suddenly overcome with fear, “both numbers are not in service.”

“Odd,” was all Henley could reply, then “Maybe there’s a problem at the phone company?”

“I thought that at first, but his home and cell numbers are serviced by different providers,” said Draper, while feeling she had to calm herself, think rationally.

“Well, I’m sure he’ll show up, and when he comes in, I’ll get him to phone you right away. Are you at the office?”

“Yes, but I won’t be here,” she replied, “I’m going over to his apartment. There might be something wrong. Brian…” and Draper hesitated, “are you blokes working on something…well, you know…dangerous, maybe top secret stuff that could lead to…?”
“Nothing of the sort,” said Henley with some surprise in his voice, “just particle tracing – Sherlock Holmes on the trail of the muon – that sort of thing.”

“Okay then. It’s probably nothing, but I’ll take my cell phone. Call me if you hear from him.

“Joyce – do you want me to meet you there?” asked Henley, “It’s a slow day here and, anyway, without Clarence I can’t move forward with the work.”

“Sure. I’ll be at his apartment in an half-hour,” and Draper hung up.

* *

When Draper disembarked from the bus, she saw a large horde of people gathered down the block. There were police cars and fire trucks and ambulances. She began to run because that’s where Regan’s apartment building was located. She didn’t she any smoke, but… Suddenly someone grabbed her left arm.

“Joyce!” and she looked up to find Henley’s face, his very pale face, and his very large eyes, eyes full of questions, “It’s gone…”

Draper looked down the street at the crowd, then back at Henley, a shiver coursing up her spine.

“The apartment building, his building…it’s gone,” said Henley in a dazed manner, “It didn’t burn down, didn’t fall down, didn’t blow up, it’s…just gone.”

Draper, feeling slightly panicked, began moving toward the crowd, dragging Henley with her. The table, she suddenly thought, it’s gone too! And she remembered Regan’s words, “this table will cease to exist when I die.”

When she reached the crowd, her eyes sought out the building… but it wasn’t there. As if it had never been built, in its place a perfectly vertical rectangular empty space was visible, the borders of which were the perfectly smooth walls of the row-house-style attached apartment buildings on either side; the ground but a dirt lot with various and sparse weeds growing, some of which had blooming flowers signaling their habitation there over time.

“Brain?” was all Draper could say, as she felt his grip on her left arm loosen and fade away, and turning her head to look at Henley at her side, found no one there.

“Brain!” she nearly screamed as her eyes took in a slight shimmer in the air where Henley had been, a slight shimmer in which she could barely discern a pair of astonished and pleading eyes that then blinked out of existence. Then she looked at her left arm, which he had gripped, an arm that seemed to be becoming more transparent by the moment.

* *

“Ma’am, can you hear me?”

She slowly came to consciousness, feeling herself lying prone on the ground, her eyes barely making out human forms about her.

“Here – take a sip of water,” and her head was raised gently. “You gotta nasty bump on the back of your head, but nothin’ serious,” she heard as she took a drink from what she assumed was a bottle.

Two persons were kneeling at her sides. She slowly sat up, her mind unusually empty and remembering nothing of the incident.

“What happened? Where am I?” she asked.

“Well, ya were knocked down, miss, trying to cross the road. But the carriage just grazed ya slightly, so no real damage. Stupid driver said you appeared out of nowhere. Some people need their eyes checked. Here, let me help ya up. Do ya feel ya can stand?”

“Yes, thank you,” she replied and got to her feet. She found herself standing on a cobbled road, the boardwalks on each side full of strangers gawking at her. She wiped down her billowy dress, feeling somewhat embarrassed by the situation.

“Can I assist you in anyway, ma’am?” asked the young man.

“Yes, please. I’m feeling a wee bit odd. I just need directions to my father’s shop. I’m on my way to my first day’s work, you see. He might be angry that I’m late. Do you know it – it’s Clarence’s Cosmic Confections. I’ve forgotten the actual shop number, but it has a large sign out front painted with spinning stars.”

“I know it well, miss. The chocolates are my favourites. If it pleases, I’ll accompany you,” he replied.

So taking his arm, Joyce proceeded to walk with the young man towards her father’s shop, looking forward to her first real work in the world.

“What’s your name,” Joyce asked, because for some reason she felt comfortable and at ease with this young man.

“Brian, ma’am, Brian Henley. Presently at Oxford, ma’am, where I’m studying these new theories of Mr. Darwin’s,” and Brian looked into the young girl’s eyes and smiled.

Richard Truhlar’s *Dynamite in the Lung* is available from MERCURY PRESS
This study on the History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe (H.L.C.E.C.E.) offers trans-cultural views of literary history including sections on poetry, figurations of family, female identity, the “other,” outlaws, trauma, and mediation, as well as an Epilogue covering East-Central European Literature after 1989 and following the collapse of the Soviet Union. East-Central Europe has long been a cultural hot-spot, and there is a history of brilliance that arises from this region. Herta Müller, recent Nobel laureate in literature (2009) arises from tragic circumstances within cultural milieu. Twelve other Nobel literary prize winners have emerged from East Central Europe. And, Elie Wiesel who comes from this same region won the Nobel Peace Prize. Many of these writers and their colleagues endured intense suffering through war and political upheaval. One can think of the writing of Czeslaw Milosz, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Günter Grass, Imre Kertész, or Elias Canetti. Such authors present a polyphony of voices emerging from cities such as Vilnius, Auschwitz, Warsaw, Gdansk, Sighet, Nitzkydorf, Ruse, and Krakow. This edition is the last in a four-volume project that started some fifteen years ago in Toronto under the stewardship of Mario Valdés and Linda Hutcheon with the aim of re-thinking European literary history. This four volume project has successfully met that challenge by generating an alternate and collaborative form of critical discourse on literary developments, while conceptualizing regional histories within a transnational context.

H.L.C.E.C.E. successfully responds to and embraces emergent theoretical and practical approaches to writing literary history by recognizing the multiple complexities of voice that arose in Twentieth Century literature. The dialogical and varied perspectives are recognized here, while skepticism concerning “master narratives” is addressed. As such, the heterogeneity of critical voices assembled here moves beyond conventional, linear literary histories thereby establishing this volume as a hallmark not only for studies in East Central European Literature, but as a model for global literary study. This collection considers a broad range of literary cultures and as such provides valuable insights on the production and consumption of literature as it arises from the hot-bed of strife known as East-Central Europe. By adopting multicultural and regional perspectives, this project provides thought clusters or “nodes” of focus that respond to elements such as key political events, literary periods and genres, cities and regions, literary institutions, and figures of literary form. In this way, movements in histories, genres, institutions and types of literature are covered in a manner that recognizes them as organic and evolving phenomena.

One of the remarkable aspects of this extensive study involves the fact that some sections are co-written by roughly a dozen internationally respected scholars. This is the case for the section on East-Central European Literature after 1989, which includes subsections on Literary and Cultural Reconstruction, Terminological Historical Reconsiderations, “Amended Texts”: Literary Responses and Transformations after 1989, Post-communist and Postcolonial Motifs in Baltic Literatures of the 1990s, Theatre and Drama at the Turning Point, as well as, Narratives of Exodus, Contact, and Return. This section on East-Central European Literature in the post-Soviet period includes commentaries by esteemed scholars such as Marcel Cornis-Pope with Boyko Pencev and Alexander Kiossev on Bulgarian literature, John Neubauer and Mihaly Szegedy-Maszák on Hungarian literature, Dagmar Roberts on Slovak Literature, Karl Jirgens on Latvian Literature, Arturas Tereskinas on Lithuanian Literature, Tamara Trojanowska on Polish Theater, Domincia Rădelescu on Romanian Theater, Zoltán Impré on Hungarian Theatre, as well as Andaluna Borcilă and Marta Bladek on Narratives of Post-1989 returns. The combination of these manifold perspectives in a single section provides a useful and significant scope that is helpful to both experts and newcomers by providing a succinct and informative overview on cultural developments. This particular section of the project covers the final “nodal” points which include the collapse of the Iron Curtain, freedom from censorship, open contact with larger European and world audiences, freedom to travel, collapse of state subsidies, introduction of Capitalist commercialism, and the subsequent crises experienced by theaters, publishers, journals, and educational institutions while the region was re-stabilizing. Accompanying the political vacuum left by the former Soviet Union, came a re-surfacing of nationalistic, chauvinistic, and xenophobic attitudes. Many noted authors departed from the regions in question, including Norman Manea, Andrei Codrescu, Milan Kundera, and Josef Skvorecky. The period of strife was followed by a new sense of inter-culturalism which served to reshape attitudes and mores.

East-Central Europe has fallen victim to war, terror, and genocide, with millions seeking refuge from Nazi-ism or Communism, often finding misery, prison, exile, or death. Yet, the region has also produced stunning literary and cultural achievements. The editors of this volume, Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer have meticulously organized the collective comments and interactions of a broad cadre of international scholars thereby offering lucid and candid perspectives on key literary phenomena. Due to the consortium of international scholars contributing to these four volumes, we now have detailed insights into the extraordinary deprivations and remarkable achievements of this region.

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