



Yapp is a magazine created by the 2012-2013 Book and Digital Media Studies master's students at Leiden University.

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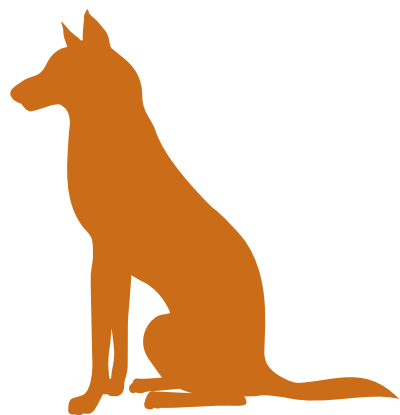
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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Our Yapp project began in the early months of our master's programme, Book and Digital Media Studies (BDMS), at Leiden University. With an unexpectedly large and incredibly diverse group we started our classes, hearing unfamiliar terms that would soon become very familiar indeed: the digital medium, the Order of the Book, mancula, the Text Encoding Initiative. At that point, I think it's safe to say that most of us were still dreaming of a career in the publishing industry... even with the understanding that it was changing with each passing day.

Last year, a group of students wanted to add practical experience to the theory and the philosophy of our classes. To this end, they decided to publish their own magazine. What started out as a small-scale exercise ended in a beautifully designed, well-curated publication they called "RE\_". The launch of RE\_, timed to be held as their academic year ended and ours began, was a great success. It brought together students, faculty, and various industry professionals to meet and discuss the changing climate of book studies.

This year, we are picking up the project where they left off. With a dedicated core team, a sizable group of supportive and enthusiastic classmates, and many wonderful contributors, we set out to publish a reader that would reflect our experiences during BDMS and the wider world of book studies from a variety of perspectives. Taking the concept of transition as our theme, we have

contributed some new design ideas, a new name, and increased the length and the breadth of the publication's scope.

If there is one thing that we have learned over the past year, it's that the field of publishing is not the only moving target in the book industry. Digital media and mediums have changed—and will continue to change—all aspects of the production, marketing and consumption of books. Perhaps most radically, they are changing our perception of the book. With the world of the book in a state of such great transition, and with the future still so uncertain, we could not think of a more appropriate theme to address in the pages of Yapp.

With this theme in mind, we have included articles and reviews, interviews and editorials, art and poems that address aspects of the past, present, and future of book studies. Our goal was to make Yapp a reflection of the diversity of our programme, and therefore ourselves; in that I believe we have succeeded.

I hope you enjoy reading Yapp as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

**Noora Lamers**  
**Editor-in-Chief**

## Acknowledgements

Were it not for a great number of people working behind the scenes, Yapp would never have been realized. We would like to take a moment to thank some of you here.

It goes without saying that Yapp is the collective effort of our entire class, but we would especially like to thank those fellow students who contributed to Yapp with their writing, their corrections/editing, their time, their energy, and their enthusiastic support: Sophie Boisvert-Hearn, Eric Brotchie, Ruben Burbach, Lorne Darnell, Giulia Furegato, Giulia Moriconi, Anna Ntrouka, Adela Rauchova, Patricia Riley, Oliver Schwab, and Mathijs Timmermans.

A very special thank you is extended to Universiteit Leiden and the faculty of the Book and Digital Media Studies programme, and in particular to Prof. Paul G. Hoftijzer, Fleur Praal, and Prof. Adriaan H. van der Weel. You were instrumental in orchestrating this publication and Yapp has benefitted immeasurably from your suggestions and your experience.

The theme of Yapp this year is “Transition”, and much of the material addresses the subject of print versus digital text. Without the generous support of Herman Pabbruwe and Brill, the esteemed academic publishing house, Yapp would most likely have been published exclusively digitally. This would have been a regrettable loss, and the print edition of Yapp is entirely thanks to Mr. Pabbruwe and Brill. We would also like to thank Alexander Dek for his help with production,



Anja van Hoek for her marketing savvy, and Pim Rietbroek for his editorial assistance. We sincerely hope that the invaluable relationship between Brill and the academic community at Leiden continues for many years to come.

To all the professional artists who graciously allowed us to freely publish images of their work, thank you. Visual representation of the many ways that books can be ‘transitioned’ into new conceptual forms has made Yapp a much more aesthetically thought-provoking publication.

We would also like to thank Silvia Zwaaneveldt of De Baaierd Printing for teaching us the proper way to use a printing press, and for contributing material for the Lissitzky insert; Kate Cunningham for her various creative gifts; everyone who donated time, energy and items for the book sale; and finally, Marcus Graf for his technical and design support. And his muscles.

Iedereen bedankt voor alle hulp en ondersteuning,

The Yapp team

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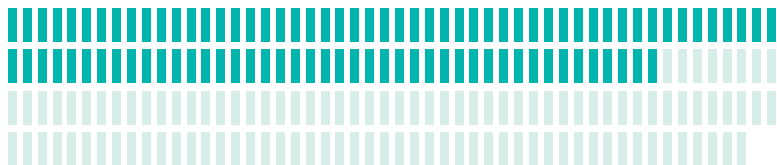
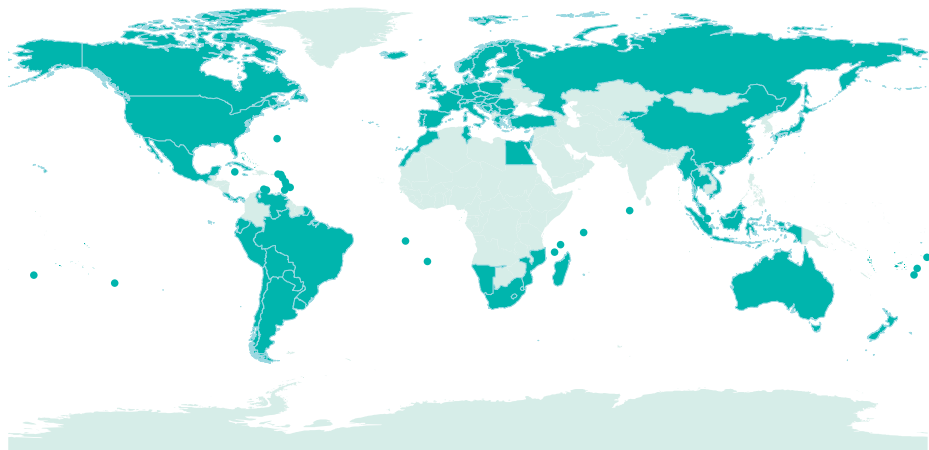
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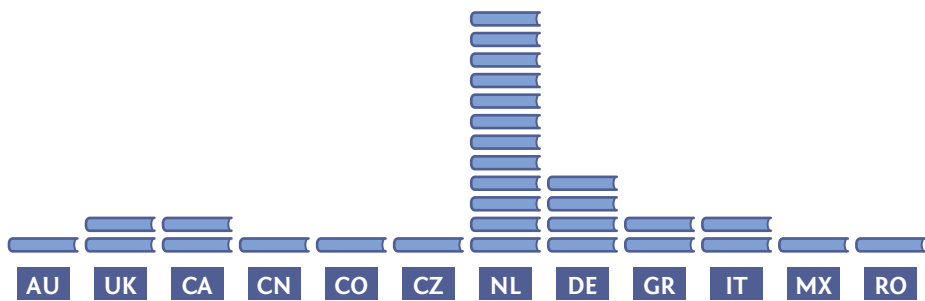


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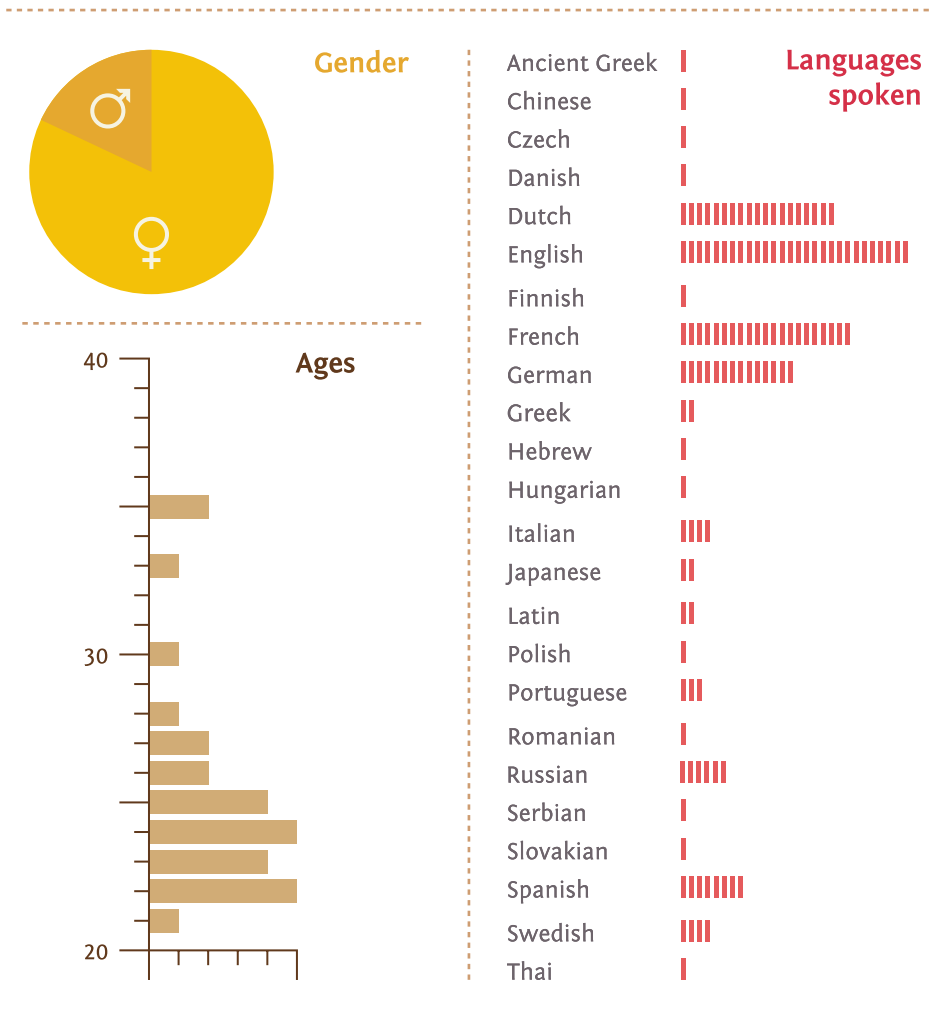
Nationalities



## “Mag ik mij even voorstellen?”

marcus graf, andrea reyes elizondo

With thirty-three students collectively representing twelve nationalities and speaking twenty-four languages, the 2012-2013 BDMS class is very diverse. One thing we do have in common? A passion for books!





Pagina reperta non est. Original: MS Royal 10 D IV f. 1. Illustration: Andrea Reyes Elizondo.

## Pandora's box of text technology

dr. adriaan van der weel

*Note: This article first appeared in "Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis" 2013  
(Reprinted with permission of the editors).*

Gathering the dust of ages in libraries and archives around the world, the material record of centuries of book history patiently and quietly awaits the curious seeker. Meanwhile in the world of the contemporary book things have been a great deal less serene.

Digital publishing and e-books have arrived, attended by new business, publishing and value-chain models. E-books are read on devices that are "on the grid 24/7", creating endless possibilities for dynamic functionality, such as social reading, sharing annotations and experiences. E-books can be enhanced by links to dictionary or encyclopedic entries, or video or audio fragments.

As these innovations are transforming the nature of the book, we often hear that it is ultimately the content that matters; not the 'mere' form in which we consume that content. To book historians this seems a rather ingenuous belief. As we know, an entire arsenal of paratextual elements lies always in readiness to be employed in the production of a text. They are deliberately selected by editors, printers, and publishers to lend the text's final appearance a particular connotation. Digital production adds to this existing arsenal an array of additional possibilities, further widening the range of reader experiences, and the range of meaning the text may take on. Indeed, the choice between paper and digital production and dissemination is itself a meaningful one.

So in a digitizing world, the concept of the book is proving more transient than it ever was on paper. But the consequences of the digital transformation do not end there. Libraries are being overtaken by an acute identity crisis as Web-based alternative ways of finding relevant information, such as LibraryThing and Goodreads, Google Books and Elsevier's Science Direct, Amazon and the iBookstore, are vying for patrons' time and attention. Publishing is becoming a free-for-all, with tech companies, libraries, museums, archives, governments and private individuals all thronging to claim their part of the cake. Bookshops are disappearing, as shopping is swept up in the unprecedented wave of mediatization that is washing over our daily lives.

In this perfect storm of Internet and WWW the position of the long-form

book, paper or digital, is proving less stable than it was once thought to be. The new digital substrates for the creation, preservation, and dissemination of text are engendering new and very different reading practices. Yes, more people are reading more than ever in history, but brief, disconnected fragments rather than long discursive texts. And if long discursive texts are read digitally, the technology invites them to be read fragmentarily, interrupted by the siren calls of status updates and WhatsApp messages, if not by the ‘passages from the book that mention the idea, person, or topic you’re interested in’ helpfully highlighted for you in advance by Amazon Kindle’s X-Ray function. It is certainly true that a tablet can be used for immersive reading no less than a printed book; it is just a great deal less likely that it will be. Distraction is built into the device—and may well be built increasingly into the very text.

In these circumstances I wonder if it isn’t perhaps naive to maintain that the form in which we consume our reading does not matter. Isn’t that notion just as misguided as the notion that ‘technology is just a set of tools’, that it isn’t the technology that makes the difference, but the use we make of it? Under the suggestive title ‘Are We Becoming Cyborgs?’ the *New York Times* not long ago published a striking example of this mantra being repeated several times in a single discussion by three prominent thinkers about new technology: Susan Greenfield, Evgeny Morozov, and Maria Popova. Greenfield fears that ‘we are heading toward a short attention span and a premium on sensationalism rather than on abstract thought and deeper reflection’, but says that ‘what concerns me is not the technology in itself, but the degree to which it has become a lifestyle in and of itself rather than a means to improving your life’. Popova: ‘My concern is really not ... the degree to which technology is being used, but the way in which we use it.’ Morozov: ‘[W]e have to be very careful not to criticize the whole idea of technological mediation. We only have to set limits on how far this mediation should go, and how exactly it should proceed.’

To ‘critize the whole idea of technological mediation’ would be pointless, and very silly. But that does not mean we should not critically examine how it may affect us and why it may affect us the way it does. The history of the book—of authorship, printing, publishing and reading—has always been intimately bound up with intellectual history. Especially since the French ‘*Annales*’ school of history, it has been one of the central pursuits of book history to map how the history of culture and ideas, the history of scientific discoveries and inventions, and our social history, have all been intimately connected with the history of print culture. However, book historians have also been divided about the extent of a causal connection between the history of print technology and intellectual history. Most have been just as wary of attributing any form of agency to technology as Greenfield, Morozov, and Popova.

This attitude is understandable enough. It makes sense to assume that



by virtue of being the inventors of the technology we must be in control of it, deciding if and how we use it. Yet I think the assumption may be based on wishful thinking. This is certainly what the countless myths and stories about technology running out of hand that can be found in all cultures at all times are warning us for. In the myth of Pandora and her box; Prometheus and the fire of the gods; the sorcerer's apprentice; the golem of Prague; Frankenstein, and so on technology seduces the protagonist with the promise of somehow enhancing a particular human capability only to then turn against him. In most cases this atavistic fear takes the shape very literally of an inanimate object becoming animated.

A particularly fascinating example that clearly belongs in this category of warning tales is Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus*, where Plato has Socrates discuss writing in very much the same terms as Pandora's box. Writing too, Socrates believes, is capable of taking on a life of its own, out of control of its author. Not only is the technology beguiling because it takes over or makes easier a task that would cost us more time or energy or other resources (in the case of script, for example memorizing factual knowledge or fictional narratives). It also has inherent properties, or affordances, that suggest how it is likely to be used. In the case of writing probably the most obvious one is carrying a record to another place or time, obviating the need to memorize it. In having *Thamus* call attention to the medium's unintended consequence of a collective loss of memory Plato proved himself a very early and very perceptive 'media critic'. Plato forefelt that writing, which could fall into the hands of any number of unspecified anonymous, and not necessarily well-informed, readers, would change the nature of human communication forever. Plato deplored this, but ultimately the issue is not whether we regard this change as "good" or "bad" but simply that we acknowledge that it happened.

The technology of digital textuality (and digital media at large) holds out even more beguiling promises of convenience than did writing. As in the case of writing social acceptance is so widespread that it is hardly possible for individuals to evade its use.<sup>1</sup> And like writing it comes with all sorts of inherent properties that stand to make their mark on human communication.

I would therefore like to propose two things. Firstly, as I have suggested before, we should extend bibliography, and book studies, to include all written texts, even if they are not in the form of print. We can and should use the methods of bibliography and book studies to study the book in its ever evolving digital guises. As Alan Galey has recently again reminded us, 'bibliography's unity lies in method and mindset, not in materials'. This is also useful as a form of 'applied history'. Each material substrate, from clay, inscriptions, and scrolls, to the digital text forms, has its own affordances. Contrasting the inherent characteristics and affordances of digital text forms with those of, for example, the print medium will elucidate the nature and extent of the current developments. Conversely,

observations and insights about the radically different nature of digital textuality will also present a vantage point for a better understanding of the print paradigm and the Order of the Book<sup>2</sup> and help us break through the persistent myth of textual transparency. Regarded sub specie mutationis the material evidence of the history of the book that continues to lie undisturbed and apparently unchanged in libraries and archives will take on new and surprising meaning.

Secondly, I suggest that as book historians we allow ourselves to entertain – if only as a hypothesis – the idea that after a certain point in its evolution technology shapes society more than society shapes technology. Already there is clear evidence that the digital media are having an effect on our reading habits. The suggestion is strong that this may have cognitive effects, and whatever we may think about them, these are certainly unplanned. As we have seen in the case of writing and printing, changing our dominant textual medium also changes our mindset, but not by design.

The point of this is not to suggest that digital text technologies (or digital technologies at large) are bad for us. This is precisely one criticism often levelled at Plato's assessment of writing: that his attitude is that of a culture pessimist. We all hate to be thought Luddites. As we just saw in the case of the *New York Times* article, modern commentators fall over backwards denying that they are cultural pessimists. Instead, they maintain, it is merely a matter of setting limits to its use. However, the eagerness not to be cast in the feared role of the technophobe threatens to make us miss the point. Suggesting that technology has a certain sway over us is not tantamount to believing that we will all become dumber;<sup>3</sup> merely that the dominant mediums, including the dominant textual medium, will affect the way we think more deeply than we realize or apparently wish to know—without anyone planning for this to happen. What all the technology-run-out-of-control myths are about is that where we fail spectacularly is precisely in setting limits: in controlling the technology. Instead of attacking, denying or glorifying the potential effects of the technology, we would do better to acknowledge the limitations of our control, and study the mechanisms involved.

The point is also not to be unduly technologically determinist. Of course it's humans who adopt, or don't adopt, technologies. The discovery of a technology's usefulness and uses is a social process. However, it is one that is to a large extent confined by that technology's inherent properties. The properties inherent in technologies will suggest to what use they are put. Only if we face the possibility that technology may in that sense have a mind of its own can we hope to influence its further development.

How are texts used to transmit culture and knowledge? How does a particular technological substrate, such as the printed book, affect the content and its dissemination? What types of texts (and knowledge) does it stimulate? These are all important questions in book history. Much more challenging is the question

how this might affect the way we think: our very mentality. How to establish the causal link between the technological properties of a given dominant medium or substrate and such farreaching social effects is what I believe the major challenge of book studies should be in the digitizing decades to come. Asking such questions would certainly make book studies even more relevant than it already is.

#### Notes

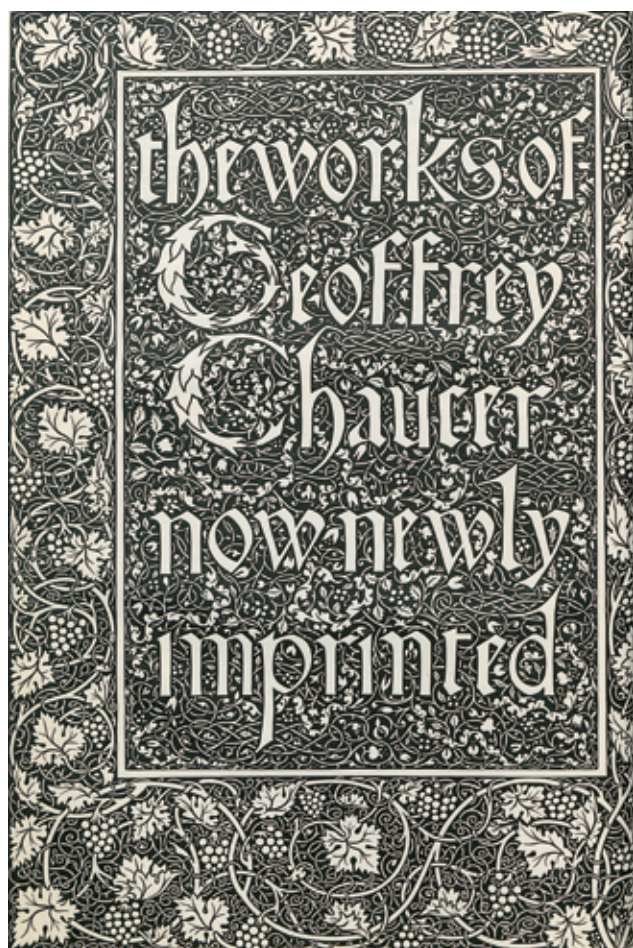
- 1 Recently Jennifer A. Chandler has given a very persuasive account of the mechanism of such 'social enforcement' in "Obligatory Technologies": Explaining Why People Feel Compelled To Use Certain Technologies', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 32.4 (2012): 255-64.
- 2 I explain the term in *Changing Our Textual Minds: Towards a Digital Order of Knowledge*, Manchester UP, 2011, pp. 67-103.
- 3 As do, for example, M. Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation. How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*, New York 2008, and N.G. Carr, *The Shallows. What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, New York 2010.

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*The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Kelmscott Press, 1876.  
Image: University of Maryland.

Disciplinary measures:  
Münster visit, December 2012  
eric brotchie

Although we students of the Leiden BDMS programme may often feel as if our tight-knit group is a small and possibly peculiar community removed from the mainstays of a standard University prospectus, it must be remembered that Book and Digital Media Studies does not exist within a vacuum. As in any discipline, cross-institutional exchange, excursions and other events are of great importance to the development of a more defined sense of academic experience. Understanding where another group of scholars comes from, what their aims and methods are, their interests, their passions, and even their personalities forms a critical part of the backbone of the academy. Debate and dialogue within one's own academic field may all be well and good, but if one becomes isolated in that field, and cannot establish common ground among peers far and wide, the academy can be a lonely place. It is safe to say that man cannot live among his thoughts alone, and that human experiences and the relations that govern them are at least of equal value to the academic project.

It was in this spirit that a small and curious group of students from the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, headed by Professor Gabriele Müller-Oberhäuser, visited Leiden in December 2012. Representing a different approach to the book as a historical object, the Münster group are, in fact, book scientists of the more traditional variety. Where the Book and Digital Media Studies programme focuses on an all-encompassing history of the varied platforms for the textual medium, book science is a more nuanced, highly specialized field of study that addresses the book—or Latin codex—alone as a manifestation of the zeitgeist. The interplay of ideas that resulted from the discussions with the Münster group showed to us that a common love of books, not only as technologies but also as sources of cultural capital, social cohesion and even resistance, was more than enough to bridge the gap between disciplines. We enjoyed their musings immensely.

Presenting at a seminar focusing on the value of the book as cultural capital, the Münster group thesis centred around a particular definition of cultural capital in its objectified state, lengthily described by its author, Pierre Bourdieu, as follows:

Cultural capital in its objectified state presents itself with all

the appearances of an autonomous, coherent universe which, although the product of historical action, has its own laws, transcending individual wills, and which, as the example of language well illustrates, therefore remains irreducible to that which each agent, or even the aggregate of the agents, can appropriate (i.e., to the cultural capital embodied in each agent or even in the aggregate of the agents).

Taking Bourdieu's Marxist conceptualization of cultural capital to mean that which represents the dominant cultural impulse in any given society, the group attempted to show that the book, historically a subjective form of cultural capital, was a victim of the industrialization of book production in nineteenth-century England. By applying the theory, the subjective wills of the agents of that society, the majority of people who lived at the time, were necessarily disregarded. This static view of the medium of the book alone highlighted many differences between the two programme's disciplinary perspectives. Book science, it appears, may have more deference for historical materialism, or indeed other philosophical, modernist grand narratives than the collective output of Book and Digital Media Studies students.

Nevertheless, the Münster thesis was not without its merits, and was at its best when it shifted away from Bourdieu's linear approach, focusing finally on one example of the book as a site of cultural resistance to the mass production inherent in the industrial revolution. This was the example of William Morris, a key proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement in contemporary England, and his work delicately producing handmade copies of *The Canterbury Tales* in cultural response to the decline of "personalized" book ownership as paperbacks took hold. This exception that proved the rule, as the thesis suggested, held great impact, showing that cultural capital as Bourdieu conceives it in its embodied state, or the state by which it is built within individuals, can often intersect with its wider objectified state. This was a particularly nice tie-off, and a somewhat welcome segue for the introduction of the Book and Digital Media Studies response, which, in focusing on the contrary disembodiment of form and content in e-book technology, leans far more towards, if any of Bourdieu's divisions, an embodied state of cultural capital.

The Book and Digital Media Studies response, perhaps in its essence, reflected the student group's cultural as well as academic backgrounds. More individualist in their approach, Book and Digital Media students were seemingly able to go beyond the murky historical fixity of the Book Science thesis, and allow for a greater level of subjectivity when it came to the Bourdieuan paradigm. Effecting the somewhat deconstructionist thesis of Van der Weel that text can no longer be assumed to be "fixed", "owned" or indeed reflective of any form of

cultural resistance, many of the assumptions of Bourdieu were naturally hard to consolidate. Instead of focusing on “capital”, as the Marxist thesis demanded, representatives of Book and Digital Media Studies spoke more of “value”. Value in books was defined not as a cultural representation of trends in history, but in terms of production and meaning for the individual. Creativity, adaptability, superficiality, social status and usability “per-agent”, as it were, were highlighted. As Professor Müller-Oberhäuser rightly reviewed, the response was dedicated more towards the idea of social capital or the means by which, as increasingly individual agents, modern readers are able to project elements of class or economic distinction through interaction with their technologies and their built-in networks.

And this is where the crux of the difference lay. The key and lasting distinction, borne out so strongly in the arguments of many participants in the subsequent discussion, was between the means by which text “mattered” to people in history and how it matters to people today. An evidently postmodernist edge is visible among scholars of Book and Digital Media, whereas book scientists necessarily emphasize historiography, historical application, and largely modernist perspectives on book scholarship. A certain impasse too, was evident; the philosophical nature by which each of these perspectives had deep and complex roots could not possibly have been explained, or even vaguely acknowledged, in the tragically short space of time the visit allowed for. However, as an academic exercise, the seminar was doubtless of great worth to both parties, fundamentally progressing a collective scholarship of books that may have been hard to acquire in our various disciplines alone.

A warm thanks to those who visited from Münster, and to all who participated in the seminar and its associated activities. At the risk of repetition, such activities embody the true and honest nature of the academy as a site for the elimination of boundaries to knowledge, and the progression of scholarship otherwise prone to the annals of the ivory towers of ages past. We look forward to further discussions forthwith.

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Close-up view of Prof. Hoftijzer's bookshelf. Photo: Noora Lamers.



## The professor's bookshelf

marleen van os

Prof. Dr. P.G. (Paul) Hoftijzer's biography on the Universiteit Leiden website tells us that he is both Senior Lecturer and Extraordinary Professor; we can't help but agree whole-heartedly with the latter. As one of our principal teachers in the Book and Digital Media Studies programme, Professor Hoftijzer's book history expertise has both impressed and inspired. After a few months of lectures, we began to wonder what motivates our esteemed Professor. Why did he choose to devote his professional, academic life to book history?

Graciously, he accepted Yapp's request to interview him in his modest Leiden home, a professor's picture perfect house: dark wooden furniture, a beautiful writing desk, two curious cats, plenty of plush armchairs—one can only assume they are of the kind ideal for reading in, while the candle burns at both ends—and, of course, books. Shelves upon shelves of books, old and new, hundreds, perhaps thousands, of books. After we were comfortably settled with steaming cups of tea, we asked Professor Hoftijzer to tell us the stories of two books that have been of particular influence or significance in his life (*Nieuwe Spiegel der Jeugd, of Franse Tiranny* and *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, see photograph on page 22). Then, after asking him a few simple questions to get him started, we sat back and listened.

**Marleen van Os:** You have chosen two very different books; could you tell us about them?

**Dr. Paul Hoftijzer:** The first time I came in contact with the little book entitled *Nieuwe Spiegel der Jeugd, of Franse Tiranny* (*New Mirror of Youth, or French Tyranny*) was through a neighbour in The Hague. She was an elderly lady who had been the first female student of history at Leiden. From her historical library she gave me a few old books, including this one. That was in 1973, my first year of university. It looks rather worn, but it really triggered my interest. It's a description of the atrocities committed by the French in the "disaster year" of 1672 and written for the common people; it is printed in a very simple way on bad paper, with a very plain binding. It contains simple illustrations too, so you can see what horrible things the French did. For me, this was not just my first contact with old books, but also with this kind of book. I assume I knew about the existence of the Blaeu

atlas then, but I had never realized that there were also countless little books like this one, produced cheaply and available to everyone. It is not something I would read; I wonder how people didn't get a headache from reading the bad typography and the thick Gothic script. Nevertheless, it fascinated me, and in giving me this gift my neighbour really contributed to my decision to study history in Leiden.

At the end of my studies I had to take a literature exam for history on a topic of my choosing. In consultation with one of my professors I chose *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* by Elizabeth Eisenstein, which had just come out in 1979. With this book, my academic interest in book history was born. A whole new world opened up for me. It is a very controversial book. Eisenstein wants to show that the introduction of print led to huge changes in the Western world. Books and their contents could be preserved better, simply because there were more copies available. They could reach a much larger audience since they had a lower price and were printed in large numbers. Information and texts were standardized and continually improved. Scholars and writers reacted to each other; they corrected and improved each other so that knowledge became increasingly trustworthy. Something of a scientific revolution emerged; a religious reformation could take place because things were now recorded. Eisenstein describes all that in a rather verbose style, in a rather thick book. Fortunately, a paperback edition was later published, which provides a concise



*Nieuwe Spiegel der Jeugd*, of *Franse Tiranny* and *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*.  
Photo: Noora Lamers.

version containing the essence of her theories. I thought: this is fantastic. We are surrounded by books, everywhere around us, and we don't even realise what all these books actually mean to our daily lives, what they mean to our society, to civilization.

**MO:** Is this the field in which you did your own graduate research?

**PH:** I wrote my master's thesis about Leiden, which has always been my main subject of research. It was about the printers and booksellers at the end of the eighteenth century who partook in the revolution at the time. Because of their religious background, it was impossible for them to participate in society. They could be merchants or craftsmen, but they could never be on a government board or committee. They had no rights because they didn't belong to the Calvinist church. This research follows what Eisenstein described. It shows that the book reflects and influences society, and society in turn influences the book. All the books around us are in fact a mirror of society. They contain everything that is written about society. Eisenstein's book was the start of this realization. If my teacher hadn't pointed it out to me, I would probably not have discovered it until much later and my career and academic studies would have taken a completely different turn. Your future can depend on one book.

Eisenstein connected practically everything in her book, which was also the basis of the criticism she received. People have rightfully remarked that it was not just the printers who were the origin of all the changes. The Renaissance had already started in Italy in the thirteenth century and therefore precedes the printing press by a long shot. It has also brought important changes in science. You could say that print was a necessary instrument to consolidate the changes, but it was not the cause. The interesting thing was that this author addressed something that wasn't even considered before. The book empowered ordinary people who then suddenly started to play an important role in social processes. In the past, history was about Napoleon, Alexander the Great, William of Orange, the great heroes, the makers of history. This book is an example of a whole new approach to history, because history is also made by the common people, by us all.

**MO:** Have you bought many books just because of their particular beauty or rarity?

**PH:** I am not a collector; I wouldn't know where to begin. I like the fact that I can use the Bibliotheca Thysiana as my collection for a while; that is enough for me. I don't collect old books other than this kind of old, creased booklets that I just think are a bit sad. My library is a sort of hospital for them, where they can rest and go with me for a while, and then hopefully they will again go to someone

else. But I do have many books, some just for their beauty. I think books are very pleasant objects. You can touch them; they have a scent and colour that can either repel or attract. That is one of the objections I have against the e-book—it is an instrument, but not the book itself. A book is an object, a carrier of ideas, of information, of the best and perhaps also the worst humanity produces: *Mein Kampf* is also a book. But at the same time it is something that can touch you; that it, as an object, is always nearby, that you can connect a certain sentiment to it, love or hate or admiration. That applies to many of my books at home, and I think that that form can contribute to a better grasp of the content. The object belongs to the message it presents. I am very sensitive to that presentation, to whether a book is or isn't pleasant to read.

I can't say that I have a collection of particularly rare or beautiful books, but I do have a special interest in what is called marginal printing, or private press printers who don't print for money but work from a small back room. Those are interesting people; they spend their time printing texts they like, sometimes without permission of the author. They put a lot of effort into production, which leads to very nice results. This even happened during the Second World War, when people printed texts as an act of resistance. The Dutch publisher De Bezige Bij originated like this, they were a group of people who printed texts and then gave the profit to Jews in hiding or to the resistance movement. The book can, in such a way, be a potent weapon. Those are aspects of the book that interest me more than the rarity or extreme beauty per se.

On the other hand, a book is a democratic instrument, and so when you print a book in a limited edition of only fifteen copies it somewhat loses its attraction to me, since there are only fifteen people who will be able to read it. There is a miniature book collection which commissioned little books in very limited print runs, to then destroy all but one to make it the more exclusive. To me that is absurd; it doesn't add anything. A book needs to be read; that is the essence of it. It exists to convey knowledge, information and pleasure, and it should do that. Not remain in the hands of a few collectors.

**MO:** Did you read much when you were young?

**PH:** Yes, I did, more than my peers. I used to go to De Slegte at a young age to buy books from my pocket money. I remember I bought a very small unbound book from the sixteenth century for 2,50 guilders, of which I was very proud. In my student years I sometimes didn't eat because I had just bought a book with the last of my money. I don't regret any of it.

**MO:** Could you tell us a little more about how the booklet on *Franse Tiranny* attracted your interest?

**PH:** I don't know why my neighbour gave it to me. I've tried to read it, but it is almost illegible, with an ugly typeface and poor quality paper. I think the attraction to me is more in the phenomenon as such; these books are quite rare now, they have literally been read to pieces. The academic libraries usually never collected these books for the common people. This was not for someone on the Rapenburg canal, but for someone in the Haarlemmerstraat or the back alleys. I gradually became aware of the fact that there had been such a culture in the Netherlands. I wouldn't be surprised if the little book I showed you was printed in 5000 copies or more, not to mention later reprints, of which now only a small percentage is left, spread here and there. Many must still be in people's private homes, because they are not in the large libraries. This sort of book represents the reading activities of a large group of people of which we hardly know anything. That is something that still plays a role in my research. I am interested in academic book culture at Leiden, in the libraries of scholars such as Johannes Thysius, but also in what common people had in their houses and how those two worlds touch each other.

**MO:** What are you currently researching?

**PH:** Now I primarily research book history. For example, a particular printer or a genre of books, but it can also be a city. Here in Leiden the local book culture is influenced strongly by the university. At the end of the sixteenth century, before the university was founded, booksellers and publishers did exist although they were few. Times were made difficult for them through competition with other cities, like Antwerp. The emergence of the university changed this enormously; even the great Christopher Plantin came to Leiden to set an example of how things should be done. Because the university was successful, the book business was very successful too. Over the years I have collected a lot of information on printing and bookselling in Leiden, which is the basis of a book that I am writing on the subject. But I also like doing research on ordinary, forgotten people and their books; for example, in the notarial archives. You can't look into those people's thoughts, but you can see what they liked to read and explain why. That is great fun; as a historian you can bring those people back to life for a moment, give them a face, tell something about their lives. That I at least find fascinating. It has little—and at the same time everything—to do with the larger historical picture. They are only grains of sand on the beach, but without those grains there would be no beach.

*Original interview in Dutch follows.*



**PH:** Some fifteen years ago we asked a well-known Dutch stonecutter to make a gevelsteen [gable stone] for the facade of our house in Oegstgeest. The subject is taken from a famous episode in Dutch history: the escape of the famous Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius, in a book chest, from Loevestein castle where he was imprisoned in 1621. We choose this scene because my wife is from Delft, where Grotius was born, and because it symbolizes the freedom of thought offered by books and reading. The accompanying Latin word *liber* means both 'book' and 'free'.

Photo: Noora Lamers.

**MO:** U heeft twee erg verschillende boeken gekozen. Kunt u ons daar wat over vertellen?

**PH:** De eerste keer dat ik in aanraking kwam met het oude boek [*Nieuwe Spiegel der Jeugd, of Franse Tiranny*] was door mijn buurvrouw in Den Haag, een oudere vrouw die de eerste vrouwelijke geschiedenisstudent was geweest in Leiden. Ik heb een paar oude boeken van haar gekregen uit haar historische bibliotheek. De leukste is deze, een boekje van niks, *Nieuwe Spiegel der Jeugd, of Franse Tiranny*. Ik heb het gekregen in 1973, het jaar dat ik naar de universiteit ging. Het ziet er niet uit, maar het trok wel mijn aandacht. Het is een beschrijving van de gruwelijkheden die de Fransen in het "rampjaar" 1672 hebben aangericht, geschreven voor gewone mensen. Dat kun je ook zien aan de eenvoudige manier waarop het gedrukt is, op slecht papier met een eenvoudig bandje. Het bevat ook hele simpele illustraties, waarbij je steeds ziet wat de Fransen hebben uitgericht. Dit was voor mij niet alleen de eerste aanraking met het oude boek, maar ook met dit soort van boeken. Ik wist natuurlijk wel dat er een Blaeu atlas bestond, maar dat er ook ontelbare van dit soort boekjes waren, voor weinig geld geproduceerd en voor iedereen verkrijgbaar, dat had ik me nooit gerealiseerd. Dit is niet iets wat ik zou lezen, als je die slechte typografie ziet met die dikke gotische letter. Je vraagt je af hoe mensen hier geen hoofdpijn van kregen. Toch fascineerde het me, en mijn buurvrouw heeft er dus zeker toe bijgedragen dat ik in Leiden geschiedenis ben gaan studeren.

Aan het eind van mijn studie Geschiedenis moest ik een literatuurtentamen doen over een onderwerp naar eigen keus. Ik heb toen in overleg met mijn docent voor het boek *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* van Elizabeth Eisenstein gekozen. Die was net verschenen in 1979. Met dit boek is mijn wetenschappelijke belangstelling geboren. Hier ging echt een wereld voor mij open. Het is een erg omstreden boek. Eisenstein wil aantonen dat de introductie van de boekdrukkunst tot enorme veranderingen in de westerse wereld heeft geleid. Boeken en hun inhoud konden beter bewaard worden, omdat er nu veel meer exemplaren beschikbaar waren. Ze konden een veel groter publiek bereiken doordat ze lager in prijs waren en in grote oplage werden gedrukt. Informatie en teksten werden gestandaardiseerd en voortdurend verbeterd. Geleerden en schrijvers reageerden op elkaar zodat ze elkaar konden controleren en verbeteren en kennis zo steeds betrouwbaarder werd. Er ontstond iets van een wetenschappelijke revolutie, een reformatie kon plaatsvinden omdat dingen vastgelegd werden. Eisenstein schrijft dat in een tamelijk onleesbare stijl in een tamelijk dik boek. Er is gelukkig later ook een paperback uitgave van uitgekomen, waarin de essentie staat. Ik dacht: dit vind ik fantastisch. We zijn omgeven door boeken, overal om ons heen, en we realiseren ons niet goed genoeg wat die eigenlijk in ons dagelijks leven betekenen, wat ze voor de maatschappij, voor de beschaving betekenen.

**MO:** Is dit het gebied waarin u uw eigen afstudeeronderzoek heeft gedaan?

**PH:** Ik heb mijn scriptie geschreven over Leiden, dat is altijd mijn onderzoeksonderwerp gebleven. Het ging over drukkers en boekverkopers aan het eind van de achttiende eeuw die meededen aan de revolutie die toen plaatsvond. Doordat ze een godsdienstige achtergrond hadden, als doopsgezinde of katholiek, was het voor hen onmogelijk om maatschappelijk te participeren. Ze konden wel drukker zijn, maar konden nooit in een bestuur komen. Ze hadden geen rechten, want het waren mensen die niet tot de calvinistische kerk behoorden. Mijn onderzoek volgt dat wat Eisenstein beschrijft. Het boek reflecteert en beïnvloedt de maatschappij, en de maatschappij beïnvloedt weer het boek. Alles wat om ons heen aan boeken is, dat is in feite de samenleving en alles wat wij daarover hebben geschreven. Als mijn docent mij er niet op had gewezen, had ik dit boek misschien pas veel later ontdekt en hadden mijn loopbaan en mijn academische studie misschien een hele andere wending gekregen. Het kan van één boek afhangen.

Eisenstein brengt alles met alles in verband. Dat is ook wel de grote kritiek die erop is geweest. Er zijn mensen die terecht hebben opgemerkt dat het niet alleen de drukkers waren die aan het begin staan van allerlei veranderingen. De Renaissance begon al in Italië in de dertiende eeuw en loopt dus lang vooruit op de drukpers. Het heeft ook interessante veranderingen gebracht in de wetenschap.

Je kan zeggen dat de drukpers noodzakelijk was om erbij te hebben, om het als het ware te bestendigen, maar het was niet de oorzaak. Het is interessant omdat een auteur als deze aandacht geeft aan iets waar tot op dat moment nooit aandacht aan werd besteed. Gewone mensen die een machine bedienden konden ineens een enorm belangrijke rol gaan spelen in maatschappelijke processen. Vroeger ging het om Napoleon, Alexander de Grote, Willem van Oranje, de grote helden. Dat waren de makers van de geschiedenis. Dit is een boek dat een voorbeeld is van een hele nieuwe benadering van geschiedenis, waarbij geschiedenis ook wordt gemaakt door gewone mensen, door ons allemaal.

**MO:** Heeft u veel boeken gekocht alleen om hun schoonheid of zeldzaamheid?

**PH:** Ik ben geen verzamelaar, ik zou niet weten waar ik zou moeten beginnen. Ik vind het heel fijn dat ik de Bibliotheca Thysiana kan gebruiken voor een tijd als mijn verzameling om het zo maar te zeggen, daar heb ik genoeg aan. Dus ik verzamel geen oude boeken anders dan dit soort verfromfaaide boekjes die ik gewoon een beetje zielig vind. Ik verzamel ze om in een soort ziekenhuis te plaatsen, dan kunnen ze een tijdje met mij mee, en dan gaan ze hopelijk weer naar iemand anders. Maar ik heb wel heel erg veel boeken, sommige gewoon vanwege de schoonheid. Ik betrap me erop dat ik soms een boek koop dat ik niet lees maar wel opsla omdat het mooi is. Ik vind boeken hele aangename objecten. Je kan ze aanraken, ze hebben geur, en ze hebben een kleur die afstotend of juist aantrekkelijk kan zijn. Dat is een van de bezwaren die ik heb tegen het e-book—het is een instrument, maar niet het boek zelf. Het boek is een object, een drager van ideeën, van informatie, van het beste en misschien ook wel het slechtste wat de mensheid voortbrengt—ook *Mein Kampf* is een boek. Maar het is tegelijkertijd iets wat je kan raken, en dat het als object altijd in je omgeving is, dat je er een bepaald sentiment aan kunt verbinden, liefde of haat of bewondering. Dat geldt wel voor veel van mijn boeken thuis, en ik denk dat die vorm kan bijdragen aan het beter tot je nemen van de inhoud. Het object hoort bij de boodschap die het overbrengt. Ik ben erg gevoelig voor presentatie en of een boek fijn is om te lezen of niet.

Ik kan nou niet zeggen dat ik bijzonder zeldzame of bijzonder mooie boeken heb gekocht. Ik heb wel een klein beetje een zwak voor wat ze noemen marginaal drukwerk. Drukkers die niet voor geld drukken maar vanuit een achterkamertje werken, dat vind ik interessante mensen, ze doen geen vlieg kwaad. Ze verbrengen hun tijd met het drukken van teksten die zij leuk vinden, soms ook zonder toestemming van de auteur. Ze besteden daar veel moeite aan en dat leidt vaak tot hele aardige resultaten. Zelfs in de Tweede Wereldoorlog gebeurde dat, toen mensen als hun daad van verzet teksten drukten. De uitgeverij De Bezige Bij is zo ontstaan, door een groep mensen die teksten drukten en



verkochten. De opbrengst ging naar Joodse onderduikers of naar het verzet. Het boek kan ook een bescheiden wapen zijn in de strijd. Dat zijn aspecten van het boek die mij meer interesseren dan per se de zeldzaamheid of de extreme schoonheid.

Een boek is een democratisch instrument, en zodra je dus een boek gaat drukken in een oplage van vijftien exemplaren dan verliest het voor mij ook wel een beetje z'n waarde, want dan zijn er maar vijftien mensen die dat boek lezen. Er bestaat een miniatuurboekenverzameling waarvoor kleine boekjes verzameld en gedrukt worden, bijvoorbeeld in een oplage van zeven exemplaren, om er dan zes te vernietigen zodat er nog maar een van over is. Dat is absurd, raar, voor mij voegt dat niets toe. Dat boek moet gelezen worden, dat is de essentie ervan. Het is om kennis over te brengen, en informatie en plezier, en dat moet het dan wel doen, en niet in de handen blijven van twee mensen die daar prat op gaan.

**MO:** Las u veel toen u jong was?

**PH:** Ik las zelf vroeger ook veel, meer dan leeftijdgenoten. Ik ging ook heel vroeg al naar de Slegte, om boeken te kopen van mijn zakgeld. Ik kan me nog herinneren dat ik een heel klein boekje, ongebonden uit de zestiende eeuw, heb gekocht voor 2 gulden 50, daar was ik apetrots op. In mijn studententijd at ik soms niet omdat ik dan net een boek had gekocht en net mijn laatste geld had opgemaakt. Ik heb er allemaal geen spijt van.

**MO:** Kunt u wat meer vertellen over waarom het boekje over *Franse Tiranny* uw aandacht trok?

**PH:** Ik weet niet waarom mijn buurvrouw het nou aan mij heeft gegeven. Ik heb het geprobeerd te lezen maar het is nagenoeg onleesbaar, met die rare letter en het slechte papier. Ik denk dat de attractie voor mij meer in het fenomeen aan sich ligt, dat dit boekjes zijn die nu vrij zeldzaam zijn. Ze zijn letterlijk aan flarden gelezen. Ook werden dit soort volksboekjes over het algemeen nooit bewaard in de wetenschappelijke bibliotheek. Dit was niet voor iemand op het Rapenburg, maar voor iemand op de Haarlemmerstraat of steegjes daar achter. Ik werd me gaandeweg bewust van het feit dat er dus in Nederland zo'n cultuur heeft bestaan. Het zou mij niet verbazen dat er van dit boekje 5000 zijn gedrukt, met later nog herdrukken, waarvan er nu nog maar een paar honderd over zijn, her en der verspreid. Veel staat nog bij mensen privé, om dat het niet in de grote bibliotheken staat. Dit soort boekjes staat voor leesactiviteiten van een grote groep mensen waar we eigenlijk heel weinig van weten. Dat is ook wel iets dat in mijn onderzoek nog steeds een rol speelt. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in geleerde cultuur, de Leidse universiteit, en de collectie van Johannes Thysius, maar ik ben even geïnteresseerd

in wat gewone mensen thuis hebben staan en hoe die twee werelden elkaar raken.

**MO:** Is dat waar u nu op dit moment onderzoek naar doet?

**PH:** Nu doe ik vooral onderzoek naar boekculturen, bijvoorbeeld van een beroepsgroep, een soort van boeken, maar het kan ook de cultuur van een stad zijn. Hier in Leiden is de boekcultuur heel sterk beïnvloed door de universiteit. Aan het einde van de zestiende eeuw toen de universiteit ontstond had je al boekverkopers en uitgevers, maar heel weinig. Die hadden het nog erg moeilijk door de concurrentie met andere steden als Antwerpen. Met de komst van de universiteit is dat enorm veranderd. Plantijn kwam naar Leiden en die zette het voorbeeld van hoe het zou moeten. Omdat de universiteit erg succesvol was is ook het boekenbedrijf erg succesvol geworden. Door de jaren heen heb ik veel informatie verzameld over drukwerk en boekverkoop in Leiden, wat ook de basis is voor een boek dat ik aan het schrijven ben. Ik schrijf ook veel over gewone mensen met een boekverzameling. Dat vind ik eigenlijk steeds leuker dan zo'n groot overzicht. Ik heb er zo langzamerhand fantastische dingen over gevonden in het notarieel archief. Je kunt niet in hun gedachten kijken, maar wel zien hoe hun leven een beetje was. Ontzettend leuk, ze bestaan in feite nog steeds. Als historicus kun je die mensen weer even tot leven wekken, ze een gezicht geven en iets over hun leven vertellen wat ik in elk geval fascinerend vind. Het heeft niks en tegelijk alles met de grote geschiedenis te maken. Het zijn maar korreltjes op het strand, maar zonder die korreltjes is er geen strand.



Professor Hoftijzer in his studio.  
Photo: Noora Lamers.



Marta Minujín's *Tower of Babel*. Photo: Facug.

## Reminiscences: A brief introduction to 'bookwork' grătiela dimitrică

*Increasingly, data flows once confined to books and later to records and films are disappearing into black holes and boxes that, as artificial intelligences, are bidding us farewell on their way to nameless high commands. In this situation we are left only with reminiscences.*

– Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*

They are carved, sliced, folded, burned, shredded, pulped, and sculpted. They are torn apart, nailed together, and sawed into pieces. They are stacked in great towers and suspended from great heights. Their spines are broken and their innards exposed. Often representative as artefacts of the past, these books will never again be read but are rather viewed as conceptual pieces, to be exhibited as materials of art. These days, deconstruction is a common fate of books and it seems important to indentify why the number of artworks that use books as their primary material has increased significantly in the past two decades. Are books simply a different kind of “canvas”, a coincidentally popular means of expression for contemporary artists? Or is this surge of artistic interest symptomatic of the physical book’s digital age “crisis”?

In this era of textual transitioning—from handwriting to typing, from paper to the screen, from the book to the e-book, from the analogue to the digital—the Codex as we have known it is going through a process of transformation. Of course, it is easily argued that history repeats itself in transformational successions. Clay tablets evolved into scrolls and manuscripts. The bound codex was implemented in the second century. Manuscript production was made obsolete with the advent of printing, first by hand and, afterwards, on an industrial scale. The book established itself as a veritable institution of knowledge and communication, a ‘resilient and deepening microcosm, in which the reader can move around at great length, without getting lost within its “walls”’. However, along with its function as a carrier of knowledge, in many countries the book is still considered a highly valuable, even sacred, cultural object. Government policies are still being implemented in the European Union with a primary aim of preserving the cultural value of the paper book. Book art, with its dual aspects of destruction and creation, is likely to face criticism from certain groups who view

this form of manifestation as mutilation, even sacrilege.

Consequently, a new question arises: what are books if they cannot perform their main function as vessels of necessarily legible text? Is there a term that could better define these unreadable books? According to theoretician and visual analyst Garrett Stewart, material books that have lost their utilitarian role as transmitters of textual knowledge but gained new conceptual meaning as works of art should be known as bookworks. Historically, the field of book studies looks at the book in its various roles as instrument, medium or symbol. However, bookworks no longer exclusively belong to the realm of art history and, as questions of textual physicality in the digital age become more prominent, they are entering the field of book studies in general, especially considering their proliferation in recent years.

Considering the printed book as a mass-produced object of cultural transmission, a certain evolution of resistance can be clearly traced. The pocket paperback, the cheapest type of book ever produced, can be realized with tens of thousands of copies in a single edition. The obvious response to this mass duplicability can be found in the opposite approach: special and limited editions, hand-made books with few issues, or unique artists' books. Finally, the ultimate rendition of the book consists of its disuse by physical transformation so fundamental it transcends its text-container status. Books without text are, in fact, all the more relevant due to the fundamental characteristic that they cannot be read – or, at the very least, not in the way we normally understand “reading”. They are then exhibited without any of their traditional functions, as vessels of text or images, available. From this point of view, the book appears to be in an indeterminate state, and although it remains recognizable through its familiar features pages, spine and cover, it also runs the risk of being redundant, even obliterated. Thus, artists have responded, in one way or another, to what the book symbolizes, trying to retrace, redefine, decompose, deconstruct and conceptualize the book as an idea via its physical shape.

A good example of the phenomenon of bookwork can be traced to the beginning of the twentieth century, during the Futurist movement. Typographical experimentation, a focus on the future, particularly its mechanical and technological possibilities, and a complete disregard for traditional book-making materials laid the foundations of Futurist book construction. It is through their books bound in tin and other metals that the concept of the book-object came to light. The *Depero Futurista*, containing Fortunato Depero's manifesto, appeared in 1927 and embraced for the first time the “machine book” model envisioned by the Futurist movement. The binding consisted of two aluminium bolts that held the pages together, while the inside of the book featured the creative use of paper combined with typographical and chromatic innovation. Five years later, in 1932, the accomplished mechanical book appeared in the form of Filippo Tommaso

Marinetti's *Parole in Libertà Futuriste, olfattive, tattili, termiche* (*Words-in-freedom: olfactory, tactile, thermal*), also known as *The Tin Book*. It was constructed of twenty-seven lithographed metal pages and represented the epitome of pioneering avant-garde at the time: the rule of industry. Bound with a wire structure, the tin book represented the perfect container for Marinetti's manifesto by literally mirroring the text, which called for the aggressive use of technology and encouraged visual manipulation.

When some artists first start to seriously conceptualize the idea of "book", they do so as a reaction to social, political or cultural movements. A relevant example is Marta Minujín's architectural simulation *The Parthenon of Books/ Homage to Democracy*. Designed and created in Buenos Aires in 1983, it marked a crucial year that saw the fall of the military junta and the first free general elections after the demise of the National Reorganization Process dictatorship. Approximately 25,000 books that had been banned by the dictatorship were used to build a full-scale model of the Parthenon, the temple built on the Greek Acropolis in honour of Athena, the goddess of wisdom. Minujín's work represented a national awakening, the importance of freedom of expression and, ultimately, became a symbol for the newly democratic rule in Argentina. After three weeks, on Christmas Eve, it was publicly dismantled and the books freely distributed. A decade earlier, in 1970, Joseph Kosuth created a special reading room in the installation *Information Room (Special Investigation)*. In a gallery, the ultimate aesthetic space, two long wooden tables were piled with texts on philosophy, anthropology and psychoanalytic theory from Kosuth's own library, transforming the gallery into a reading room, a room of ideas. Resisting Marcel Duchamp's idea of "ready-made" culture, Kosuth's installation insists on the representation of an idea in itself: the nature of art manifesting itself through the power of ideas. In the 1990s, when mass publishing was reaching its peak, Brian Clerx's *Purification* (1993) envisioned an open book made from soap, silk-screened with fragments from Francis Ponge's prose-poem *Savon*, suspended above a towel printed with the same text. It symbolizes the book as a perishable object, a consumable good which is meant to be used up and which is easily replaced.

Navigating closer to the twenty-first century, artists have vigorously responded to the new digital medium in relation to the physical book. Their "demediated" books are vehicles for ideas that redefine the book's function, affording it new significance. Doug Beube defines himself as a 'biblioclast' who explores the meaning of "book" itself in the digital age. He cuts, pierces, drills, gouges and excavates books, which he calls 'intractable' and 'inflexible' technologies, to emphasize their elegance. Alicia Martín constructs static streams of books cascading out of old buildings. Her conceptual book sculptures reimagine the book as a living organism out of control. Her use of books is reminiscent of consumer culture and the excess of the Western world, especially

in terms of the current state of so-called information overload. In another look at books as living organisms, Georgia Russell ‘vivisects’ books and then encloses them in specimen jars, as if to preserve them. However, they then take on the appearance of dead creatures, as ‘taxidermy objects of a past existence’. Russell’s shredded books are a form of ‘creative destruction’; she first liberates the permanence of the book’s form by sculpting it into a new shape, but then encloses it under glass, in a state of conservation. In this regard her books become a link between the past and the present.

These are just a few examples of the great number of book sculptors, book architects, and book designers—many of whom are featured in this publication—that redefine the meaning of the book. Their bookwork allows for the creation of unmediated ‘conceptual objects: not for normal reading but for thinking about’. They offer us, the viewers, a visual and intellectual reinterpretation of the book, allowing us to rediscover its inherent qualities and to reflect upon its future in this age of digital uncertainty. Can bookwork reimagine the physical book as a vessel of both informative and symbolic content? As usual, we are left with more questions than answers.

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*Lorem Ipsum II* (From the Summer Reading Series). Manipulated, screwed, ink-splashed, hand-stitched book assemblage. Photo: Paul Kodama. All images courtesy of the artist.

## Bookwork #1

### Jacqueline Rush Lee

Jacqueline Rush Lee focuses on the book as object, medium and archetypal form. Working to reveal or transform the nature of a book, Lee is interested in the aesthetic of books as cultural objects that come with their own histories of use and meaning. By using books as a canvas or building block, Jacqueline transforms their formal and conceptual arrangement through a variety of practices in which the physicality, and thus the context of the books have been altered. Drawn to objects that record physical processes or bear imperfections and the scars of life, she is interested in creating evocative works that are cerebral with emotional depth. Remaining open to the physical and metaphorical transformations that occur in the working process, Lee's residual sculptures or installations emerge as a palimpsest – a document that bears traces of the original text within its framework but possesses a new narrative as a visual document of another time.

[www.jacquelinerrushlee.com](http://www.jacquelinerrushlee.com)



*Inside Out Slice* (from Volumes Series 2001). Soaked, dried, scraped book components.  
Photo: Jacqueline Rush Lee.



*Inside Outside Slice*, detail, 2001. Soaked, dried, manipulated books screwed together.  
Photo: Jacqueline Rush Lee.



*Tehran: Collective Fictions Burnt*, 2010. Book covers.  
Photo: Rob Jaffe. All images courtesy of the artist.

## Bookwork #2

### Matthew Picton

Cities are often described as living organisms, viewed as subject rather than object. Matthew Picton engages with this tradition of humanizing the city by deconstructing the clean, uncompromising aesthetic of the cartographic city plan and imbuing it with the unique history and culture of each place. *Venice*, for example, is constructed from excerpts of *Death in Venice* written by Thomas Mann after his visit to the city in 1911. During his travels he experienced a cholera outbreak and was witness to a strange mixture of official denials. The novel's protagonist falls victim to his own obsessive desires and yearnings in a metaphor for the state of the disease-stricken city of Venice. The walls of text are interwoven with the musical score by Benjamin Britten for the operatic interpretation of Mann's novel. The work is made from paper partially soaked in water and mud dredged from the lagoon surrounding Venice. These water stains seeping upwards through the crisp, white paper parallel the unique predicament of Venice as it gradually returns to the water, and reference the contamination that spread the water-born cholera through the city.

[www.matthewpicton.com](http://www.matthewpicton.com)  
<http://store.blurb.com/ebooks/395736-of-urban-history>





*Venice*, 2012. Text from *Death in Venice* by Thomas Mann and the music score from Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice* opera. Photo: Rob Jaffe.



Detail from *Venice*. Photo: Rob Jaffe.



Illustration: Virginia Shields.

## Remembrance of scents past

anna ntrouka

A book can be appealing in so many different ways. For some people it is the content: the promise of an interesting text, or a fascinating story that captures their attention. For others it is the physical characteristics of the book: a charming cover, a beautiful binding, good typography and the quality of the paper that draws them in. Then there are those who are attracted to a book based on a much more instinctive reaction: they like the way it smells. Especially among booklovers, it is not uncommon to hear how much they love the smell of a book and how entering a bookstore with used books pleases their noses. As Ray Bradbury said, 'A book has got smell. A new book smells great. An old book smells even better. An old book smells like ancient Egypt'.

As romantic as this quote may be, there is a far more pragmatic reason why books (and old books in particular) do, in fact, have a distinct smell. Without delving too deep into chemical technicalities, one can argue that the empirical reason behind an old book's aroma is quite pedestrian. The 2009 study 'Material Degradomics: On the Smell of Old Books' analysed the factors contributing to the scent of old books, a scent which the researchers described as 'a combination of grassy notes with a tang of acids and a hint of vanilla over an underlying mustiness'. According to the study, the organic materials that compose a book—paper, ink, and glue—react to their environment. Heat, moisture and light are all agents that contribute to the degradation of these organic materials, causing acidity levels to rise and speeding up the process of deterioration. The noticeable odour of old books is actually a sign of their decay; indeed, books of the nineteenth century that were printed on highly acidic paper are now a source of concern for the preservation departments of libraries, as the fragile paper that was used in their production is now causing them to fall apart at the seams.

If this scent that so many seem to cherish is nothing more than paper covered in brown spots, faded ink and decomposing glue, how does it manage to evoke such a sentimental reaction in book lovers? The answer lies in the human brain. The sense of smell, or olfactory perception, has a strong link to memory. The olfactory bulb—the instrument that perceives odours—is part of a region in the brain called the limbic system. The limbic system also consists of the amygdala, the area of the brain where memories and emotional reactions are processed, and the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for associative learning and

for transforming received information from short-term to long-term memories. Scientists believe that the olfactory bulb's close proximity to the amygdala and hippocampus is the reason why smells are able to trigger such powerful emotional memories. In essence, odours cannot be processed unless they travel through the areas of the brain that are associated with memory functions. Psychologists refer to this process as the Proustian Phenomenon, named after Marcel Proust. In his celebrated work *In Search of Lost Time*, the author describes how experiencing the scent of a cookie dipped into tea unleashes a flood of childhood memories. Whenever bibliophiles experience a trip down memory lane after that all-too-familiar whiff of an old book, it is the Proustian Phenomenon they have to thank—or to blame.

Thanks to the so-called Gutenberg revolution and the advances it brought in print, books became ubiquitous objects. In its physical form, the book is an object that not only tickles the nose with its scent but also has the ability to engage all other human senses. Naturally sight is the most obvious, as eyes are the main instruments for deciphering text and image. Then there is touch, used not only when holding a book or turning its pages but also for writing and reading systems used for the blind and visually impaired, like Braille. The sound that paper makes as pages are turned can be music to one's ears. Finally, in a rather unconventional twist, there are those people who actually devour, or taste, books—and not in the metaphorical sense. Xylophagia, or the desire to eat objects made of wood or paper, is part of a disorder called Pica that compels people to eat materials not usually considered food.

Although the latter example is extreme, it illustrates that up until the digital age the book has been an exclusively tangible object, experienced only in the physical world. However, as the digital era marches on, the status of the book as a physical object is changing. Electronic reading is now a reality, and the transformation of books from physical objects into digital entities entails all kinds of consequences. In the sphere of digital books we still have a chance to employ our sight, touch and hearing, which also means enjoying the benefits of the digital era such as the increasing popularity of e-book add-ons like embedded video, auditory reading and audio books. However, it seems that where books are concerned, our olfactory desires and pleasures are being more and more neglected.

In 2009 a product that promised to address this most unfortunate lack of aroma in the electronic book world was announced. Smell of Books™, a self-described 'aerosol e-book enhancer', declared the end of odourless electronic books. According to their website the 'enhancer' was compatible with almost all popular electronic reading devices and came in five different aromas, each destined to satisfy different tastes. There was the *Classic Musty Smell* or 'collected works of Shakespeare in a can'; the *New Book Smell* which could 'bring back



memories of your favorite local bookstore'; the *Scent of Sensibility*, marketed to women who wanted their e-reader to make them feel as though they were 'living in a Jane Austen novel'; *Crunchy Bacon Smell*, also known as 'the low cholesterol alternative for health conscious e-book lovers'; and finally, *Eau, You Have Cats* for dedicated feline owners. This series of e-book aromas, the product of the innovative company DuroSport Electronics, was, unfortunately, short-lived. The company was quickly forced to recall the entire product line, not only due to defective units but also to controversy. Smell of Books™ was instantly under attack by an association called "The Authors Guild", who were exasperated at the product's invasion in a new market of custom aromas for books, the control of which, they claimed, should belong to their authors. Public disputes between several of the company's high-ranking executives on the site's corporate blog added the final blow that led to the product's recall.

It was all too outrageous to be true. In time, Smell of Books™ was exposed as part of an elaborate online April Fool's Day spoof. Despite its highly quixotic disposition, this prank did touch on a relevant, prevailing issue: namely, that the nature of the book is changing and, as with any process of change, some things will be lost while others are gained. Perhaps the avid bibliophiles who cannot imagine books without their characteristic scent find their electronic reading experience lacking, but there might still be some hope. *Paper Passion*, an actual perfume based on the smell of books, was developed by publishing house Steidl in collaboration with the perfumer Geza Schoen. This perfume, which was part of Steidl's special editions, is suited for anyone who does not want to let go of their page sniffing habits, albeit a rather expensive and quirky alternative. The digital book world is undergoing constant change and innovation, so it is rather early to make the assumption that smells will never be a part of it. Whether or not there is a place for aromas in the digital sphere is something that remains to be seen, but it is undoubtedly safe to say that its current absence does not go unnoticed. For those incurable romantics who still find the scent of books captivating, and who feel slightly robbed of that scent in the digital world, there are still plenty of tangible, wonderfully fragrant old books to be enjoyed.

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Artist's impression of Jacir's billboards installed at the Fridericianum in Kassel. Text in Arabic reads 'This book belongs to its owner Fathallah Saad. He bought it with his own money. Gaza, March, 1892'. Illustration: Visnja Ostojic.

## The appropriation of books

andrea reyes elizondo

Book ownership is a layered process, which involves more than sole physical acquisition. Private libraries are usually built with care and curiosity, and often reflect specific and highly personal intellectual interests. A collection will grow through transactions, gifts and inheritance, but above all it will grow through reading the books—the true process of intellectual appropriation. Such rich histories are what make large private libraries interesting, particularly when the owner is educated or affluent. Following the owner's death, these libraries are often sold or donated and their contents moved to new collections. However, there are also alternative methods of book acquisition, the most intrusive of which are, for example, theft and the unfortunate act of looting. Not only do these means accelerate the process of ownership change, they are also considerably cheaper than standard acquisition.<sup>1</sup>

The toll of war is difficult to apprehend in real numbers and extent. Infrastructural damage is expressed in currency while the impact on human life is referred to in numbers of casualties and refugees. Yet the scale of dispossession on a cultural level is usually absent in any statistical survey, as it is almost impossible to definitively calculate. One particular difficulty in gauging the damage that war causes arises when the cultural dispossession of one people is part of another people's nation building. When one "finds" an object, how far must one go searching for the original owner before claiming ownership of it?

Much has been written of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but not all parts of the conflict have received the same amount of attention. A little-known issue is the cultural destruction (on the Palestinian side) that goes beyond the physical destruction and dispossession of land and property.<sup>2</sup> A particular case is that of the books which were extracted from Palestinian houses and which are currently held by the Jewish National Library in West Jerusalem. This is an undeniably delicate case surrounded by controversy due to the on-going conflict—without temporal distance one's views can be easily disregarded as "taking sides". However, it is my view that one can still comment on the issue based on facts, as difficult as they are to come by.

In 1948, neighbourhoods in Jerusalem and other urban centres were raided by extremist Zionist militias.<sup>3</sup> Many Palestinians did what every human being would do in the midst of conflict: flee with the few objects they could carry,

imagining that they would return home once the fighting had ended.<sup>4</sup> Many of these deserted neighbourhoods were affluent, their inhabitants wealthy and formally educated. Given the social and economic status of the homeowners, the existence of private libraries in these neighbourhoods can easily have been inferred. This possibility certainly did not escape the librarians of Israel's National Library: they harvested and catalogued 30,000 books in West Jerusalem alone.<sup>5</sup> The books were written in Arabic, English, French, Italian and German, while the subjects were equally varied: religion, foreign fiction, science, history and philosophy.

At first, these books were catalogued by subjects and owners' names into the Israeli national collection. In the mid-sixties the policy changed and most of the books were added to the general catalogue of the library without any record of provenance. 6,000 books were accessioned into a collection labelled "Abandoned Property"; their call numbers still begin with the letters AP today. The change of cataloguing policy can be understood by looking at the internal papers of the National Library, which show the different attitudes among the librarians: from doubts about the duality of robbing versus rescuing and the dilemma of whether to define collecting the books as plunder or not, to coming to terms with the firm belief that this was an act of grace and rescue. At the end, the official narrative took the shape of a 1949 announcement in the library's bulletin: 'In the end of May the Jewish national and university library embarked on collecting abandoned books in occupied sites, appointing itself as their guardian, thus rescuing thousands of books from the damage of war and from annihilation'.<sup>6</sup> The Abandoned Property category could suggest that the books were intentionally abandoned, whilst the reality of West Jerusalem's displaced population suggests otherwise. However the AP designation is closely related to the Absentee Property Law in which the State of Israel is the custodian—though not owner—of a refugee's property.<sup>7</sup>

Recently, two artists' initiatives addressing this controversy were launched. By focusing on the issue of the appropriated Palestinian books, they hope to generate discussion that may ultimately result in restitution of the property in question. *Ex Libris* is a series of photographs by Palestinian artist Emily Jacir. From 2010 to 2012 she used her mobile phone to document dedications and other property marks on the AP books at the Jewish National Library in West Jerusalem. Her work was presented at DOCUMENTA(13) as an exhibition of pictures and transcripts of some of these marks. The transcripts were displayed during the summer of 2012 on billboards throughout the city of Kassel, both in Arabic and in English. A particularly intimate note discovered in one of the stolen books became a public symbol denouncing theft of private property.

Another initiative is the documentary *The Great Book Robbery*, which includes a digital platform to create a virtual library of the harvested Palestinian

books. Israeli-Dutch filmmaker Benny Brunner and Dutch filmmaker Alexandra Jansse coordinated the project with Arjan El Fassed, a Dutch member of parliament with a Palestinian background. The screening of the documentary highlights the large-scale dispossession experienced by Palestinians, and its goal is not only to raise awareness but also to mobilize legal and political action. Where restitution of the stolen books is not possible, they intend the virtual collection to act as a repository for part of the lost intellectual Palestinian heritage.

I am convinced that the restitution of “rescued” goods is not a high priority for the Israeli government.<sup>8</sup> Yet the subject of restitution cannot be avoided indefinitely. In recent years, property stolen and confiscated from Jews during the Second World War has been returned to rightful owners or their heirs. When restitution was no longer possible, financial compensation and recognition of previous wrong-doing was given to the victims. Although belonging to completely different historical contexts and periods, these cases highlight what could be considered as double standards on the subject of rightful restitution. Are the legal mechanisms of restitution available on an equal basis to all victims of political conflict? Not according to Chomsky and Herman: in *Manufacturing Consent* they note that since it is the victor who writes the annals of history after a war, not all victims are considered legally equal after the political dust has settled. It would be understandable for political factions in Israel to be anxious about any issue concerning the property of the Palestinians. Conceding that the Palestinian West Jerusalem libraries—and others—were looted would mean opening a Pandora’s box of legal, social and political implications and could ultimately threaten the national narrative.

Any bibliophile can surely empathize with the rightful owners of these appropriated books. We have all felt the pain of losing books before, but never on such a large scale. To lose all of one’s books at once during a conflict, and then to see those books systematically appropriated by others, is a terrible thing to imagine for anyone who treasures their book collections. Many of the Palestinian owners marked their books with a hand-written note, such as: This book belongs to its owner Fathallah Saad. He bought it with his own money. Gaza, March, 1892!<sup>9</sup> An ex libris and other property notes are an educated territorial-marking ritual: beware; this book belongs to me. However, their placement is incredibly naïve since they cannot safeguard one’s books from theft nor do they guarantee their rightful return, as many Palestinians have sadly learned.

Robbed or rescued from a conflict zone, these books were owned by somebody—as their various provenance and marginalia marks show. Their presence in the Jewish National Library as “abandoned property” is difficult to understand in the light of international law. These books belong to their rightful owners and heirs. In the cases where no heirs can be found, the books should be returned to the Palestinian people as part of their collective intellectual past. No

people should be denied access to their own libraries.

- 1 It is worth noting that this “low price” is only valid when considering the lack of economic price in the absence of an initial commercial transaction. The long-lasting moral and legal costs can end up backfiring, as the cases of stolen goods and property during the Second World War have shown in recent times.
- 2 After writing about the Palestinian refugee problems, historians began focusing on the physical destruction of Palestinian property. An example can be found in Falah's account of how Jewish civilians aided the military into demolishing strategically positioned villages as well as settlers ‘harvesting both existing and abandoned Arab fields’. (Falah, p. 261)
- 3 During the 1948 war and the preceding civil war there was fighting originating from both sides, as in any other war. However, for the purposes of this article we will focus on the effects of the violence originating from the extremist Zionist flanks as described by Hannah Mermelstein.
- 4 Regarding the Palestinian refugee problem, the Old Israeli historians (as defined by Shlaim) have classified this as ‘exodus out of free will’ whilst the Arab historians have called it ‘expulsion’. As Shlaim points out, the “old” historians were no scholars academically formed but politicians and soldiers who had experienced the 1948 war. Setting national narratives aside, Benny Morris—a New Israeli historian—concludes that ‘the Palestinian refugee problem was born of war, not by design, Jewish or Arab. It was largely a by-product of Arab and Jewish fears and of the protracted, bitter fighting that characterized the first Arab-Israeli war; in smaller part, it was the deliberate creation of Jewish and Arab military commanders and politicians.’ (cited in Shlaim, p.135). In other words, this displacement was similar to other war-related displacements throughout history.
- 5 Amit Gish points out that the harvesting first originated of a concern by ‘men of letters’ for the books as spiritual heritage that could be lost forever. But it was also a result of the moving of the National Library from an autonomous scientific body such as the Hebrew University to an ideological authority: the State of Israel. (Gish, pp. 1-3.)
- 6 Gish, p. 4.
- 7 An overview of the various Absentee Property Regulations can be found in Forman, “From Arab Land to ‘Israel Lands’: The Legal Dispossession of the Palestinians Displaced by Israel In the Wake of 1948,” pp. 813-822.
- 8 The dispossession of Palestinian Arabs’ property is one of the most infamous aspects of the conflict. Thanks to several legislative processes—such as the aforementioned Absentee Property Law—the expropriation and reallocation of land and property was carried out legally—although not internationally recognized. Any legal challenges to any form of property restitution, whether books or land, would no doubt challenge the legal basis for the land and resources claims from the Israeli part.
- 9 Text on billboard, *Ex libris* 2010-2012, Emily Jacir. Displayed at Fridericianum's tower (Kassel, Germany), Documenta 13, 2012.

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All of these questions, so vital to you, are answered in the free booklet pictured below. You can have a copy of it for the asking. In it Dr. Charles W. Eliot, who was for forty years president of Harvard University, gives his own plan of reading. In it are described the contents, plan, and purpose of

### Dr. Eliot's Five-Foot Shelf of Books

Every well-informed man and woman should know about this famous library. The free book tells about it—how Dr. Eliot has put into his Five-Foot Shelf "the essentials of a liberal education"; how he has so arranged it that even "fifteen minutes a day" are enough; how, in pleasant moments of spare time, by using the reading courses Dr. Eliot has provided for you, you can get the knowledge of literature and life that every university strives to give.

Every reader of *Life* is invited to have a copy of this handsome and entertaining free book. Merely clip the coupon and mail it today.

Send for  
This Free Booklet  
That Gives Dr. Eliot's  
Own Plan of  
Reading



P. F. COLLIER & SON COMPANY  
416 West Thirtieth Street, New York

Mail me the free book, "Fifteen Minutes a Day," telling about the Five-Foot Shelf of Books, and containing the valuable article by Dr. Eliot on what and how to read for a liberal education.

Name

Address

447—HCE L

Harvard Classics/Dr. Eliot's Five Foot Shelf advertisement published in *Life*, November 23, 1922.  
Photo: Colleen A. Bryant.



## These books aren't made for reading: Creating identity with ready-made libraries

giulia moriconi

A January 1927 advertisement from the American magazine *Collier's* reads:

What should a family's very first investment be? Bonds? A home? Insurance? There is one thing even more vital than these. Their future success is going to depend principally upon his or her mental growth. Will their social acquaintances find her interesting, or mentally commonplace? Will men in business be impressed with his range of information, his capacity to think straight and talk well? More than 250,000 families have found the answer to these questions with the help of Dr. Charles W. Eliot, for forty years President of Harvard. These families are spending 15 minutes a day with the most famous library in the world.

– Dr. Eliot's *Five-Foot Shelf Of Books*

The books advertised here were considered 'the essentials of a liberal education', books that should be owned by all American families. This kind of advertisement promised not only knowledge and education, but social prestige and professional success. The prerequisite for attaining all this was to possess a pre-assembled personal library, whose mere presence in the home symbolized a well-educated family. The books were chosen by somebody else, somebody who was considered to be an expert. These kinds of advertisements were directed at families with relatively modest incomes, the so-called middle class, that came into prominence at the beginning of the twentieth century. The middle class had higher salaries, and disposable income. The ability to acquire non-essential goods was evidence of social climbing. This explains the emphasis on the social prestige of owning such books: books were seen as a status symbol.

Following the explosion of mass production during the industrial age, companies needed to promote widespread consumption of mass-produced consumer goods. In the United States in particular, increased personal incomes allowed a higher standard of living, industries started to produce consumer goods at unprecedented levels and mass media were able to market their products to an unprecedented number of consumers. These factors determined the birth of a consumer society. Although the book industry was certainly part of this

process, books are not simple commodities. Their status as sacred cultural objects, symbolically charged, sets them apart from other mass-produced goods. However, by entering the circle of mass production, their status became ambiguous: on the one hand they were culturally revered, on the other hand they were being produced, marketed and sold as any other commodity.

Two kinds of opposing strategies were used in American advertisements from the 1920s: firstly, books were advertised by promoting the importance of education. As mentioned earlier, advertisements stressed the social advantages of being well-read. In a seeming contradiction to the first method of advertising, books were also promoted with the implication that mere ownership could be sufficient to represent cultivated sophistication. Books were included in the background of almost thirty percent of magazine advertisements during the 1920s, communicating messages of distinction, culture and social prestige with their mere presence. Cultural and social benefits were perceived as deriving from simply owning books. Books seemed to imbue these qualities apart from their content, and beyond the actual reading: ‘the benefits gained from actually reading the texts were considerably more vague, harder to acquire, and harder to exploit [...] New bookbuyers wanted only the effects of culture without its substance—it was felt—just as they rigorously sought to style the surfaces of their selves and their homes for a particular “look”’.

Using extensive marketing campaigns, the book industry contributed to disseminating the idea of social mobility and social prestige being inextricably linked to the ownership and display of books, rather than to actual reading and education. Selling books to the rising middle class, which suddenly had buying power, was logical and necessary for the book industry. In the 1920s and 1930s ‘built-in-bookshelves’ campaigns were widespread in the United States. They followed the logic that ‘where there are bookshelves there will be books’. Architects and interior decorators were persuaded by publishing houses to design and install book-shelves in houses, and public figures were used in advertising campaigns to endorse the importance of books to society. Bookshelves are the symbolic means of ownership, accumulation and display, and these three concepts are also integrally related to consumerism.

Let’s now look at another advertisement:

Are you looking to have a library created just for you? We can assemble a great book collection for you that will satisfy the mind and please the eye. We can supply books on any subject, including art, biography, literature, New York, history, music, film, etc. We have put together libraries for thousands of clients including the Waldorf-Astoria, Steven Spielberg and Ralph Lauren Polo.

These words appear today on the website of The Strand, a New York bookstore, ninety years after the ‘built-in bookshelves’ campaigns and Dr. Eliot’s *Five-Foot Shelf of Books*. This bookstore offers to assemble personalized libraries for customers, according to their thematic or aesthetic criteria. The service is called ‘books-by-the-foot’ and it is also offered as a rental service for movie sets or other events requiring the appearance of libraries. Clients can choose between pre-assembled collections (for example ‘English Language Antique Leather books’ for 500 dollars per foot of shelf space, or ‘Bargain Paperbacks’ for 15 dollars per foot) or they can ask for specific characteristics depending on their interests.

Bass Wyden, the third generation owner of Strand Book Store [...], began the service by selling bargain books for ten dollars a foot. When she noticed customers buying shelf loads—even library loads—of books they were never going to read, she knew she had the makings of the latest must-have interior-design service for busy city sophisticates.

The ‘books-by-the-foot’ selling strategy is clearly related to the marketing strategies of the 1920s. At that time, promotion of books also meant promoting education for people who wanted to climb the social ladder. However, social advantages of displayed culture were stressed more than educational advantages, permitting ownership to supercede actual reading. The specific socio-economic reasons justifying these kinds of marketing campaigns in the 1920s are no longer present now to justify ‘books-by-the-foot’ libraries. Therefore, what are the similarities and differences between marketing strategies of the 1920s and the Strand’s current offer of ‘books-by-the-foot’?

In both cases ownership and display, rather than reading, are the focus. These marketing strategies were—and still are, in fact—aimed at selling books to people who will probably never read them. Libraries can be assembled by somebody other than the owner. The Strand offers to assemble personalized libraries, but letting a complete stranger choose topics and genres for you, and not deciding which titles are going in your “personal library” seems rather impersonal. Paradoxically, in both cases books are used to create and project an image of the library’s owner. They are used to build and to represent personal identity—or, as in the 1920s, social identity—regardless of whether those identities are real or fictional. Moreover, in the 1920s, the display of books was used to claim membership in a certain social class. Nowadays, the ‘books-by-the-foot’ library is still a way to exhibit cultural prestige, but it lacks the strength of such a social status claim. Nevertheless, the persistent phenomenon of displaying book collections as a status symbol proves that the symbolic capital of books prevails, and can therefore be used to market books regardless of whether or not they’re

meant to be read.<sup>1</sup>

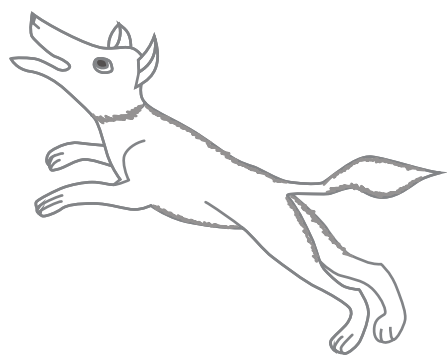
The symbolic capital of books (by which we mean that, historically, they bestow perceived prestige and sacrality) is their universally recognized association with certain cultural values. This transforms books into status symbols, and it also means that books are objects that can be sold independently from the actual reading, and therefore from the content. At the same time, ownership and display of books, two concepts employed and empowered by a consumer society, are associated with symbolic capital, necessarily making them objects that testify to one's personal culture and constructed identity.

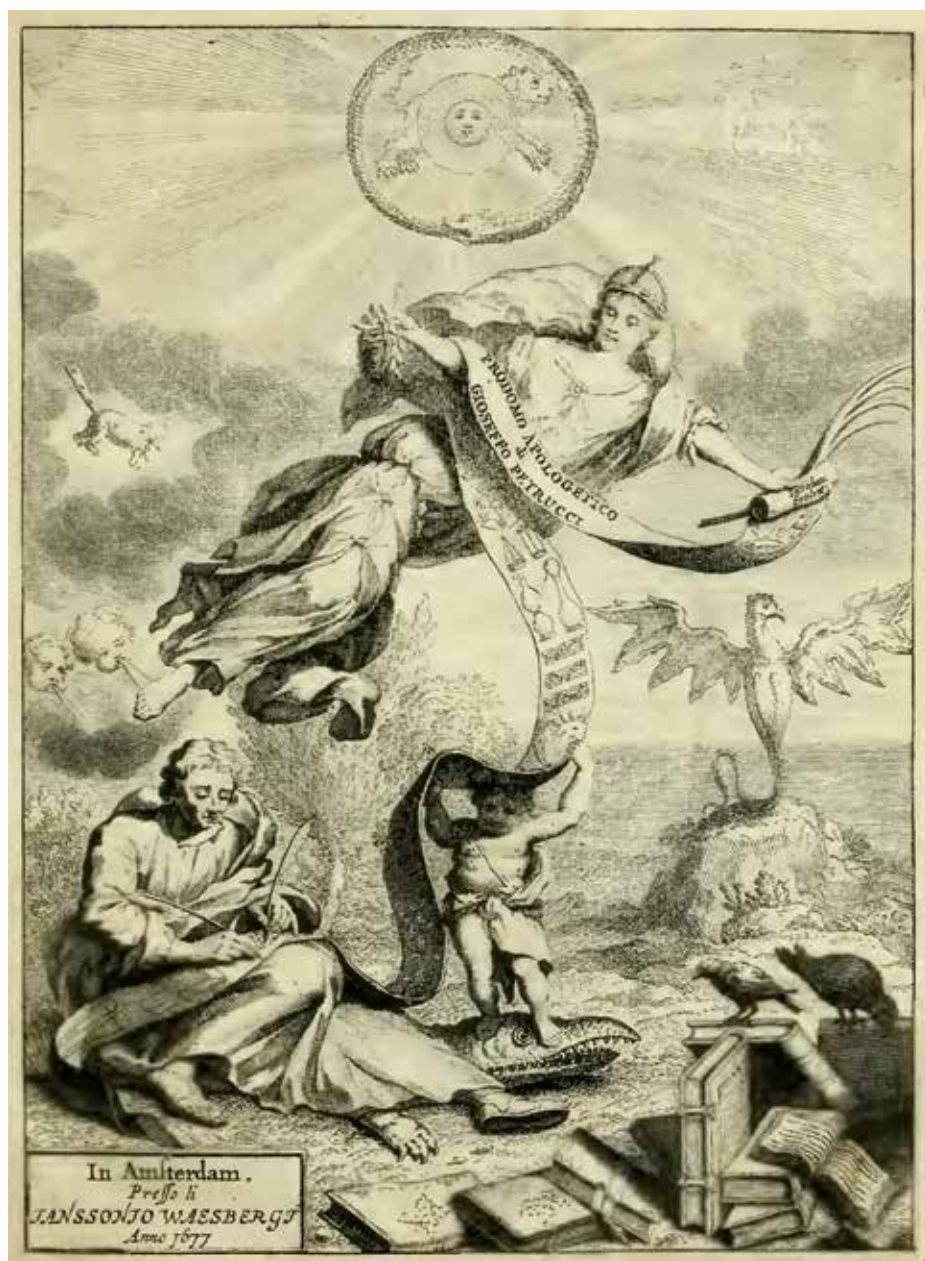
#### Notes

- 1 Bourdieu, P. *La Distinction*. Paris: Les Edition de Minuit, 1979. The symbolic in Bourdieu's terms is the value that things assume for the subjects. It therefore concerns the subjective perception and representation of things according to the specific class/social context.

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Frontispiece from *Prodomo apologetico alli studi Chircheriani* by Gioseffo Petrucci.  
Engraving: Janssonius van Waesberge.

## Once upon a time in Amsterdam: Bridging digital and analogue through storytelling

mara calenic

*I am a part of all that I have met;  
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough  
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move.  
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!  
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains: but every hour is saved  
From that eternal silence, something more,  
A bringer of new things; and vile it were  
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,  
And this grey spirit yearning in desire  
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,  
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.*

– Sir Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*

I was not asked to contribute a piece for this reader. I volunteered because I felt I had something meaningful to say. I am not shy when it comes to expressing my opinion, so writing an article about book studies didn't sound like much of a challenge. I began my first draft right away, thinking that the process would be a walk in the park, or, at the very most, a short but refreshing hike in the mountains. Instead, the article quickly became my downfall. I couldn't stop writing—or rather, rewriting—as days became weeks and then stretched into months. Why, you ask? What's so difficult about writing four pages? The answer might not surprise you, but it might help clarify a few of the finer issues in the perceived war between digital and analogue.

This article dragged on like a disastrous construction site. I had been asked to finish it by Christmas, but by then it only consisted of a few bare bricks, some nascent ideas and broad concepts, but nothing concrete. Even the foundation was a bit shaky—I knew what I wanted to say, but I didn't know how to say it. Or at least, how to say it in a way my editor wanted me to. 'I like your ideas',

she said, again and again, 'but what's your thesis? Where's your argument? Keep it simple.' She had a point, but it was still frustrating to hear. I kept researching, mainly on the web. One line of inquiry always led to another, and each one seemed too important to ignore. If we actually recognize that technology, particularly the Internet, it changes our patterns of perceptions without resistance, can we indeed witness firsthand the increasingly telescopic nature of our evolutionary paradigm? How has the Internet changed as a playground for industries and individuals? 'A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace', click. 'Context, Not Container', click. 'No Surprise: Student-Age Digital Natives Still like Libraries, Print', click, click, click. Too fast to focus on one subject for long. I skidded from source to source, pausing only briefly before moving along.

Deadlines passed, new ones were set and more time passed. Although my fellow Yapp staffers remained sympathetic to my determination to produce a piece of writing both they and I would be happy with, I could feel their patience diminishing. The emails from my editor, who is also my friend, became frostier as the weeks passed. And so I began again, this time with renewed determination. I collected my thoughts, or perhaps I should say, I collected more thoughts. I read contemporary opinions and researched historical analyses. I wrote and rewrote, summarized arguments, condensed conclusions, expanded and discarded paragraph after paragraph, but the attempt to build a good foundation failed time and again. The Internet is an ocean of shifting perspectives and scopes, and my little article rode the wave bravely, but with no compass it was directionless. Having torn down my argument several times and rebuilt my thesis in a hundred different ways, I finally handed in what I had cobbled together and waited for the verdict. It was now late July, two months after my first deadline.

My editor and I met in Amsterdam. I knew that this would be my last chance to submit a contribution. Time was not only short: it had run out. We found a sunny patch of grass and settled down with coffees. As she read over my words a gentle breeze rattled the pages, which suddenly seemed too few and too flimsy for the hours of work I had poured into them. I didn't expect praise: although my argument was infinitely clear in my mind, I anticipated her criticism. It's not like it was anything new. I had tried so hard to do as she had asked, but the thought of focusing, or rather, of limiting myself to making one linear argument made me grimace. Regardless, I had tried. I had taken the criticism to heart. I had tried to find the red thread that would connect all my arguments, to narrow my subject, to find the most interesting aspects. It was beginning to seem pedantic, this whole process. I didn't want to be tied down by the weight of structure, I wanted to soar! I wanted my ideas to inspire my readers to do their own research, to question their own conclusions. I watched the boats sailing up the Amstel and waited in silent frustration.

My editor sighed and looked up. She asked me if I could summarize my



argument into one sentence for her. Of course I could! I immediately started babbling, incoherently, about the technological revolution and the implications of the Internet's lack of intellectual authority or "gatekeepers", about the continual changing of our neural pathways and the effect of digital reading on those pathways, about the ethos of information technology... I was on a roll. But my editor's eyes had glazed over. 'One sentence', she repeated. 'Fifteen words or less, not counting 'this article is about'...' and I realized that she had me, again. I looked at what I had written. It was brilliant. I'd discussed Google searches and the way they regulate our choices, how the Internet can be seen as the 'new home of the mind', Orwell and Huxley's dystopian visions of society, the role of the humanities for future generations. I had quoted Neil Gaiman, Neil Postman, Marshall McLuhan, Judith Butler, and Charles Wright Mills. Every sentence was so essential to making my point, which was... wandering. Unfinished.

'This bit about Horkheimer, Adorno and the Frankfurt school theories, I like how you link that to Hollywood during the Depression and the idea that the Internet could be seen as an extension of the film medium', said my editor, 'but I'm not so sure how that ties into this article from *Time* magazine. Or corporate influence on the web'.

'Aha', I said, 'It's simple. It has to do with what I mentioned before, about media formats. While the computer enables us to connect, the corporate influence on the Internet encourages our immersion into the trivial, which is similar to the film medium... But what I want to hint at is the possibility for media formats to exist as a mutually supportive, non-competitive grouping that will enable the people's revolution and their means of participation in—'

'Whoa', my editor said. 'Slow down. I'm still on the first two pages. Then what are you saying here, the part about the danger of 'single stories'? Here's something straightforward, I thought. Diversity of stories is always better.

'Well, that's about storytelling, mass media and the value of narrative in forming national identity and world view, especially when you acknowledge that we live in a second-hand world influenced by received meaning and lacking any kind of substantive "fact" (which is very Plato's cave, you know, mimetic if you think about it), and when you consider that the ratio of fabrication increases dramatically in a dynamic environment like the Internet where "information" is demanded in increasingly smaller periods of time and formats...' I trailed off. My editor was staring at me. 'But, the societal role of storytelling for society and medial change is causing us to restructure the way we see reality –'

'And what do you mean by society? And reality?'

'Um, Western society? And the reality of, well that is...' Did she really have to be so nitpicky? I was clearly writing about Western society, since it's what I'm most familiar with. That being said, I'm sure that the underlying principles involved could theoretically be applied to all of humankind. Obviously. Reality? I

was going to suggest that she buy a dictionary, when she started talking again.

‘What kind of writing is this, then? An article? An op-ed column? A scholarly essay? You have to decide on your format or your readers will have a hard time knowing how to approach your writing’, my editor told me. I struggled to find an answer to this. ‘There are too many generalizations in what you write, which you don’t explain precisely enough or not at all’. She pauses, and then says, apologetically, ‘I’m sorry, but we can’t publish this’. I knew she was right, but I felt despair. Could I write another article with a linear argument by tomorrow? Probably not. It would all come out the same way. I had to face it: the way I speak is the way I write. The way I write is the way I think, and the way I think is, in so many words, digital.

The irony was not lost on me: I had written a completely distracted article about how the Internet enables and amplifies distraction. Could anything sum up my generation so succinctly? Although I was only six years old when I used my first computer, I have never considered myself a digital native. After all, I still remember a time before mobile phones. Thinking of the hours I used to spend reading (actual books) and engaged in imaginative play makes me nostalgic for my younger years. I sometimes try to convince myself that my negligent reading habits can be explained away by the time-consuming responsibilities of adulthood. But this is just an excuse: I am fully aware that my inability to find time to read is directly related to my frequent usage of the Internet.

And yet – I do read. I read all the time. My fascination with the potential of the Internet knows no bounds. Whenever I come across an interesting phenomenon, I want to know how it came to be, what its existence implies, and how it is related to other phenomena. I want to zoom from particularities to universalities. I reverse the telescope: I try to look past the narrow focus to see the bigger picture. Usually I can see the centre clearly in front of me, but the edges are always blurry. The tiny nodes of information, of lines of inquiry, move and branch off endlessly. The Internet caters wonderfully to my thirst for finding missing links and exploring all sides of a story in order to connect the dots. However, when writing a structured essay with linear argumentation, explaining myself coherently becomes complicated. The framework is limited and I simply don’t have enough room to write about all the threads that compose the whole. How to decide where to begin, let alone which bits to neglect? This is my problem: my digital mind does not allow an idea to be discarded. Once discovered, it must be preserved, and somehow woven into the tapestry.

In this age of limitless information, I understand that I am running the unfortunate risk of not only missing my point, but also the satisfaction of communicating my ideas to others. By sacrificing focus, I am sacrificing the attention of my readers. Truth be told, the ease with which I am “distracted” bothers me. But neither do I like black-and-white, cut-and-dry. How do I find

that focus? And get it out of my head onto the page? Having rewritten the article countless times, I felt resigned. It wasn't going to happen after all. And then, sitting there in the sunshine after a long day at the office, after about an hour of talking with my friend, something did happen. 'You know what the real story here is?' asked my editor. 'The story of this paper. The story of trying to write it, and why you wanted to write it so badly, and why it wasn't working'.

Sitting in the sun with pen and paper in your hands is nice. So is surfing the web for infinite ideas. But communication between two people who have a common goal, a union of minds that think differently, a union that yields productive results? That's the best. And that happened for two reasons: my editor's analogue desire for structure and depth, and my digital desire for breadth and creative spontaneity. I realize that not all digital natives are "distracted" in the way that I am, and even if they are, most don't really seem to mind. I engage in intellectual pursuits, but I'm also comfortable with ambiguity and disorder; I am compelled to explore ideas further and further, linking all the elements that I can find. I have not completely embraced the Internet and am inclined to point out its flaws, but I have come to realize that the perceived war between analogue and digital is senseless, a myth that we are telling ourselves in a moment of great change. Moments when everything falls into place rarely happen, and the Internet is a macrocosm of human chaos that we can only explain through narratives. Its greatest purpose is to facilitate collaboration. The danger lies in isolation; we shouldn't hesitate to ask for help. Google is handy, but it was through another person, and the infinite power of storytelling, that I found my voice. And my article.



*Treasure Island*. Photo: Jodi Harvey-Brown.



*Pandora's Box*. Book altered is *A Book of Myths and Legends* (1947). Photo: Jodi Harvey-Brown.



*Olga the Little Owl*. Photo: Jodi Harvey-Brown. All images courtesy of the artist.

### Bookwork #3 Jodi Harvey-Brown

'For as long as I can remember, I've been making art. When I was eight, my grandfather gave me a set of artist's pencils. That was the beginning of my obsession with art. I haven't stopped since. I grew up in a small town in South Eastern PA. After high school I studied art at Seton Hill University in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. It was there that I discovered a love for 3D media. I have always enjoyed reading. Books pull you into a new world. Art lets you see that world. It made sense to me that these two mediums should come together. The books that we love to read should be made to come to life. Characters, for which we care so much, should come out of the pages to show us their stories. What we see in our imaginations as we read should be there for the world to see. My book sculptures are my way of making stories come to life.'

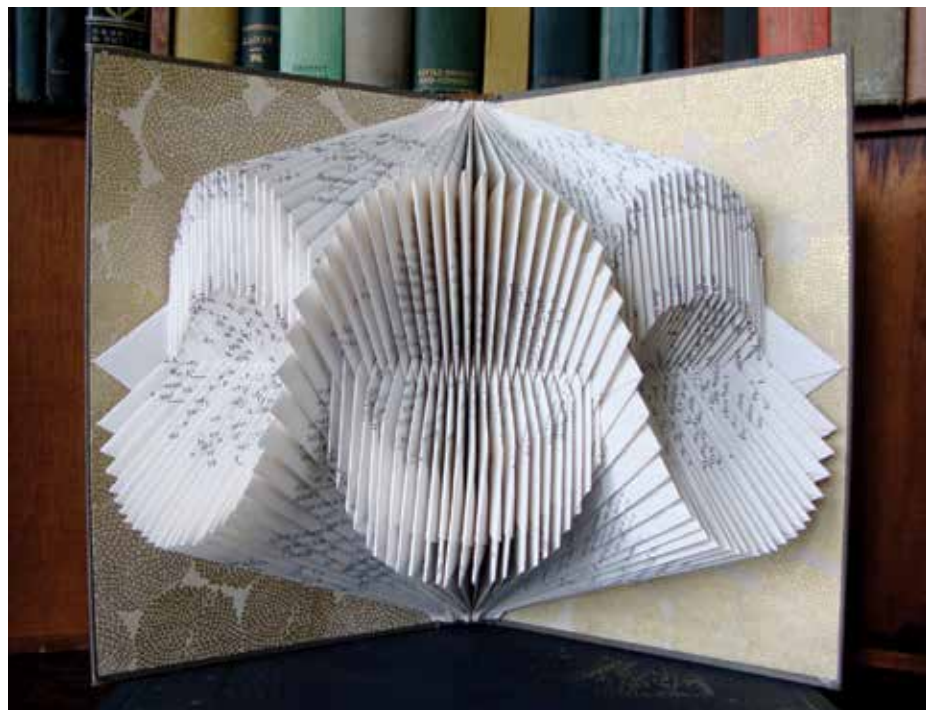
[www.jodiharvey-brown.com](http://www.jodiharvey-brown.com)

## Bookwork #4

### Betsy Birkey

'Few objects could seem more familiar than books. By folding the pages of a book, however, it changes into something new, perhaps something unexpected. For me, this is the inspiration and the excitement: starting with basically the same template each time and challenging myself to manipulate it into something new. As with origami, the paper is not cut or glued; every design is fashioned by folding alone. While cutting the paper would increase the range of design possibilities for a book, I've continued this self-imposed limitation as a way to push myself to think in new ways. Additionally, I like the fact that, were one to unfold the pages, the book would still be readable, and essentially unchanged. I look for books to fold everywhere I go—library sales, garage sales, second hand stores, estate sales and used bookstores. I am careful not to use anything antique or valuable. They are generally books that have become outdated and have fallen out of use. There is a glut of old, unwanted books; quite literally millions of them are pulped each year. The rest are doomed to a life sitting on a dusty bottom shelf or in a box. By folding a book, I like to hope that I'm giving it a new life, and another chance to be appreciated.'

[www.explodedlibrary.com](http://www.explodedlibrary.com)



*Untitled*. Photo: Betsy Birkey. All images courtesy of the artist.

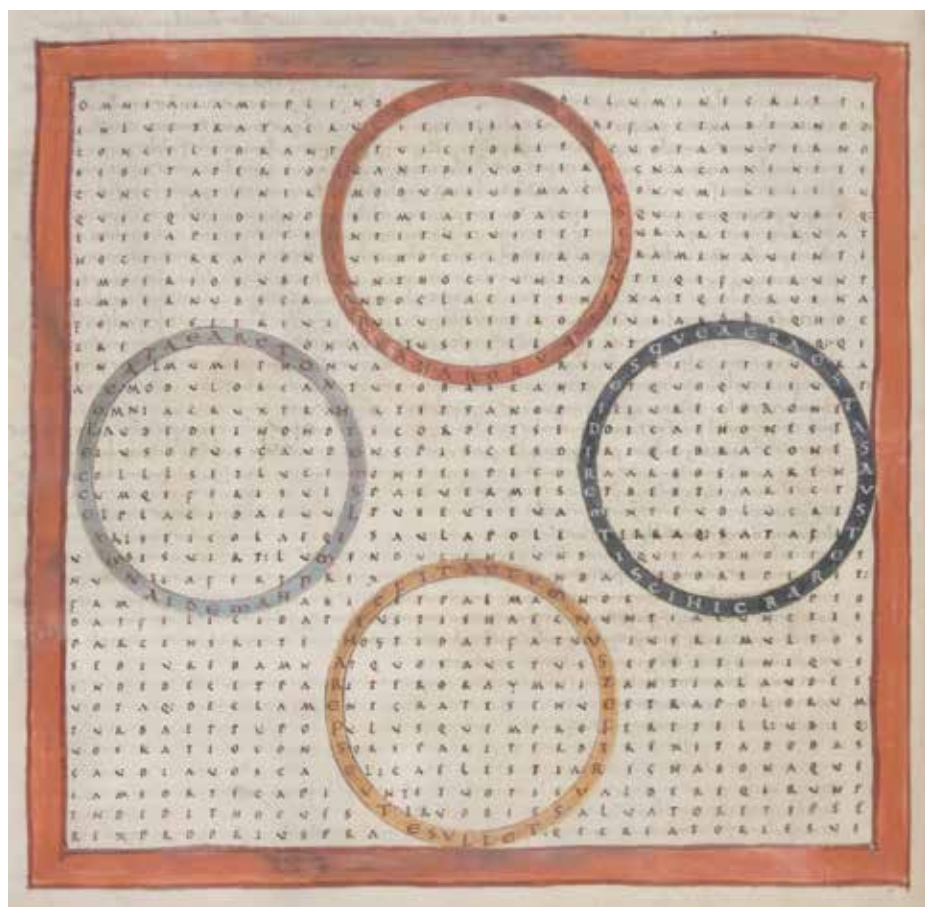




*Untitled* (Exploded Library #198). Photo: Betsy Birkey.



*Untitled* (Exploded Library #201). Vintage World Book atlas. Photo: Betsy Birkey.



Hrabanus Maurus: 'Omnia iam splendent'. Amiens Bibliothèque municipale Ms. 0223, f. 012v.



Poet, geometer, architect, scribe:  
The medieval cruciverbalist and the art of grid poetry  
hilary drummond

*The notion of a close affinity between a building and a well-crafted poem [...] is firmly rooted in classical periodic rhetoric. (xiii)*

*The art of making poetry was always, so it seems, associated in the human mind with the act of divine creation, the second world or nature of the poet being fashioned in imitation of, and in response to, the primary poësis of the deity. (p. 25)*

*The [figure] poet uses “simple geometrical constructions” as his basis. Such constructions embody the medieval concept of the divinity as either architect or geometer who imposes form on the cosmos by using a compass. (p. 40)*

– R. Eriksen, *The Building in the Text*

The metaphors we use to describe language are often analogous with construction. Ideas, once formed, can be shaped. Questions are raised; conclusions are drawn. If an argument is unfounded, it must either be reinforced or torn down. Language itself is a human construct, and of all the uses of language it is no coincidence that poetry—perhaps more than any other literary genre—resembles most closely the Platonic concept of ποιησις [*poiêsis*] (“creation” or “making”) in both orthography and definition; it is created specifically for a purpose (τέλος [*télos*], “end”) apart from normal language use. Furthermore, presuming that poetry is often composed so that format is harmonious with content, it could then be argued that of all the written poetical genres figure poetry—a type of visual poetry which blends text with images, whose origins can be traced to Plato’s era—most closely adheres to the precept of *poiêsis*, since its format is not only harmonious but synonymous with content. However, since only fragments and witnesses of figure poetry remain from the time of Plato, we will move our focus to the Middle Ages, when Alcuin of York is credited with sparking a renaissance of the genre circa ninth century. Inspired by the poets of antiquity, monks and scribes of the medieval period created a number of exceptional figure poems, many of which have been preserved and allow for close study.

If, as certain authors have suggested, the relevance of the textual aspects

of medieval figure poetry has been understudied, then the study of the physical aspects and scribal practices used in the transcription of figure poetry is a woefully neglected area of scholarship. In light of this oversight, this essay will attempt to contribute by looking closely at some physical aspects of grid poetry, a subgenre of figure poetry suggested by the German scholar Ulrich Ernst. It will be argued that the text of grid poetry, taken as a separate entity, does not in itself qualify as poetry by any traditional standards; therefore it is only the combination of the text with the physical aspects of this kind of poetry—notably its particular layout, spatial orientation of “intext” (to be defined in the following section) and grid components—that allow it to be included in the poetical genre at all. By examining archival material, in particular the grid poetry of Hrabanus Maurus (of which many copies have been preserved), this essay will show that this type of figure poetry required a *mise-en-page* that differed from not only the transcription of standard, linear verse, but all other subgenres of figure poetry as well, as defined by Ernst in the following section. Unconventional scribal practices, including horizontal pricking, are further evidence for the significance of physical aspects in the definition of grid poetry. By examining a variety of these physical aspects, it will be shown that the construction and layout of grid poetry is integrally linked with its usage, meaning that accurate design and transcription is essential for the reader to comprehend the various levels of textual (and visual) meaning.

### **Hrabanus Maurus and the genre of figure poetry**

Figure poetry, ‘about which very little has as yet been written’, is defined by Ulrich Ernst as follows:

...In the broadest sense, a lyrical text [...] constructed in such a way that the words – sometimes with the help of purely pictorial means – form a graphic figure which in relation to the verbal utterance has both a mimetic and symbolic function.

Ernst acknowledges that there exist conflicting or overlapping definitions of the various kinds of figure poetry, and in the interest of clarifying terminology he offers his own definition of a separate “species” of figure poetry consisting of five subgenres. The unifying trait of these subgenres is that unlike other types of figure poetry, like micographics or calligrammes, they all utilize at least two textual levels (the second referred to as “intext”).<sup>1</sup> These are: the outline poem, the cubus, the spatial line poem, the intextual imago-poem, and the grid poem. For the purposes of this essay we will discuss only the final subgenre, grid poetry, which Ernst defines as:

...constructed on an equilateral or rectangular text-surface into which colored versus intexti are set. These are formed in the manner of an acrostic [...] into a figurative network of words, which is both mimetic in shape and symbolic in meaning. While in the outline form the figura is constituted by the simple text alone, in the grid poem it is the intext rather than the square or rectangular base text that determines the figure.

It should be noted that correct colouring of the intext, whether by rubrication or other kinds of pigmentation, is so essential to the understanding of the second textual level of the poem that it is included in the definition (fig. 1). It should also be noted that since grid poetry is a subgenre of figure poetry, the two terms can be used interchangeably when discussing grid poetry.

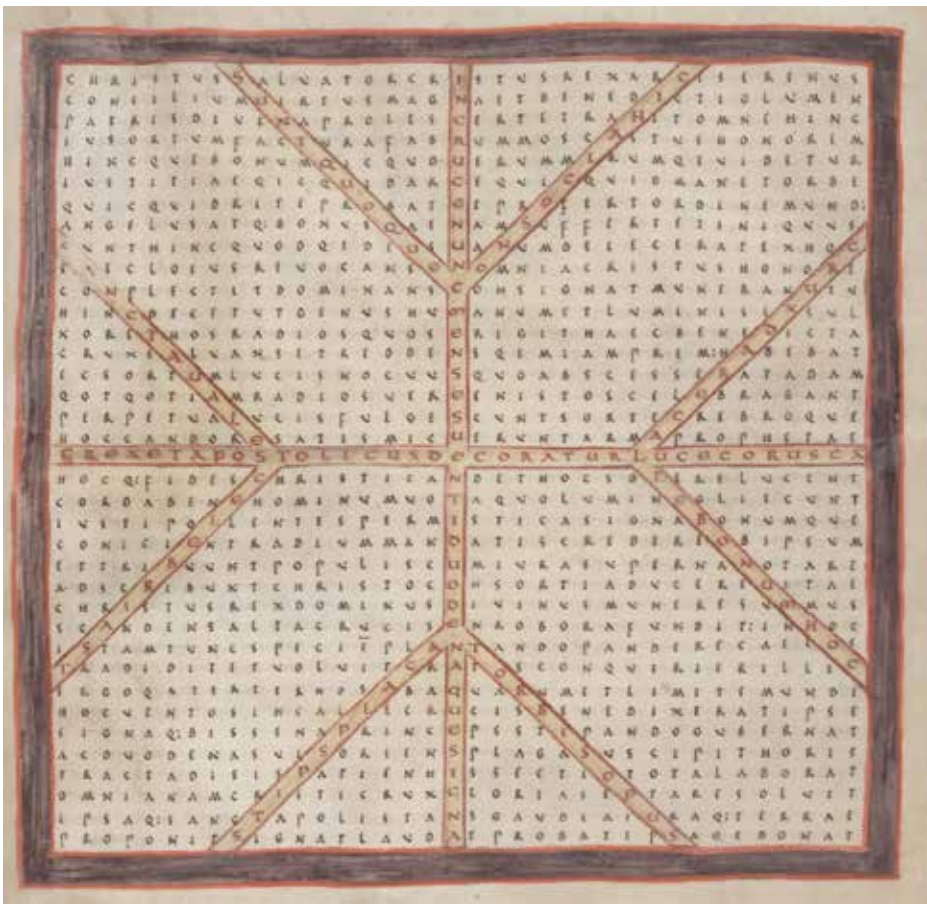


Fig. 1: Example of intext in Hrabanus Maurus' 'Christus Saluator'. Amiens BM Ms. 0223, f. 013v.

The earliest known records of figure poetry date back to the outline poems of Simmias of Rhodes (c. 300 BCE) and Laevius (c. 100 BCE) as well as the acrostics of Theocritus (c. 270 BCE). The genre is traced in one form or another by Higgins throughout the Roman period, including the impressive acrostic works of Fortunatus Venantius (c. 540-c. 605), some of which were presented as images of buildings. Little is known about the transmission of figure poetry between the period of late Roman antiquity and the Carolingian Renaissance; what is known is that the genre enjoyed a revival in popularity after Alcuin of York (c. 735 – 804) presented a collection of figure poems to Charlemagne's court, including a libelli containing the well-documented *Carmina Figurata* of Optatianus Porphyrius, a fourth century exiled Roman citizen (fig. 2). Alcuin was personally interested in figure poetry and authored several acrostic grid poems. His work inspired several other medieval monks and scribes such as Joseph Scottus (who had studied under Alcuin at York) and Abbo of Fleury (c. 945 – 1004) to try their hands at figure poetry. It was also via Alcuin that Hrabanus Maurus (c. 780 – 856), then a young monk at Fulda who would later become the Archbishop of Mainz, first came into contact with the genre and began experimenting with it, authoring and transcribing his own figure poems, many (but not all) of them grid poems. His seminal work is a collection of thirty figure poems (twenty-eight meditations on the cross and two prefatory poems) known as *In laudem sanctae cruce*s. According to Perrin, eighty-one copies of this work survive.<sup>2</sup>

Although of course it is impossible to definitively comment on the mental, emotional, or spiritual state of a medieval monk engaged in authoring a figure poem, the complexity with which they are constructed could indicate that the work was more than just an act of divine meditation and communion through textual composition. In fact, it is entirely possible that constructing grid poetry was a medieval game of solitary wordplay that both entertained and pleased the monks.<sup>3</sup> Edwards suggests that this was the case with Porphyrius,<sup>4</sup> and Sedgwick described figure poems as 'ancient jeux d'esprit'. It is a clever double-headed phrase that invokes both religious and personal satisfaction,



Fig. 2: Optatianus Porphyrius, Poem X of *Carmina Figurata*. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 2421, f. 051v.

and opens the discussion to further scholarly inquiry into the culture of medieval people at play, especially those constrained by the strict tenets of a religious order.

### The architecture of layout

Scribal convention for the layout of figure poetry differed greatly from that of more standard, linear verse being transcribed during the Carolingian period. According to Clemens and Graham, ‘in the early medieval period poetry written in the vernacular was usually not laid out in verse lines but had the same lay-out as prose [...] [it] was structured by meter and alliteration rather than rhyme [...] and used punctuation as a way of marking the meter’. Latin poetry, however, was copied linearly, with each poetic line assigned a new line on the page. Punctuation in Latin verse was used in the same way as prose, although ‘many scribes preferred to place these punctuation marks at the far right [...] so that the punctuation formed a column that paralleled the column of initials on the left side of the page’.

Although the symmetrical transcription of initials to punctuation in standard verse indicates a distant relationship to the symmetrical construction of grid poetry, its layout is nevertheless in stark contrast to the layout of both vernacular and Latin verse in that it uses none of the structured elements associated with either: no alliteration, meter, line-breaks, stanzas, rhyme or punctuation. In the following section (‘The definition of the intext’) it will be shown that the base text of figure poetry was intentionally badly written in order to accommodate the symmetry and intext. If this is taken to be true, and if it is also the case that the base text apparently contains no basic poetic elements (stanza, rhyme, etc.), and if it is furthermore not transcribed using the same scribal conventions as standard verse was, how then can it be described as poetry at all? As mentioned previously, it is the argument of this essay that the concept of *poiêsis*, or the significance of the construction or “making” of the poem, and by proxy its layout and visual presentation, is precisely why it is considered to be poetry.

It should be noted that one element figure poetry might have in common with standard verse is that from the ninth century ‘it became common to begin each line of poetry with a capital letter.’ Occasionally in grid poetry the first letter of each line (the initials that formed the vertical acrostic line) as well as the intext would sometimes be transcribed slightly larger than the rest of the base text to highlight the different textual levels, but more often than not the size of the letters would remain uniform throughout. Furthermore, like Latin verse, in grid poetry each “poetic” line was given its own line on the page, but the lines were written according to the constraint of the number of letters per line rather than a semantic or poetic division.

The lack of spaces between the words of the base text is also of interest,

as this practice was quickly implemented for standard verse but never adopted for grid poetry, as it would have disturbed the symmetry (and therefore the geometry) of the grid. Laying out the base text with no spaces is a practice that continues today in the example of modern crossword puzzles. In medieval figure poetry, is it simply a question of presentation (no room in the grid for spaces, and aesthetically displeasing to have gaps in the symmetry of the grid), or is it more complicated than that? Did the lack of spacing indicate that the reading of figure poetry was a form of *lectio divina*, or prayer through textual meditation?<sup>5</sup> Was figure poetry meant to be read aloud? Perhaps not, if the “quality” of the base text is judged by so many scholars as poetically substandard. But if it was intended to be vocalized, the initial acrostic line as well as the intext could be viewed as a lovely caesurae after the base text had been read: the reader would need to lift his eyes (and perhaps take a breath) before returning to a different part of the page and reading the acrostic line and each intext, as they are often physically separated on the page by several word lengths. They are also often written vertically, crossing the base text; this unusual format requires a different way of reading altogether. Again, this unconventional reading practice is all due to the multi-tiered construction of figure poetry.

Finally, a brief note on the script. While the *Carmina* of Porphyrius survives only in fragmentary form, all known copies were transcribed in a display script, most commonly Rustic Capitals, which Parkes claims to be the oldest Roman book hand. This is also true for other figure poetry of the ancient period attributed to Simmias and Venantius. As the genre moved into the Middle Ages, the tradition of transcribing the base text in Rustic Capitals or another form of majuscule script continued. This further differentiates the transcription of figure poetry from other genres of verse, since majuscule scripts were mainly used for titles and headers, not for large blocks of text. Parkes attributes this consistent use of Rustic Capitals to the connection between a scribe selecting a typeface and the significance of ‘certain texts’ (in this case, figure poetry) to a reader:

When a particular script had been preferred for a certain text, or kind of text, which had a special significance for readers, the image of the handwriting could itself acquire an emblematic significance by association. Carolingian scribes developed a hierarchy of scripts incorporating ancient scripts, but with its own conventions. The rank of a script in this hierarchy was eventually determined by its function in the layout and presentation of the text on the page. A primary display script was employed for titles [...] The choice of scripts for these different functions was usually made by scribes. Display scripts were sometimes used for text, most notably in copies of figure poems.

If the choice of a particular script by a scribe was determined by its 'function in the layout and presentation of the text' what does the choice of display scripts for figure poetry say about its function in medieval times? This question, as well as the lack of base-text spacing and how it relates to medieval monastic reading practices, are surely topics for further inquiry.

### The artistry of the intext

Figure poetry was considered a form of religious art that incorporated aspects of both image and word, presenting them as a single unit, while the three levels of comprehension—first, the acrostic lines of poetry that make up the background of the grid, then the secondary poems embedded in the primary text (intext), and finally the visual pattern or image (or sometimes even a third layer of text) that became apparent when the intext was highlighted—indicate a mystical relationship with the unification of the trinity and further strengthen Chazelle's argument that both the creation and the reading of figure poetry were considered a way of communing with God. The central axis of the grid forms a natural cross, and the theme of crucifixion is seen throughout. It has even been suggested that rubrication on the central axis could represent the blood of Jesus on the cross (figures 3-4).

During the period of antiquity, Higgins claims, the figure poems of Porphyrius 'in their original form, according to the scholia in the Kluge and Polara editions, [were] executed in precious metal letters on dark blue or purple

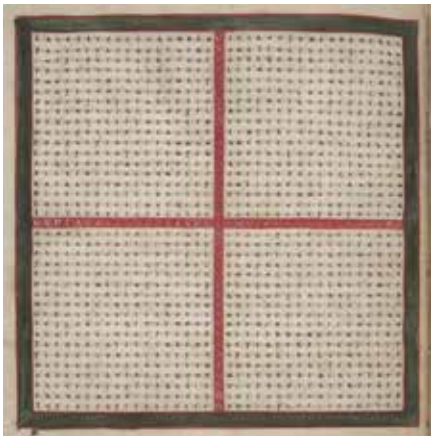


Fig. 3: Simple intext showing the central cross image in Hrabanus Maurus' *'Ergo prophetarum'*. Amiens BM Ms. 0223, f. 031v.

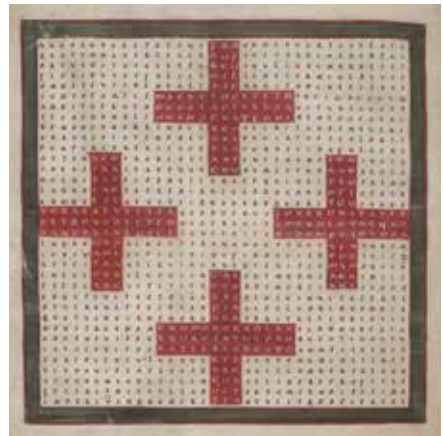


Fig. 4: More complex intextual images of the cross in Hrabanus Maurus' *'Arbor odore potens'*. Amiens BM Ms. 0223, f. 018v.



backgrounds'. Purple pigment was difficult to come by and very expensive, indicating that the poetry held a relatively high societal status (whether literary, religious, artistic—or perhaps all three—is impossible to say). In the Middle Ages, figure poetry continued to be highly regarded. Perrin describes a luxurious illuminated copy held at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, and other richly decorated copies made at Fulda and intended as gifts. However, there also survive several simpler, unattributed copies, demonstrating that there was a popular demand for the poetry as well.

As mentioned earlier, Ernst has already noted the importance of rubrication or other forms of colouration to figure poetry in general, and to grid poetry in particular. It is so important, in fact, that he includes it as part of the subgenre's definition. In grid poetry, not only does physicality follow function, but is synonymous with it. If the intext was not instantly visible, the user would be left with simply a symmetrical block of letters. Granted, the linguistic and grammatical gymnastics required to construct legibility within such a grid is still impressive, but scholars—such as Higgins—who have studied the text in depth seem to have reached a consensus that, independently of the rubrication, the text does not measure up as poetry. In the base text of the grid, the authors were often forced to misspell words or use questionable grammar in order to create the initial acrostic line as well as the intext. Higgins claims that Porphyrius' language 'was rather flat and extravagant, his imagery opaque. But that he is remembered at all is probably due to his visually striking works'. In fact, the acrostic lines were sometimes so difficult to read that in case of some figure poems, the grid poems were transcribed in addition to a more legible prose "translation", complete with annotations.

By comparing copies made over the years and in different locations, it seems that choice of colour for the borders and intext was largely arbitrary and left up to the scribe or the user to determine (compare figures 5-6), as long as it was there, although the intext was most often coloured with red. This contrasts with the use of rubrication in almost all other situations, as according to Clemens and Graham it was most commonly used for titles or underscoring text.

### **The geometry of the grid**

That grid poetry necessitates a grid might seem like a redundant statement, but the implications of drawing a grid in medieval times required calculations beyond the conventional line ruling required for standard verse. Firstly, the scribe would have to know exactly how many squares the grid (or lattice, as it is often described in the literature) required before beginning to draw, meaning he would need to count or calculate the number of letters in the poem. According to Gwara, scribes marked up their page using references when copying figure poetry:





Fig. 5: Hrabanus Maurus' 'Christus, amor, uotum' with red intext. Amiens BM Ms. 0223, f. 027v.



Fig. 6: A later transcription of the same poem. The scribe made different choices when colouring the intext. BNF, MS lat. 2421, f. 025v.

... lattice references first provide the vertical coordinate followed by the horizontal coordinate. Only points at which the acrostic changes direction are indicated, even through the intervening letters comprise part of the intexta. A semicolon divides sections of the intexta.

Gwara uses 'coordinate' to describe referential points in the physical layout of the poem, and it comes as no surprise that mathematical references are found throughout the literature when describing figure poetry. Here it becomes obvious how the graphic elements of a figure poem's intext are quite literal as they are "drawn" on a graph, or a diagram that shows the relation between typically two variable quantities, each measured along one of a pair of axes at right angles. These axes form natural "crosses" in the grid, creating a satisfying harmony between the visual presentation of the poem and its subject—which was invariably dedicated to God—and showing a quite synonymous relationship between form and content. Williamson also writes about the use of coordinate grids in manuscripts of the Middle Ages:

...point-based grids were used to emphasize the focusing potential of the coordinate, either in and of itself or as the conjunction of two axes. This constructive logic supported the late medieval grid's symbolic status of a set of qualitative vertical relations between the superphysical above and the material reality below, which were divinely generated by means of point coordinates conceived as "thresholds".

Note the use of the word ‘constructive’, indicating the grid’s creative relationship to *poiêsis* as suggested in the introduction. Furthermore, quite apropos of our subject of poetry, a graph has the secondary meaning of a visual symbol that represents a unit of sound or other feature of speech, including not only letters of the alphabet but also punctuation marks. Alas, if the term “graphic” had not unfortunately taken on the connotation of “explicitly violent” in modern usage, this author would suggest that the more accurate term of “graphic poetry” should replace “grid poetry”.

The number of squares in the grid, or graph, corresponded to an odd number of letters composing the horizontal lines, and either an equal or greater amount of odd-numbered squares composing the vertical lines (not all grid poems were equilateral – some were rectangular) (fig. 10). Gwara continues:

Ultimately, Porphyry’s *Carmen 2* was one of the most imitated acrostic formats [...] Abbo’s acrostics follow a long-established pattern in their use of the 35-square lattice. On occasion, Venantius Fortunatus uses a grid of only 33 squares (Christ’s age at the crucifixion) and Hrabanus Maurus as many as 37.

The suggestion that the number thirty-three is a reference to Christ’s age presents the idea that the number of squares in the grid, though always odd-numbered (another tradition that continues today, in the construction of modern crossword puzzles), was far from arbitrary. Again, if sections one and two have not already provided enough evidence that the physical aspects of grid poetry are what defines it as poetry, here is another example of form expressing content through the visual representation of the cross as (literally) central to all things. Paired with the number of letters in the grid corresponding to Christ’s age, this practice suggests that the central cross caused by an odd-numbered lattice is not merely an aesthetic consideration. It suggests the possibility that above and beyond the already established trinity of understanding—base text



Fig. 7: An image of Christ is revealed through the coloured intext in Maurus’ ‘O Christe salvator’. BNF, MS lat. 2421, f. oiv.

acrostic, intext, image/letter/pattern—every figure poem might incorporate a fourth dimension of complexity in the hidden form of numerological and gematric calculation. This is a subject of much speculation among figure poetry scholars, and it is the mathematical nature of the grid that provides the context for this kind of speculation.<sup>6</sup>

Since it has already been established in the first two sections that the visual impact of the poetry was as important as the text itself, spatial symmetry of the lattice was essential and achieved through the practice of pricking. Although vertical pricking was a very common, standard practice, horizontal pricking with a wheel was only used in a case where a perfectly symmetrical grid or table was required. Tables that did not need to be symmetrical (for example, where the columns were of varying width but the rows stayed identical) were only pricked vertically, where horizontal rulings were made individually and as needed. Apart from figure poetry, in what other situation would a scribe need to prick both horizontally and vertically? Graphs are synonymous with charts and diagrams and most commonly associated with scientific or mathematical data sets, astronomical almanacs or geometric diagrams (suggesting perhaps a further logical connection with the gematric aspects of figure poetry). Apart from the unique exception of figure poetry, it is extremely rare to see other literary works of prose or poetry laid out in a grid format. It is therefore not too far-fetched to suggest that in medieval times, figure poetry might have been seen as a complementary bridge between the sciences, art and God, showing again that the physical form of the grid (coordinate-based central axes depicting a cross) was in perfect harmony with the content, or intention (divine communion through textual meditation) of the work.

Finally, when considering figure poetry in the context of medieval Christianity it is important to note that the physicality of the grid was not only relevant to the visual interpretation of the poem, but to its symbolic interpretation as well, as Williamson has shown.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

Although the Latinate term “cruciverbalist” is a relatively modern neologism and most often applied to constructors of crossword puzzles, when deconstructed into its phonemic components it can be interpreted as simply “one who practices crossing words”. This term is quite applicable to any participant in the creation, transcription or consumption of grid poetry. To conclude, we make the fitting “crossing” from modernity back to antiquity, where we refer once more to the school of Platonic philosophy at the age when the earliest examples of figure poetry were being recorded. There it was taught that excellence in *poiêsis* is achieved by τεχνη [technê] (“skill”), and it would be difficult to argue against the

presence of highly refined technê shown in the composition and transcription of medieval figure poetry. These cruciverbalists demonstrated geometrical and design skills akin to those employed by early architects, although their temples were built from ink rather than stone. It is precisely these specialized technical skills that were required in order to allow correct reading, comprehension, visual and symbolic interpretation of the poetry to occur. Any errors committed during the design or transcription process would have resulted in a flawed work. Therefore, as this essay has endeavoured to show, it can be argued that its complex and sophisticated process of construction makes grid poetry, among all poetical genres, not only an important subgenre of figure poetry but perhaps the most poetical of all.

#### Notes

- 1 Ernst refers here to his colleague E. Kuhs, who agrees with him that poetry in which 'intext' develops as the main figured component should be seen as a genre unto itself. She calls this genre *Buchstabendichtung* or 'letter-poems' (Ernst, pp. 6-7), although no official definition in English yet exists.
- 2 Michel Perrin, a leading scholar of figure poetry, argues that the collection should be known as *In honorem Sanctae cruce* rather than the more familiar title, citing not only written instructions by Maurus 'donné à l'explicit du livre I par la totalité des manuscrits du IXème siècle', but that he was possibly making reference to his predecessor of the genre, Porphyrius:
 

Quelle est la difference entre les deux termes – laus et honor –, dont le sens est malgré tout très proche ? "In laudem sanctae cruce" rapproche le titre de l'œuvre de la louange du moine, du religieux et dont c'est pour ainsi dire la fonction : la poésie et sa rumination sont prière aux yeux de Dieu. "In honorem sanctae cruce" a une tonalité un peu autre, plus antique tardive et impériale sans doute... Ainsi, chez Porphyrius – le modèle de Raban –, le mot honos, employé seulement quatre fois, revient deux fois dans le poème 5 (vers 10 et 29) où il fait question très précisément de la gloire dont se couvrent Constantin et le César Crispus (Perrin, xxvi – xxix).
- 3 'The joy of a scribe in his task is stressed by E.K. Rand in his essay, "A Romantic Approach to the Middle Ages". To exemplify this attitude of the medieval copyist, the author chooses a couplet written in praise of the scribe by the ninth century abbot, scholar and scribe Hrabanus Maurus. I quote from Dr. Rand's essay: "Hrabanus is thinking not only of the writer's service in giving the precious of sacred writ its due immortality. Pleasure accompanies his task. Loving care goes in the tracing of the words and the joy of an artist accompanies their making.
 

Nam digiti scripto laetantur, lumina visu  
Mens volvet sensu mystics verba dei  
'Fingers delight in the writing and eyes in the sight of the letters  
While there indwells in his mind mystic communion with God.'

 This is the joy, the sacred joy of the artist in his art.' (cited in W. Marry, *The Mediaeval Scribe*, p. 214) .
- 4 'The *Carmina* can thus be divided into at least two separate subsets. An early subset was created for personal enjoyment and represents the evolution of the creative process, much like the preliminary drafts of a modern scholarly article. A later subset, representing the best that Optatianus had to offer, was intended for imperial presentation, in the same way that a modern historian presents only his best and most refined work for publication.' (Edwards, 'The Carmina

of Publilius Optatianus Porphyrius and the Creative Process', p. 449).

- 5 J. Robertson on the questions of spacing and lectio divina:  
 'Early medieval authorities testify, and modern studies of the manuscript have shown, that from the second century CE onward, the spaces and interpuncta which had been places between words disappeared, leaving the reader to contend with unseparated text (scriptura continua). In the era of Saint Benedict, a monk making his first approach to a text needed to vocalize in order to decipher the writing.'
- Many of Robertson's theories of lectio divina are applicable to the reading of figure poetry.
- 6 D. Howlett has produced a mind-bending analysis of computistic and gematric phenomena in the acrostic grid poetry of Abbo Fleury. See his "Computus in the Works of Victorius of Aquitaine and Abbo of Fleury and Ramsey" in I. Warntjes and D.Ó. Cróinin (eds), "The Easter Controversy of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages." *Studia Traditionis Theologiae* 10 (2011): 288–324.
- 7 Williamson writes extensively on religious symbolism and the grid in Medieval Christianity in 'The Grid: History, Use, Meaning':  
 The true basis of the grid (and of God's design plan which it symbolizes) is in fact the cross itself. This conclusion is fully consistent with the medieval interpretation of the cross in which the horizontal and the vertical beams are seen to represent – as is Christ Himself – the conjunction of heaven and earth respectively. It is the point of heavenly and earthly conjunction that is of fundamental importance here (i.e. of God becoming flesh) rather than the perpendicular bypass of two axes. The combined emphasis on coordinate and intersection was thus indissolubly linked in the symbolism of the point-based grid in the later Middle Ages (p. 18).

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*Idiom*, 1994. 22 Biennial of São Paulo, Brasil.



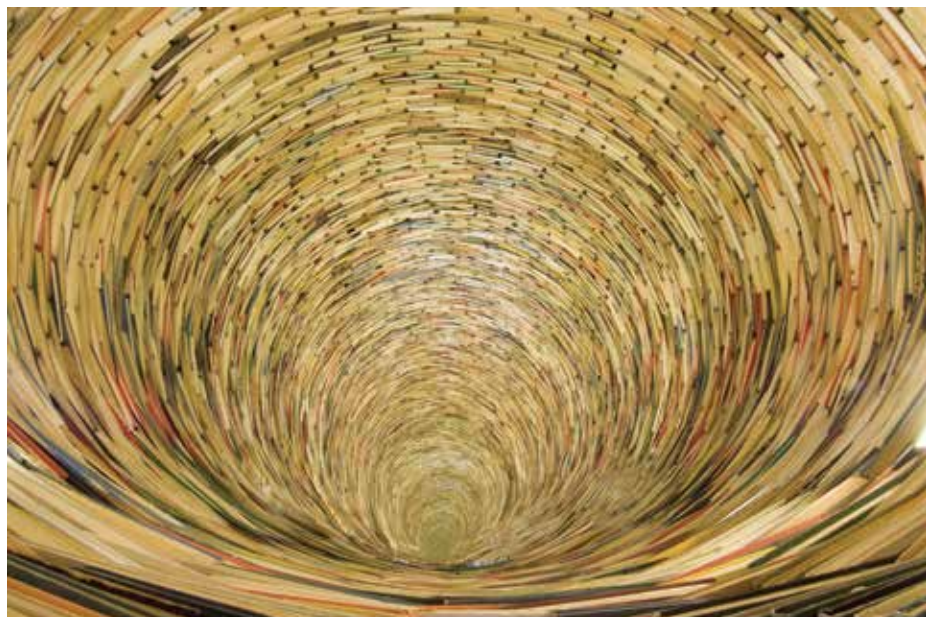
*Idiom*, 2013, Museo Marca, Catanzaro, Italy.  
Photo: A. Renda.



## Bookwork #5 Matej Krén

Matej Krén's work is remarkable for its exceptional scope. In recent years his distinctive approach to sculpture, object, installation, drawing, print, painting, action art, film, music, sound and word has attracted attention at many prestigious international art shows. His work not only touches on very contemporary problems, such as erasing the boundaries between reality and fiction, memory and the present, but also on classic themes in art—the relation between inner and outer, the part and the whole. Typical of his work is a searching for a complexity of content expressed in a monumental and comprehensible language. In 1998 he installed a “tower of books” entitled *Idiom* in the entrance hall of the Prague Municipal Library. His rotunda made of books, *Gravity Mixer*, became a key part of the Czech pavilion at EXPO 2000 in Hanover.

[www.matejkren.cz](http://www.matejkren.cz)



*Idiom* - interior, 1998. Prague Municipal Library, Czech Republic. Photo: G. Urbánek.



*False ceiling*, 1995. Books and steel cabling. Photos courtesy of Richard Wentworth and the Lisson Gallery.

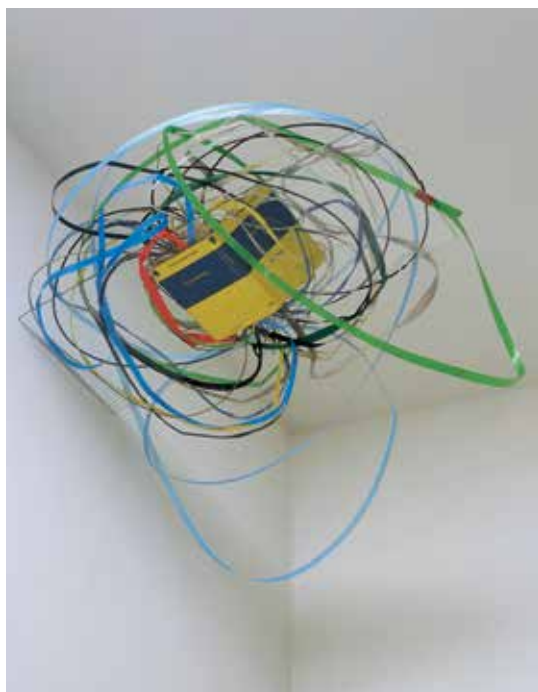
## Bookwork #6

### Richard Wentworth

Richard Wentworth's work, encircling the notion of objects and their use as part of our day-to-day experiences, has altered the traditional definition of sculpture as well as photography. By transforming and manipulating industrial and/or found objects into works of art, Wentworth subverts their original function and extends our understanding of them by breaking the conventional system of classification. The sculptural arrangements play with the notion of "ready-made" and juxtaposition of objects that bear no relation to each other. Whereas in photography, as in the ongoing series *Making Do and Getting By*, Wentworth documents the everyday, paying attention to objects, occasional and involuntary geometries as well as uncanny situations that often go unnoticed.

[www.lissongallery.com/artists/richard-wentworth](http://www.lissongallery.com/artists/richard-wentworth)

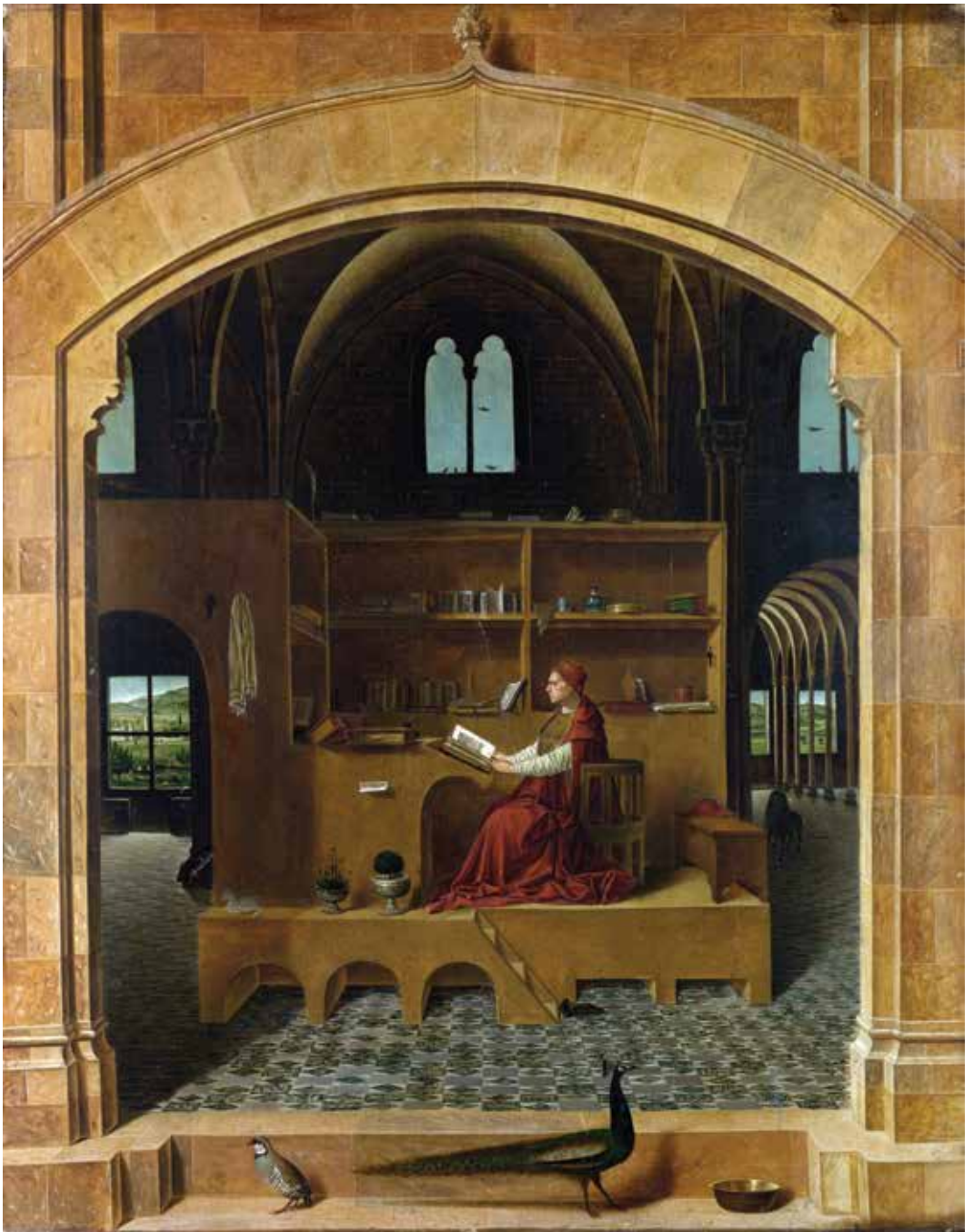




*The Loops*, 1999. Books, assorted plastics and metals on glass.



*Plume*, 2012. Book, soldered steel cable, mirror.



*Saint Jerome in his study*, Antonello da Messina. National Gallery, London.

**“Every original spirit... saying nothing new”**  
**The printing press and the dawn of Humanism in Holland**

**mathijs timmermans**

Humanism and printing are often mentioned in conjunction and are sometimes regarded as two sides of the same coin. In addition, printed works are often considered a departure from medievalism to humanism and (early) modernism. Print aided humanism insofar as it made possible the dissemination of humanist writings, though printing in itself is not humanist per se. It is the combination of mass dissemination and supposed new ideas of scholarship, dubbed humanistic, that brought about the idea that humanism and print are inseparable and that together they ended the Middle Ages and heralded a new era of textual communication. As Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin neatly put it: ‘Rapidly, under the mounting flood of new books written for an ever increasing public, the heritage of the Middle Ages lost its hold’. This view has been criticized and debated by scholars, especially book historians and medievalists. The view is persistent, however, among the wider public and scholars alike. This essay aims to contribute to this discussion by elucidating some aspects of the transitional period between the Middle Ages and (early) modernism. Due to the scope and nature of the essay, it will concern itself only with the county of Holland<sup>1</sup> during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in order to take a more detailed look at these developments without rendering the subject tedious. In addition, only historical writings during this period will be taken into account. The main issue is whether printing brought about the dramatic changes that authors such as Elizabeth Eisenstein claim it did, and—perhaps more relevant to the current hypothesis—if those changes resulted in the transition from medievalism to humanism.

To begin, it is important to elaborate on why this essay limits itself to historical texts produced in the county of Holland. Medieval readers were interested in historical accounts more than any other genre, and a large number of humanist writers were writing histories. In investigating to what extent the change from manuscript writing to print entailed a transition from medievalism to humanism, Holland makes an excellent case study. The historiographical tradition in Holland changed quite drastically during the fifteenth century and at the same time a number of histories were printed. Three chronicles in particular can aid in illuminating the relation between print, medievalism and humanism. These chronicles are the anonymous *Gouda Chronicle* (c.1440-1477), Jan van Naaldwijk's second *Chronicle of Holland* (c. 1520), and Cornelius Aurelius' *Divisionchronicle*

(1517). This essay will proceed by looking at these chronicles in some detail and considering the views of select scholars on these writings and their impact.

Starting with the most recent of these chronicles, the *Divisiechroniek* (*Divisionchronicle*), written by Cornelius Aurelius (c. 1460-1531) in 1517, originally titled *Die Chronyk van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vriesland* (*Chronicle of Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland*), represents an early humanist history in the form of a printed chronicle. The chronicle is a Universal Chronicle (or world chronicle—indicating a historical work of the world starting with the Creation) focusing on the county of Holland, divided into parts or divisions (Dutch: *divisies*). Tilmans maintains that the *Divisionchronicle* introduced humanist history writing in Holland, and that its contents are a complete departure from earlier Dutch chronicles and histories. Her main argument for this statement is that ‘Aurelius and his contemporaries were the first generation to look for, and to find their way to printers’. Tilmans further maintains that the *Divisionchronicle* was exceptional in that it focused on the history of Holland, since before 1500 ‘[m]ost printers showed little interest in local history’, and it was the first to contain a national myth of origin: the Myth of Batavia. Although Tilmans admits that earlier historiographers, starting in the fifteenth century, explored myths of origin for the county of Holland, she argues that the replacement of the Trojan myth of origin was a radical departure from earlier historiography. This is mainly due to what could be called a humanist method of argumentation. That is to say, Aurelius used classical sources made available through printing to support his arguments, found in the chronicle.

The Trojan myth of origin was a popular theme in Western-European historical works from the seventh century onwards. The Trojan myth of origin is a concept that traces a royal or princely genealogy to the end of the second destruction of Troy, usually to Aeneas and his bloodline. The first chronicles to mention this myth of origin are the so-called *Fredegar Chronicles* or *Historia Francorum* (c. 660), in seventh century France, but the myth became widespread via the so-called *Grandes Chroniques de France* (1274-1461), or the royal French Chronicles, written at the monastery of St. Denis, the official centre of historiographical production of the French crown. The myth is present in Holland’s historiography from the fifteenth century onwards, albeit in a somewhat different form and for different reasons. I will come back to the replacement of this Trojan myth of origin by Aurelius’ chronicle of the Batavian myth in more detail below.

Tilmans’ claims have suffered a drawback in recent historical writing on historiography in fifteenth and sixteenth century Holland. Sjoerd Levelt has analysed Jan van Naaldwijk’s two unpublished chronicles of Holland, written in manuscript form. They were written at the same time as Aurelius’ *Divisionchronicle*; van Naaldwijk’s first chronicle was finished in 1514 and his

second chronicle around 1520.<sup>2</sup> Van Naaldwijk's chronicles are closely related to the *Divisionchronicle*. In his prologue to the second chronicle van Naaldwijk states that he started writing his second chronicle because the *Divisionchronicle* appeared in print and included many new insights on the history of Holland.<sup>3</sup> More than just an analysis of van Naaldwijk's chronicles, Levelt's study entails a treatment of the historiographical developments in Holland. In doing so, Levelt counters Tilmans' claim that the Myth of Batavia is a complete departure from medievalism to humanism. 'Seen within the context of Holland's historical tradition', he writes, 'the Batavian myth was an old story, retold in a humanist vocabulary, part of a continuous tradition of historiographical experimentation from at least the middle of the fourteenth century onwards'. In addition, Tilman's claim that the *Divisionchronicle* intended to replace the other myths of origin explored in the fifteenth century is falsified, because these myths are presented next to the Batavian myth of origin. Tilman's claims are thus significantly nuanced with regard to a radical departure from medievalism to humanism.

It is important to note Levelt's statement about how the Batavian myth of origin is a reworking of earlier stories into a humanist vocabulary. Given the fact that the Trojan myth of origin was a very important theme in Western-European historiography (as has been briefly explained above) it is not surprising that humanist historiographers sought to use this myth to some extent in their works. Medieval people by nature were very suspicious of anything radically new. In medieval historiography this suspicion is reflected in the fact that all historical works of the Middle Ages are compilations. There are sound arguments in favour of using compilation in medieval historical reasoning. Bernard Guenée points to the wariness of medieval people to novelties: '[B]ecause their readers were wary of any new proposition, and relied more on older sources, every original spirit would have to hold that he was saying nothing new'.<sup>4</sup> Put another way, a compiler could present new information in a familiar way to his audience by adhering to old practices. These old practices, in turn, gave the work authoritative standing because it seemed like nothing (radically) new was being proposed. Seen in this light, Aurelius' Batavian myth of origin seems to resemble one of the most fundamental characteristics of medieval historiography, namely compiling old information and adding new elements to create a new (though familiar) narrative. Humanist historians, however creative they might have been, adhered to the medieval principle of compilation to strengthen their argumentation, much like scholars nowadays remain standing on the shoulders of giants—to quote a famous English physicist.

The so-called *Gouda Chronicle* serves as an excellent case study to further Levelt's line of thinking. This somewhat misleading name (for it is not a chronicle of the city of Gouda) has been given due to a posthumous edition of Petrus Scriverius (1576-1660), called the *Oude Goutsche Kronycxken* (*Old Gouda Chronicle*),

in 1663. The chronicle was originally published in print as the *Chronijke of Historie van Hollant, van Zeelant ende Vrieslant ende van den Sticht van Utrecht* (*Chronicle or History of Holland, of Zeeland and Frisia, and of the Episcopacy of Utrecht*), in 1478 by the printer Gerard de Leeu in Gouda. Two more prints were made in Delft (by Jacob Jacobsz., between 1483-1486) and in Leiden (by Heynricus Heynrici, in 1483). The printed edition of the chronicle has twelve known manuscript predecessors (as well as three manuscript transcriptions of the 1478 printed edition), and this makes the chronicle of particular interest with regard to changes in the content of historical works during the period that witnessed the shift from manuscript to print. From the fifteen known manuscripts of the *Gouda Chronicle* we can infer an interesting and dynamic history of origin of the chronicle.

The chronicle contains a significant amount of new information. Yet it has taken a long time for scholars to recognize this new information as unique to this chronicle. That is because the text of the chronicle appears similar to a range of texts from around the same time (ca. 1440) that have comparable titles. The oldest surviving manuscript of the chronicle resides in Leiden's university library under signature BPL 136 D. The printed edition differs significantly from BPL 136 D in terms of content. BPL 136 D ends in 1436, while the printed edition continues to 1477, and the printed edition has more details on certain events than BPL 136 D. The text in BPL 136 D is also present in four other manuscripts. Three other manuscripts contain additions to the text until 1456, three continue until 1477, and four manuscripts are direct copies of the printed edition of 1478.<sup>5</sup> It is with these considerations in mind that Antheun Janse has dubbed the earliest version of the chronicle the *Histories of Hollant* (*Historien van Hollant*), in imitation of the starting sentence of BPL 136 D (also present in four other manuscripts):

A long time have I been asked to make and write the histories of Holland, how the land was first conquered and started to be populated, and who they were who first conquered and builded the cities, and how they got their name, and how the land was reigned afterwards, from Dirk the first count of Holland until the mighty duke Philip of Burgundy reigned in Holland.<sup>6</sup>

Janse uses the title *Histories of Hollant* (subsequently abbreviated as *HoH*) to refer to the group of manuscripts constituting the oldest version of the chronicle.

This group of manuscripts had a predecessor in turn, but this version of the chronicle is not handed over to us in its original version. Janse dates the creation of this predecessor around 1440. This predecessor, like the *HoH*, must have contained the history of Holland until 1436, but it likely lacked the most important feature in terms of new information that is present in the *HoH*. That new information is the pre-history of Holland, or the origins of the county, present



in the prologue of BPL 136 D (ff. 1r-16v). Here, the author traces the origins of the people of Holland back to the time of the Trojans. In doing so he follows the text of herald Beyeren's *Worldchronicle* (Dutch: *Wereldkroniek*), written at the beginning of the fifteenth century (see below), and there are significant similarities in the text of BPL 136 D and the *Worldchronicle*. This is also the reason that the new information in the *HoH* has not been noticed for a long time.<sup>7</sup> Herald Beyeren, or Claes Heyenzoon, was undoubtedly the most important historiographer of Holland at the beginning of the fifteenth century. He wrote history as an important courtier at the court of William VI of Holland (r. 1404-1417) and he was an important herald (first for the duchy of Gelre, later for the county of Holland). Most of his works have survived in penmanship and are full of heraldic illuminations, executed with considerable skill. His *Hollantsche Cronike* was written as a diptych with his *Worldchronicle*, both in two versions (the first version was begun in 1404, the second finished in 1409). The works of Beyeren enjoyed wide dissemination and were an important source for many other chroniclers working in or near Holland, manuscript BPL 136 D among them.<sup>8</sup>

If we read the text of BPL 136 D we see that something curious is happening on f. 16v. After the earliest history of Holland, from the destruction of Troy until the reign of Dirk I, is the following text:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.  
And because I do not want to spend my time in idleness, I want,  
because I have been requested to do so, to describe the most  
beautiful chronicle, that one can only find in the land of Holland.<sup>9</sup>

What follows is a short account of Holland's pre-history, from Charlemagne<sup>10</sup> until the reign of Dirk II, a recount of some paragraphs that had already been mentioned. What is, therefore, the meaning of this text? The beginning seems to indicate that it is a second prologue. Although the existence of two prologues may seem odd, there are good reasons for stating that this must have been the case. Firstly, the second prologue is another pre-history of the county, with some (almost literal) overlapping with the first prologue. Secondly, this second prologue turns out to be more original than the first one, because it is less detailed than the first prologue. It is likely that the first prologue was meant to replace the second one, and this has been the case in the later versions of the chronicle. The *HoH*, however, does have two prologues, probably because the earliest copyist(s) did not clearly indicate which paragraphs had to be removed. This shows that the predecessor of the *HoH* did not have the first prologue, but that this was added in a later stadium of the copying tradition.

The fact that the original, smaller chronicle without the first prologue did not survive is a significant indication that the original chronicle was not very

popular. The existence of fifteen surviving manuscripts and three prints of the chronicle with the first prologue are clear indicators that it was the first prologue that ensured the chronicle's popularity. Therefore, the question of what makes this introduction so significant comes to mind. It has already been mentioned that the novelty of the chronicle has long been overlooked. This is in part due to the fact that the first prologue seems to resemble Beyeren's *Worldchronicle*. But there are also striking resemblances with an earlier chronicle, the so-called *Dutch Beke* (Dutch: *Nederlandse Beke*). This chronicle was a Middle-Dutch translation and continuation of one of the most important fourteenth century chronicles in Holland: the *Chronographia* (ca. 1343) of Johannes de Beke (or Jan Beka), written in Latin. It also served as one of the main sources for Beyeren's historiographical works.<sup>11</sup> While it is true that a lot of information must have found its source in Beyeren's *Worldchronicle*, there is a notable difference in perspective in the *HoH*. The *HoH* uses the 'building blocks' of Beyeren and Beke, 'but they are fitted in a much greater whole'.<sup>12</sup>

This 'greater whole' is the explicit connection of Holland's history to world history. Beyeren has prepared this step, but in his chronicle world history and Holland's ducal history are separated (his *Worldchronicle* and *Hollantsche Cronike* were written as a diptych). In the *HoH* the author has applied some creative interpretations to add over a millennium of history to the county's earliest history. In addition, Holland's history and world history have been intertwined in the *HoH*'s narrative. Another completely new feature of the *HoH* is the proportion of new versus old history, as almost half of the chronicle is committed to Holland's history before the thirteenth century, whereas earlier chroniclers never spent more than two percent of their content on pre-thirteenth century history. Finally, the *HoH* emphasizes the role of the cities in the history of Holland, which leads to the presumption the chronicle originated in an urban environment (perhaps Delft). It is the combination of the intertwining of Holland's history with world history and the emphasis on the role of cities that indicates an emerging historical consciousness. Jan Burges has summarized this thusly: '(...) since the *Gouda Chronicle* authors (...) [had] the strong urgency to increase Holland's fame and antiquity. In that sense it is here that we find the start of a national history of Holland'.<sup>13</sup>

The new elements of the *HoH* are important with regard to the development of historical writing in the fifteenth century and beyond in Holland. Firstly, the *HoH* contains new information that is not found in earlier chronicles, significantly altering the themes of historical writing. Furthermore, the classical age is connected to Holland by using the Trojan myth of origin to explain the origin of the Hollanders. These mythical origins and explanations are later used in other chronicles, including the *Divisionchronicle*, which was used as a history book in Dutch schools until the nineteenth century. Another



important feature is that the *HoH* reveals an explicit interest in geography and archaeology, themes of great importance to humanism. In addition, the fact that the *Gouda Chronicle* was printed three times—first in 1478, then in 1483, and reprinted in 1483-1486—counters Tilmans' claim that printers were not interested in printing local histories. The fact that so many manuscripts survive next to the print version shows that the chronicle was very popular indeed. In addition, the *Gouda Chronicle* should be regarded as a chronicle that represents a new trend in Holland's historiographical tradition, like Aurelius' *Divisionchronicle* would in the early sixteenth century.

In conclusion, it follows from the brief analysis of these three chronicles from the late Middle Ages in the county of Holland that our view of the connection between the invention of print and the development of humanism has been altered. As the development of history writing in Holland shows, there is no sharp distinction between medievalism and humanism. Rather, we should regard developments in historical writing as continuous experimentation that changed profoundly at certain points. The appearance of the *Gouda Chronicle* is one of those moments of change in Holland's historiographical tradition and the *Divisonchronicle* can certainly be seen as another. Yet, to a large extent their contents show important continuities. Tilmans attributes more value to the discontinuities, leading her to claim that the *Divisionchronicle* was a radical departure from medievalism to humanism. Seen in the line of Levelt and Janse, however, the *Divisionchronicle* is not so radically different from the medieval tradition.

From these observations we can infer that it is often a hazardous task to distinguish between one period and another, especially when we look at transitional periods. Although periodization may have its uses, categorizing historiographical writings in one period or another tends to obfuscate rather than elucidate their true character. What the comparison of the chronicles in this essay has shown is that if we are to truly grasp the influence of a particular historical work upon the historiographical tradition, it is important to take into account both continuities and discontinuities, instead of focusing either on one or the other. Periodization is often a limiting tool in establishing such an influence, which is why transitional periods can be confounding (are we dealing with humanism or medievalism?). To conclude these contemplations, let me simply state that humanist writings were significantly indebted to their medieval predecessors and it would be advantageous to take note of this when studying the complex history of textual production.

#### Notes

- 1 The county of Holland in the Middle Ages constitutes what we now call the province North-Holland and South-Holland—as opposed to the country of Holland, often used in Anglo-Saxon

- languages to designate The Netherlands.
- 2 S. Levelt. *Jan van Naaldwijk's Chronicles*. Finished is not exactly the right term, since both chronicles abruptly stopped in the middle of a sentence.
  - 3 Cf. Levelt, pp. 245-246 and Tilmans, p. 3. In fact, it is thanks to Jan van Naaldwijk's second chronicle that we can positively identify Aurelius as the author of the *Divisonchronicle*, cf. Tilmans, p. 3 note 8.
  - 4 '[P]uisque leurs lecteurs se méfieront de toute proposition nouvelle et feront plus confiance aux anciens auteurs, même un esprit original tiendra-t-il à affirmer qu'il ne dit rien de neuf.' (Guenée, p. 10).
  - 5 Janse, "Gelaagdheid", pp. 136-137, see tabel i (table 1) there for the descriptions of the manuscripts.
  - 6 'Langhe so is my ghebeden dat ic doch woude maken ende bescriven die historien van Hollant, hoe dat dat lant eerst begrepen ende begonnen bewoent wert ende wye sy waren die die stede begrepen ende tymmerden ende hoe zi hoer naem creghen ende hoe dat lant nae beheert wort van grave Dirck die eerste grave van Hollant tot dat die machtighe hertoech Philips van Burghongen regnierde in Hollant.' (*Oude Goutsche Chronijxken*, f. 1r.).
  - 7 Janse, "De Historie", p. 24. Scholars did not consider the *Gouda Chronicle* of importance because they rendered its contents similar to Beyerens's *Worldchronicle*.
  - 8 Verbij-Schillings, *Beeldvorming*, p. 251 and pp. 268-269 for the use of herald Beyerens's works in the *Gouda Chronicle* in particular.
  - 9 'In den naem des Vaders, des Soens ende des Heilighen Ghest Amen. Ende omdat ic in ledicheden minen tijt niet versliten een wil, so wil ic om bedes wille bescriven die alre schoenste cornicke die men dair vinden mach sonderlinghe des lants van Hollant haer.' (*Oude Goutsche Chronijxken*, f. 16v.).
  - 10 Dirk i is presented as a nephew of Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious in *Oude Goutsche Chronijxken* (f. 17v).
  - 11 Verbij-Schillings, *Beeldvorming*, pp. 70, 107-109. It is also possible that Beyerens used the Latin version of the chronicle.
  - 12 'In de HvH treffen we een heel ander beeld aan. Hier vinden we wel de bouwstenen uit de kroniek van Beke terug, maar die zijn ingepast in een veel groter geheel.' (Janse, "De Historie", p. 27).
  - 13 'vanaf het Goudse kroniekje schrijvers (...) de sterke behoefte [hadden] om Hollands roem en oudheid hoog op te voeren. In die zin vinden we hier het begin van een Hollandse nationale geschiedenis.' (Burgers, J. W. J., p. 4).

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## Bookwork #7

### Wim Botha

Wim Botha lives in Cape Town. His work has been featured in major international group exhibitions of the work of African and South African artists, including *Africa Remix* and *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*. Other group shows include *The Rainbow Nation*, Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague, the Göteborg Biennial in Sweden, and the 11th Triennale für Kleinplastik in Fellbach, Germany.

[www.stevenson.info/artists/botha.html](http://www.stevenson.info/artists/botha.html)



*Study for the Epic Mundane*, 2013. Books (encyclopedias, bibles, dictionaries, historical documents, etc.), wood, stainless steel. Installation view, *Imaginary Fact: South African art and the archive*, South African Pavilion, 55th Venice Biennale, 2013. Photo: Mario Todeschini. Courtesy of the artist and the Stevenson Gallery (Cape Town and Johannesburg).



*Generic Self-Portrait as an Exile*, 2008. Learner's Dictionaries (Afrikaans, English, isiZulu, Sesotho), stainless steel.

Photo: Mario Todeschini. Courtesy of the artist and the Stevenson Gallery (Cape Town and Johannesburg).



*The Other's Library*, 2009. Cut-out letters installation; mixed media, vinyl.



## Bookwork #8 Pablo Lehmann

Pablo Lehmann likes to transcribe texts and to cut book pages in order to reconstruct them, creating different net forms. Cutting paper was for him always a way to write, to create spaces, to transfigure texts in single objects. Each page, each dismantled book enables him to argue a personal point of view, but is ultimately the place where the reader is committed to invent new paths of comprehension of the cut texts. In this sense, words are not only meaning-vehicles, but also shapes: rare webs that everybody is able to interpret using their most intimate code, their most secret desires.

[www.pablolehmann.com.ar](http://www.pablolehmann.com.ar)

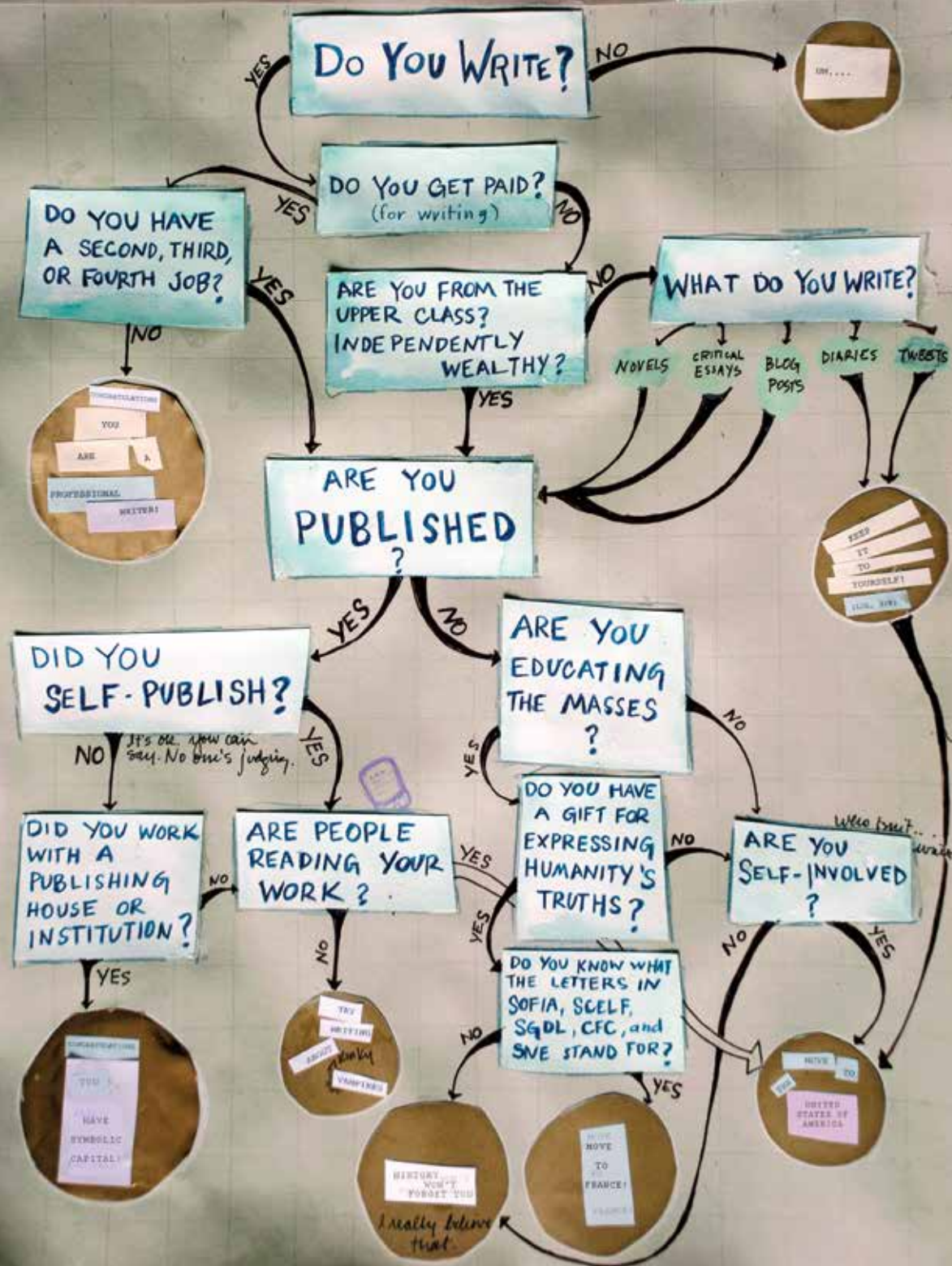


*Scribe's House - The library*, 2010.  
Photos courtesy of the artist.



*Scribe's House - The desk*, 2011.

# Do You Want to Be a Professional WRITER?





*I write, therefore I am (a writer)*  
**The future of writing in the digital age**  
giulia furegato

On 22 August 2012, an article by Ewan Morrison appeared in *The Guardian*. Its title, “Are Books Dead, and Can Authors Survive?” sounded more than merely rhetorical. Its first paragraph, utterly pessimistic:

...absolutely, within 25 years the digital revolution will bring about the end of paper books. But more importantly, ebooks and e-publishing will mean the end of “the writer” as a profession. Ebooks, in the future, will be written by first-timers, by teams, by speciality subject enthusiasts and by those who were already established in the era of the paper book. The digital revolution will not emancipate writers or open up a new era of creativity, it will mean that writers offer up their work for next to nothing or for free. Writing, as a profession, will cease to exist.

What leaps out is the author's confidence, and his matter-of-fact tone. According to Morrison such developments are unavoidable, and quantifying the number of years the paper book has left is a relatively easy task. According to statistics, paper books are slowly succumbing to e-books and writers are already receiving lower advances, or are writing more than in the past in order not to lose their place in the spotlight. Morrison also lists industries that have already been deeply affected by the digital medium and the so-called Web 2.0, both in their structure and business models. He discusses the role that e-commerce corporations such as Amazon and Google are playing in the reshaping of the publishing industry, with bookshops closing after facing unfair competition, publishers struggling to impose their conditions and authors no longer relying on publishers' advances in order to fully dedicate themselves to the “noble art” of writing.

What Morrison does not seem to take into account is that the “digital revolution” is not only changing the way we read, publish or write, but also the very definitions of reading, publishing and writing. The ‘Order of the Book’, which has shaped contemporary society and whose cultural characteristics were believed to be undisputable, is being questioned because of the emergence of the digital medium. Will this Order disappear? Will it adapt to the digital medium? Furthermore, what is reading? What is a book? Is there such a thing as a “digital”

book? Finally, and most importantly, *what is writing*, and *what is a professional writer*?

Before trying to predict what future awaits the book, we should perhaps ask ourselves what our current definition of writing is, whether or not such a definition is shared throughout the world, and whether cultural differences between nations can lead to different definitions of the writer as a professional figure. By comparing the position of writers in two countries with almost opposite approaches towards publishing—that is, the USA and France—we will see that the definition of “professional writer” is, and has always been, very feeble. Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of the field of cultural production will be used and referred to in order to explain how writers find consecration and legitimization in different ways depending on their national and cultural background, and also to outline how the very field of cultural production is being challenged by the digital medium.

Given such differences between France and the USA, the self-publishing phenomenon could affect publishers, writers and readers in both nations, albeit in very different ways. All in all, Ewan Morrison’s thesis and predictions are not inaccurate, since we have no way of predicting the future, but they could easily be considered inconsistent.

### **What is a writer? Professionalism, cultural production and symbolic capital**

Since the invention of the printing press, writers have emerged not only as educators and purveyors of knowledge and wisdom, but also as inspired, gifted artists with the ability of portraying society and humanity in all their facets. Writers are not to be found among all social classes; traditionally, only wealthy individuals could dedicate themselves to an activity that has always struggled to be acknowledged as a profession—and the same can be claimed today. Publishers have always held a more relevant role in the distribution and selling of literary works, and authors have always fought to obtain rights and proper economic recognition. Writers who do manage to make a living with their literary creations are either considered privileged, or exceptionally talented artists who receive the consecration they rightfully deserve.

This consecration, and more generally the social prestige attributed to writing as an activity and to writers as artists, bestows on the author what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has defined as symbolic capital.<sup>1</sup> As we will see, writers can acquire symbolic capital through different processes and means, depending on their culture, language and nationality. Bourdieu’s writings on the field of cultural production and on the definitions of economic and symbolic capital are extremely useful in understanding how writing for a living is perceived in modern contemporary society:

The 'profession' of writer or artist is one of the least professionalized there is, despite all the efforts of 'writers' associations, 'Pen Clubs', etc. This is shown clearly by [...] the problems which arise in classifying these agents, who are able to exercise what they regard as their main occupation only on condition that they have a secondary occupation which provides their main income.

The difficulties encountered in "professionalizing" the act of writing stem from a variety of factors. First of all, the artistic and professional value of a single piece of writing is very difficult to assess, as the authority and the legitimization to judge literary works are always contended by two different categories in the field, that is, by those who follow 'the heteronomous principle, favourable to those who dominate the field economically, and politically (e.g. 'bourgeois art'), and those who follow the autonomous principle (e.g. 'art for art's sake')'. This means that two visions of the activity of writing coexist, and that the degree of autonomy the field possesses over economic, political and social factors can vary greatly depending on a given period or nation.

Secondly, we must also take into account the role played by other professionals directly participating in the field, but not strictly involved in the act of writing: publishers, librarians, distributors, booksellers, critics, et al. These "gatekeepers" have always contributed to the manufacturing of books and the building of their social and symbolic value; they too have acquired cultural and symbolic capital through their own professional skills, and have helped writers acquire their own by assisting them in the publication and selling of their work. Finally, the act of writing can barely fit the definition of profession and professionalism as

The occupational behaviours and practices of workers who do not only have full-time jobs, but also possess a clear sense of what their work is about and when it is effective. [...] A professional does not merely work: he/she has to be educated and trained, (socialized) as member of an occupational domain, supervised by his/her peers and held accountable. [...] Professionalism, it is argued [...] exists when workers are part of an occupational association that institutionalizes a technical base (knowledge and skills) as well as a service ethic (some sort of calling or higher purpose). This, in turn, calls for an autonomous space or jurisdiction that enables members of an association to control their own behaviours and practices.

Writers, as Bourdieu himself pinpointed, do not fit such a definition. They cannot be taught to write despite the many university writing programmes. They cannot be supervised; as there is no standard writing procedure, every writer has their personal methodologies and the result of the act of writing varies from one writer to another. There are indeed associations that try to bring authors together, as the following section will show, but again, the technical skills and service ethics required to qualify as a professional writer are very difficult, if not impossible, to define.

To give a comprehensive and cohesive definition of the professional writer is extremely difficult. Authors are not to be considered as a homogeneous category of individuals pursuing common purposes and sharing a similar worldview. What may be true for one writer might not be true for another; their visions of the act of writing may differ greatly, as may the opinion authors have of their so-called profession and the importance they attribute to being actually published or read. Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity and in order to be able to understand what lies ahead in the publishing world, a general definition of professional writing must be provided. Traditionally, professional writers have been defined as authors who are capable of making a living out of their writing or, should their revenues from book sales be too low, authors who regard writing as their second occupation, and whose work has first been printed and published by a publishing firm through a series of steps required by the industry itself, and then read by a more or less mass audience.

The rise of the digital medium is questioning precisely the validity of such definitions. Everyone, it is now argued, can upload a novel in the form of a PDF or Word document on the Internet and reach a wide audience of readers and reviewers without having to abide by the traditional rules set up and institutionalized by the publishing industry. The phenomenon of self-publishing is thus seen as a threat: would-be authors do not have to go through editors and publishing houses anymore to become writers. Does this mean that publishing one's novel online is enough to be qualified as a professional writer? Or, as Morrison argues in his article, does this mean that professional writers will cease to exist?

### **Writers and symbolic capital in France: an institutionalized engagement**

Since the birth and diffusion of the French language, and particularly since the age of the Enlightenment and the progressive emancipation of intellectuals from the Catholic Church, writers have always held a prominent role in French society. These intellectuals are not only seen as educators and entertainers, but also as social and political authorities. If we think of France's most celebrated and renowned authors—Voltaire, Molière, Hugo, Balzac, Zola, Pascal, Sartre,

Camus, and many others—it is hard to find a work devoid of any political or moral precept, no matter how implicit or secondary. Literature has actively shaped and forged France's national ethos, and it would be very difficult to cleave its literary tradition from its cultural identity.

The concept of the literary author as a prominent figure in French cultural life, as a missionary with the aim to educate society and build collective memory and identity, is still present in contemporary France. To this day, associations aimed at representing and defending authors' rights still exist, and they are actively involved in the publishing world. They include the SOFIA (Société Française des Intérêts des Auteurs de l'écrit), the SCELf (Société Civile de l'Édition Littéraire Française), the SGDL (Société de Gens des Lettres) and the CFC (Centre Français d'exploitation du droit de Copie). The French publishing industry is represented by a specific trade union, the SNE (Syndicat National de l'Édition). The presence and diffusion of such associations, of a well-established and regulated publishing industry and the country's rich cultural heritage and literary tradition have led to the establishment of a path would-be writers generally have to follow if they want to be recognized as professional writers; that is, if they want to acquire symbolic capital.

These associations may not have succeeded in fully professionalizing the act of writing, but they do mean something to authors and they are an important part of the French cultural establishment. This does not mean that the publishing industry in France is not being affected by the emergence of the digital medium, but it does mean that the interactive Web 2.0 and the increasing popularity of e-readers are impacting French publishing to a far lesser extent than, for example, American or British publishing. The establishment of a fixed price by the French government for all books, the impossibility to discount books 'more than 5% below the publisher's list price' and the high VAT rate on e-books purchased online have made it possible for small, independent bookshops and publishers to resist the "digital revolution" brought up by Amazon and the Kindle, and to actively compete with e-commerce retail giants.<sup>2</sup> Publishers themselves, while acknowledging the coming of such a revolution, are trying to resist the frenzy and temptation of wading into the digital publishing realm, not because of fear of making less profit, but rather in an effort of protecting their identity and *modus operandi*. They are trying to find the best solution for their own industry, and this caution appears to coincide with what we may define as an involuntary movement of cultural resistance.

Since the publishing and the writing spheres have always impacted and reflected each other, a resistance on the side of publishers is also deemed to have an impact on professional writers. Today, the number of French authors who succeed in making a full living out of their writing is very limited; among them we find Amélie Nothomb, Marc Lévy, Michel Houellebecq and Fred Vargas.

While it is true that French writers, too, are finding themselves in an increasingly unfamiliar world and in a difficult position, with their symbolic status being 'desecrated', their social status 'blurred', in a world 'where everything is immediate', where we are witnessing 'the loss of collective memory' and where the Internet puts a higher emphasis on the written text than on its writer, it is also true that French authors are starting to see the Web as a powerful instrument to assert their artistic and social status. They are asking that a moral code of the Internet be established, in order to be able to reaffirm the value of their activity and their works, and the importance of their mission as creators and *passeurs*, that is, of vehicles of knowledge and cultural values. In the present situation France seems to be caught in a battle between the enthusiasm of digital revolutionists and the weighty force and symbolic capital of its cultural institutions, tradition and identity. So far, the latter seem to be winning.

### **Writers in the United States: the role of individualism**

As John B. Thompson outlines in *Merchants of Culture*, publishing in the United States has significantly changed since the 1960s, not only when it comes to the structure of the industry, but also with regards to the role played by all the parts involved in the publishing process and their working method. It is important to remember that the United States of America is a relatively young country, with a national history of only a few centuries: a factor we should bear in mind when thinking about the American people's general perception of cultural heritage and traditions, and its general attitude towards more or less drastic changes. This does not at all mean that the United States is a country where history and culture are overlooked. Nevertheless, when compared to countries such as France, America's history has less influence on the country's perception of new discoveries and technologies, and its willingness to adapt to them by putting the old ways aside. Significant changes usually arouse enthusiasm rather than caution and suspicion.

It was in America that the Internet was invented, that corporate trade publishing developed, and that the digital revolution started and perturbed the values and the essence of the publishing field, forcing us to question the very definitions of reading, of the book and of the writer as a professional figure. However, since the United States is not only a young country, but also the most culturally powerful in the world, whatever development is established there will also inevitably spread to others countries, as the overwhelming success of Amazon's Kindle shows. The United States is also characterized by a generally individualistic culture, with a focus on the achievements of the individual: the idea and myth of "the self-made man" is still alive to this day. Iconic personalities in American culture are seen as extremely creative and clever figures whose success and personal fulfilment are attributed to their own extraordinary qualities

and ability to stand out, to distinguish themselves from the crowd, and their persistence and determination in achieving their goals. This idea applies, of course, to the CEOs of corporations leading the digital revolution, such as Steve Jobs and Jeff Bezos, but also to artists. Surviving in publishing is no easy task, and only those writers who succeed in making a successful “brand” of themselves are destined for success and recognition. This emphasis on individuality makes it easier for American writers to adapt to the digital revolution, and it is publishers who find themselves in the most uncomfortable position when it comes to phenomena such as self-publishing.

Overall, the structure of the field of cultural production is not fixed and immutable. It is subject to variables which may not be easy to detect at first sight, but that do have an impact on the reception and adoption of major changes in the field and that do influence the status of authors in a given country. At present, both in France and in the United States, authors still have to be published by a well-known publishing house and find a readership in order to acquire the symbolic capital necessary to establish themselves as relevant figures in society.

In order for professional writers to disappear, major changes would have to occur in the publishing field, its structure and its publishing methods, but, most importantly, the concept of reading and writing would also have to be drastically revised. As far as the latter is concerned, such a revolution in thinking, driven by the widespread adoption of e-readers and new publishing methods, could, sooner or later, take place in the United States. In France, such a reversal and disruption in cultural and literary values is, for a long time to come, very unlikely. Yet writers like Ewan Morrison are concerned that the digital medium poses a serious threat to the professional category he claims he belongs to, and that the Internet and new publishing methods are to blame. But is self-publishing a novel online really such a serious threat to the survival of professional writers? Or is it rather a serious threat to the publishing industry’s status quo and those few privileged individuals who have benefited from it so far?

### **Writing and self-publishing: different countries, different outcomes**

Self-publishing is certainly not a new phenomenon. Many authors we now consider benchmarks in world literature tried to self-publish their work, either to dodge censorship, because their work was too revolutionary to be published traditionally at the time, or because publishers felt their work to be unmarketable. These include, just to name a few, Thomas Paine, Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville; among contemporary writers, we find Stephen King and J. K. Rowling.

In the last fifty years self-publishing has often been, and still is, seen as an act of vanity, as the expression “vanity publishing” clearly indicates. The

explanation behind this is the natural assumption that someone who decides to self-publish is either a mediocre writer, scared of seeing their work rejected by publishers, or someone who has no serious intention to enter the literary and publishing world as a professional, but who is simply willing and able to invest their own money to see their story in print. But is this necessarily true? With the advent of the digital medium and the endless possibilities social media is now offering us, a paradoxical shift is occurring in society: there seem to be more writers than readers. Current studies show a decline in reading habits in the Western world, but the number of published titles is constantly on the rise.<sup>3</sup> The Internet invites us to share our thoughts with other users by posting creative output: music, videos, personal blogs, or a novel written in our free time. Given the difficulties many would-be authors encounter in managing to see their work actually published, not so much because of the low quality of their work, but rather because of the harsh competition in the field and the complex selection criteria of publishing houses, the possibility of uploading one's creations online is simply too tempting. Thus, self-publishing is starting to be seen as an increasingly valuable alternative for young authors, a first step to obtain recognition. But there are difficulties in this process as well. Writers have to edit, correct and market their own work online, and gaining visibility on the Internet may be just as difficult as getting published "traditionally".

Furthermore, response to this phenomenon varies greatly in different countries. In the United States, self-publishing is gaining popularity and, after the worldwide success of E. L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy, many important publishing houses—such as Simon & Schuster—have decided to enter the e-publishing market by creating self-publishing divisions in their companies or by teaming up with established self-publishing firms.<sup>4</sup> These rapid developments in the publishing and reading world are certainly going to have an impact on writers, their idea of writing professionally and their approaches to writing. However, regardless of the country we decide to analyse, to claim that this phenomenon is going to lead to their extinction seems not only premature, but also very unlikely.

### **Possible impact and developments in France**

Self-publishing in France is not currently considered a valuable option for publishing one's work, regardless of the author's status and popularity. As in all situations, exceptions do exist, as well as online self-publishing platforms: Numilog, Edilivre and Blookup.com being just a few examples. Generally speaking, however, traditional publishers still enjoy a firm command of the market and, even if young French authors may be as tempted by self-publishing as their American peers, the symbolic capital bestowed upon professional writers by the publishing industry simply cannot be obtained by independently publishing



one's work online for the same reasons self-publishing could be considered an act of vanity: it does not require any professionalism necessary to acquire prestige and public recognition. As Antoine Gallimard strikingly commented during the 2012 Salon du Livre in Paris, 'self-publishing, which has been set up by big web corporations while simultaneously benefiting from publisher's brands on their websites, will never be able to substitute a chosen and mastered publication choreographed by strong brands and renowned purchasing advisors'.<sup>5</sup> Despite the presence of self-publishing platforms, and despite the timid efforts to bring the digital revolution to France, the digital medium's influence on the French publishing industry has been rather insignificant so far. We must not assume, however, that France is currently ignoring the presence of the digital medium and its importance, for this would be a sign of blindness: e-books, e-readers and self-publishing are being actively discussed. Readers, however, seem to generally take the paper book's side. If we expect a digital e-book revolution in France, we are going to have to wait for a very long time.

Should self-publishing acquire more popularity, publishing firms are likely to seize the day and try to establish their control on the market by pushing the government to protect the entire field and the future of its employees, just as the big American houses are doing in an attempt to prevent Amazon and Google from acquiring even more decision-making power in the trade. Or they could decide to drastically change their approach by adapting their working methods to the new medium and seeking to control the e-publishing market. This means that, as long as symbolic capital continues to be bestowed by publishing houses interested in selling compelling stories to the public, and as long as they continue to promote their authors via traditional media, writers as individuals committed to the act of writing will continue to exist and actively participate in French literary society.

At present, the number of self-published books in France is not even quantifiable, and authors who have gained popularity on a national scale after self-publishing their work can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Publishing and authors' associations keep fighting against e-commerce giants in an attempt to protect the entire industry and, as long as they have an influence on French national policies, writers will be treated as professionals and respected for their artistic commitment.

### **Possible outcomes in the United States: is the self-published author the modern equivalent of the self-made man?**

In an article published by *The Atlantic* on 2 April 2012, Sara Fay argues that 'self-published authors are the literary equivalent of self-made men and women'. This claim is based on a gross inaccuracy. As mentioned above, the self-made American

obtains recognition using talent and skill, but this recognition is also achieved through established ways of communication and the traditional media. Self-published authors rarely obtain the recognition and the success they are yearning for online, simply because managing the publication of a written work on one's own is not the only prerequisite necessary to obtain public consecration. While it is true, for example, that E. L. James' success stemmed from her own initiative on the Web, it is also true that, without the intervention of Random House, she would never have become the successful author she is today.

In the US, self-publishing could currently be considered a backdoor through which authors avoid the difficulties involved in getting their work published via traditional means—a sort of secondary first step to indirectly enter the publishing world. But, should publishers see the potential success behind a self-published title, they will not hesitate to seize the opportunity to invest in both the author's interests and their own, and to acquire and confer economic and symbolic capital at the same time. If traditional publishers succeed in maintaining their role as authorities in the field, symbolic capital will always be inextricably linked to their work, and mere presence on the Web will not be sufficient for would-be writers to be considered full professionals. Publishers do not just simply print and distribute an author's work: the totality of professionals involved in the field, such as editors, marketers and sellers, is still vital to a book's success, to the extent that we often encounter best-sellers whose success lies not so much in its quality, but more in catchy marketing campaigns.

If we are to consider professionalism simply as the ability of making a living out of one's own writing, with no symbolic capital being involved, self-publishing online could be a sufficient means for qualifying as a writer. After all, Internet companies make profit by selling advertising space, and would-be writers interested in self-publishing could launch their own website and exploit the same technique to gain income. Only writers who obtain enough attention from readers would make sufficient income from their website to keep writing, and this could be seen as a perfect instrument to establish meritocracy. At present, both solutions are possible in the United States, the latter requiring perhaps a longer time to fully come into being.

## Conclusion

It is clear by now that the digital medium is currently revolutionizing literary society as a whole. It is consistently changing the way we communicate, the way we exchange information and the way we process concepts and ideas. It is challenging our entire mind-set, and pushing us to question ideas and definitions of authorship and readership. The simple and yet miraculous diffusion of the Web 2.0 is putting the entire knowledge status quo at stake and, as a consequence, the

role of individuals involved in the field of information and cultural production. Ewan Morrison's article is just an extreme example of dread of the digital medium and the new developments and challenges it will bring about. His fear is understandable and justifiable in the light of current events and the difficulties currently being experienced by the publishing world. Yet, his concern over the "extinction" of professional writers is excessive, at least for the moment. Not because the digital medium is not challenging the publishing field and the act of writing as a full-time paid occupation (it is), but because the presence of writers can be seen as independent of technological developments. As Paul Auster, one of America's most acclaimed novelists, says in an interview contradicting Philip Roth's statement that novels are destined to die,

Human beings need stories, and we're looking for them in all kinds of places, whether it's television, whether it's comic books, or movies, or radio plays [...] Think of your own childhood, of how important the bedtime story was, of how important these imaginary experiences were for you. They help shake reality. And I think human beings would not be human without narrative, fiction. [...] Ok, perhaps [...] with the way things are moving, fewer people are reading novels than previously. But [...] I don't think it's ever going to dry up, because [...] the novel is such a flexible form, [...] you can do anything you want with it. It's a story that you tell within the covers of a book. But all bets are off; there are no rules; that's why I think the novel is constantly reinventing itself. And society continues to reinvent itself. Every historical moment needs stories to be told about it. So, much as I admire Philip Roth, I just think he's wrong about this.

Later in the course of the same interview, Auster also discusses the future of literature in the digital age. His optimistic view about the ability of the novel to reinvent itself and to adjust to the digital medium is directly linked with the belief that writers, as creators of the stories we need, will also be able to reinvent their own profession by finding new ways of making a living. To writers, after all, economic gain should be of secondary concern, the primary matter being the quality of their work and the possibility of seeing it published and read. As professionals, they cannot simply be reduced to a category including the privileged few that manage to enter the publishing industry and to receive advances to write a new novel, as Morrison seems to imply. Their "writing chances" are not directly threatened by the digital medium, but they are challenged by the changes the new medium is bringing to the publishing field and they will, subsequently, need to adjust to it. After all, the idea of the artist as someone who always struggles

to make a living is nothing new, and many of the authors we recognize today as geniuses have faced serious financial difficulties during their life. To conclude, we could argue that, as much as the digital sphere can change our habits, it will never undermine the basic human need for stories.

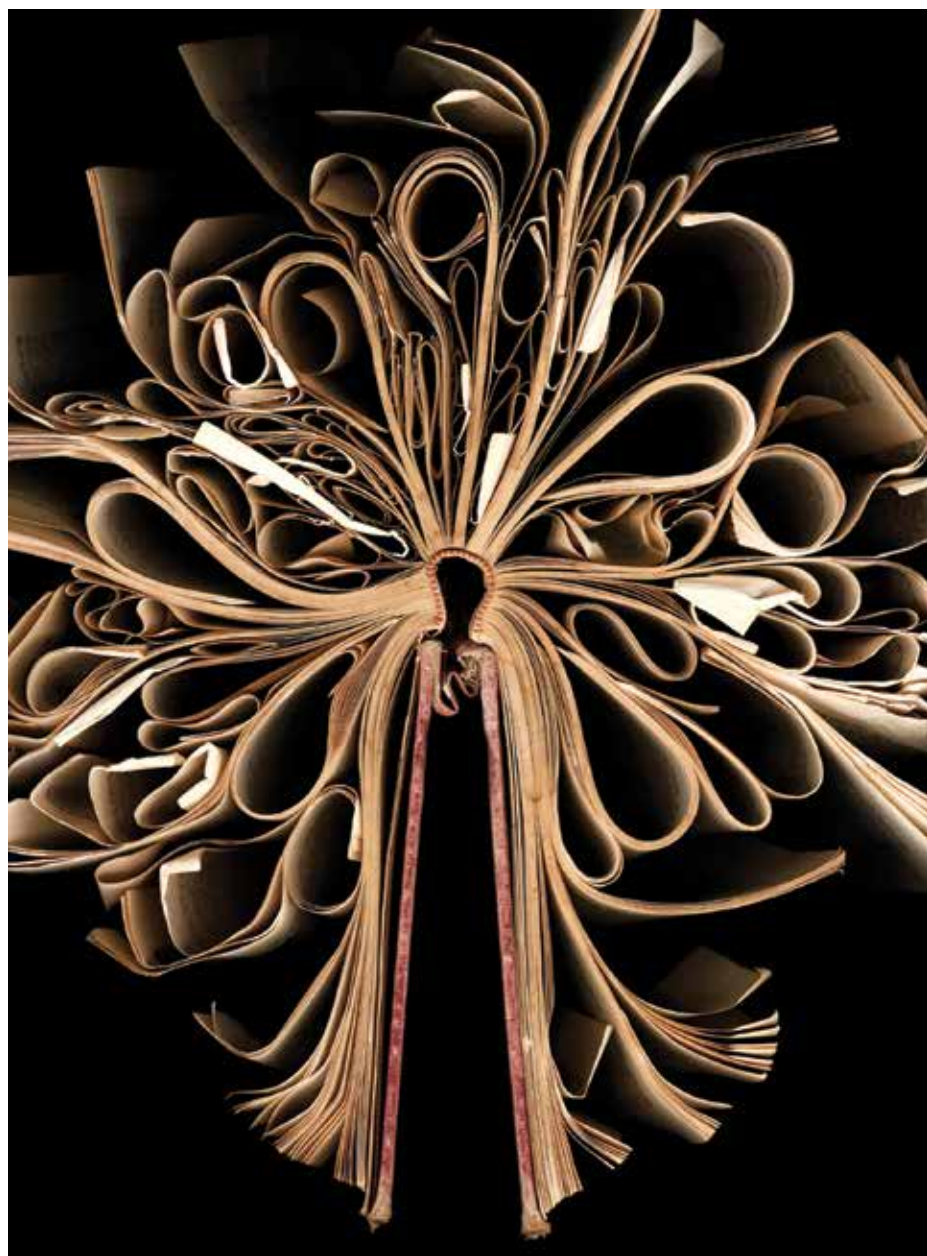
## Notes

- 1 'Symbolic capital is best understood as the accumulated prestige, recognition and respect accorded to certain individuals and institutions [...] The accumulation of symbolic capital is dependent on processes that are very different in nature from those that lead to the accumulation of economic capital, and the possession of large quantities of one does not necessarily imply the possession of large quantities of the other'. Thompson, J. B. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, p. 8-10.
- 2 For more information about the prix unique, see "Le Prix du Livre, Mode d'Emploi." *Le Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication*. 20 Dec. 2012 <<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/dll/prix-livre>>. For further information on book discounts in France, see Sciolino, E. "The French Still Flock to Bookstores." *The New York Times*. 20 June 2012. 20 Dec. 2012 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/21/books/french-bookstores-arestill-prospering.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/21/books/french-bookstores-arestill-prospering.html?_r=0)>. Finally, for further information the French VAT rate on e-books, see "TVA Sur le Livre Numerique." *Syndicat National de l'Edition*. 20 Dec. 2012 <<http://www.sne.fr/dossiers-et-enjeux/numerique/tva-sur-le-livre-numerique.html>>.
- 3 Studies on the decline of reading include, for example, "To Read or Not To Read: A Question of National Consequence." *National Endowment for the Arts*. 19 Nov. 2007. 19 Dec. 2012 <<http://www.nea.gov/news/newso7/TRNR.html>>. For further information about the increase in the number of published titles, see Keller, B. "Let's Ban Books, Or at Least Stop Writing Them." *The New York Times*. 13 July 2011. 19 Dec. 2012 <[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/magazine/bill-kellerwants-to-ban-books.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/magazine/bill-kellerwants-to-ban-books.html?_r=0)>.
- 4 The *Fifty Shades of Grey* phenomenon started when author E. L. James published a fan fiction of Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight Saga* online. After being criticized for the text's sexual content, James launched her own website, changed the name of the main characters and storyline and turned the fan fiction into three separate books, which were published by an Australian virtual publisher in e-book format and print-on-demand paperback. With the interest in the series growing exponentially, Vintage Books bought the license for the trilogy and re-released them in April 2012. See Fay, S. "After Fifty Shades of Grey, What's Next for Self-Publishing?" *The Atlantic*. 2 april 2012. 19 Dec. 2012 <<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/04/after-fifty-shades-of-grey-whatsnext-for-self-publishing/255338/>>.
- 5 'Ce n'est pas l'autoédition, mise en avant aujourd'hui par les grands opérateurs du Web en même temps qu'ils escamotent les marques des éditeurs sur leur portail, qui pourra se substituer à une édition choisie, maîtrisée, orchestrée autour de marques fortes et de prescripteurs reconnus.' "Autoédition, un Avis Signé Antoine Gallimard." *Auto-edition.com*. 20 Dec. 2012 <<http://www.autoedition.com/forumedition55.html>>.

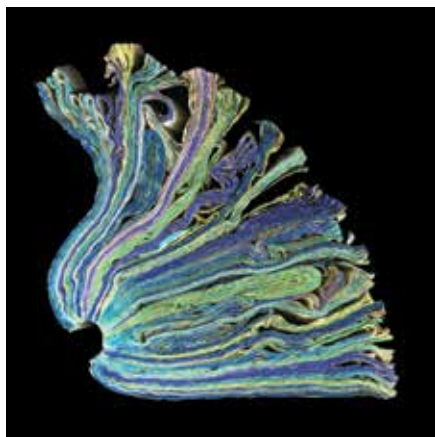
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*New Century*, 2006. Photos courtesy of Cara Barer.



*Ocean*, 2013.



*Sunset*, 2013.



*Anthology*, 2004.

## Bookwork #9 Cara Barer

Cara Barer's photographs are primarily a documentation of a physical evolution. By changing common objects into sculptures in a state of flux, she hopes to raise questions about these changes, the ephemeral and fragile nature in which we now obtain knowledge, and the future of books. With the discarded books that she has acquired, she attempts to blur the line between objects, sculpture, and photography. This project is a journey that continues to evolve.

[www.carabarer.com](http://www.carabarer.com)

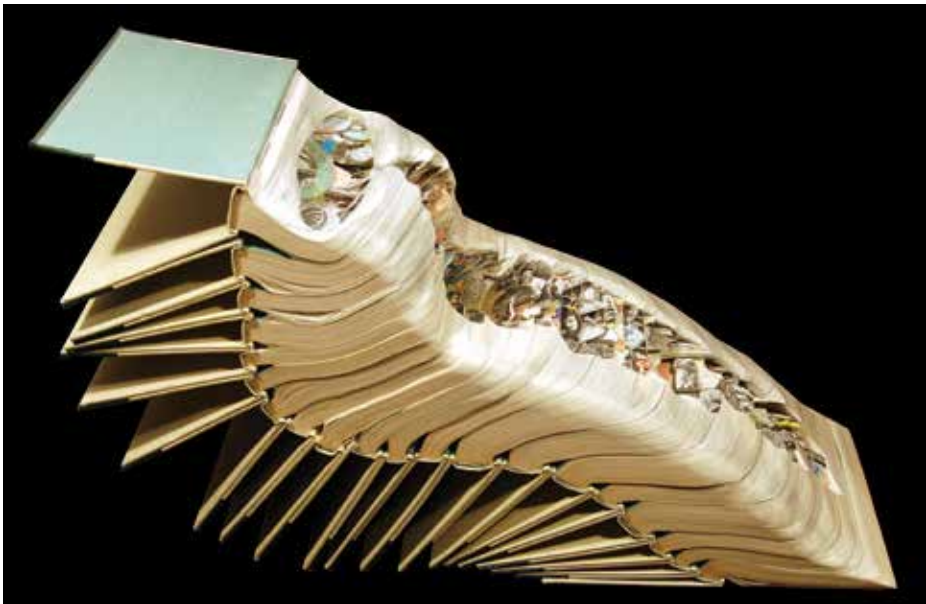


## Bookwork #10

### Brian Dettmer

‘The age of information in physical form is waning. As intangible routes thrive with quicker fluidity, material and history are being lost, slipping and eroding into the ether. Newer media swiftly flips forms, unrestricted by the weight of material and the responsibility of history. In the tangible world we are left with a frozen material but in the intangible world we may be left with nothing. History is lost as formats change from physical stability to digital distress. The richness and depth of the book is universally respected yet often undiscovered as the monopoly of the form and relevance of the information fades over time. The book’s intended function has decreased and the form remains linear in a non-linear world. By altering physical forms of information and shifting preconceived functions, new and unexpected roles emerge. This is the area I currently operate in. Through meticulous excavation or concise alteration I edit or dissect communicative objects or systems such as books, maps, tapes and other media. The medium’s role transforms. Its content is recontextualized and new meanings or interpretations emerge.’

[www.briandettmer.com](http://www.briandettmer.com)



*World Books, 2009. Altered Books. Photos courtesy of Brian Dettmer.*

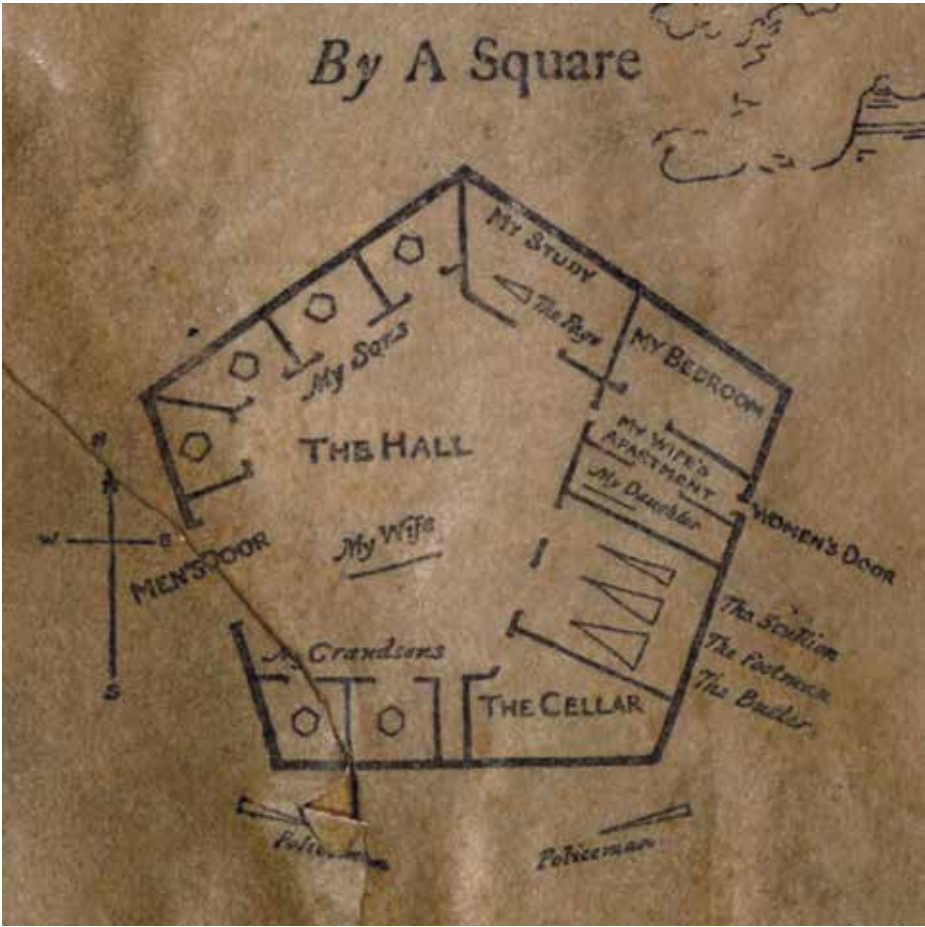




*Consumption Drains Dreams*, 2009. Altered Book.



*Consumption Drains Dreams*, 2009. Altered Book.



Jacket of *Flatland*, first edition London: Seeley and Co., 1884. Source: The Internet Archive.

*Flatland:*  
**A romance of many dimensions**  
anna ntrouka

Some books are just out of this world. *Flatland* goes one step further and creates a whole new world. Picture this, if you will: a land completely flat where only the dimensions of length and width exist. The men of Flatland are polygons and the women are simple lines. The regularity of one's shape, along with number of sides, determines societal status; everyone strives to be as close as they can to the most perfect shape, the circle. It's all very straightforward. This is the story of a humble polygon man, named A. Square, who steps out of his structured two-dimensional world and sees new realms. He dreams about Lineland, the one-dimensional plane, and about Pointland, a land with no dimension at all. He meets the Sphere, who takes him by the hand and shows him Spaceland, a kingdom of three dimensions: width, length and height. This is the story of a simple Square who dares to imagine that since there exist worlds of one, two, and three dimensions, maybe there could exist four, or five, or even six-dimensional worlds! Naturally such absurd, illogical and radical views are not tolerated in Flatland, so the Square is arrested and thrown in jail for daring to think that the world might be a little different than it appears.

*Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* was written by Edwin Abbott Abbott (1838-1926), an English schoolmaster and theologian. His interest in philology and theology is evident from his body of work, with books such as the *Shakespearean Grammar* (1870), *English Lessons for English People* (1871), his book on Francis Bacon, *Bacon and Essex* (1877), and a number of religious writings such as *Philochristus* (1878) and *Onesimus: Memoirs of a Disciple of Paul* (1882). While he is considered as one of the leading scholars of the Victorian period and as a well-respected and innovative schoolmaster, his most famous work to this day remains his whimsical novel *Flatland*. When it was first published in 1884 by Seeley & Co. in London, Edwin Abbott chose to use the pseudonym A. Square in accordance with the novel's satirical nature. Indeed, the book makes some harsh observations of Victorian society and beliefs but it does so by euphemistically using mathematical and geometrical principles. All of the matters that would concern a scholar of that age—the rigid structure of classes in society, the status of women, and current scientific interest in the nature of dimensions—are very much present in *Flatland*. The first print run of one thousand copies was well-received by the public and enjoyed various favorable reviews in a number of high-profile

journals of the time such as *The Athenaeum*, *Nature*, *The Spectator* and *The Literary World*. However, it was not a great success.

The book was rediscovered in 1926. Ten years earlier, Albert Einstein had published his general theory of relativity and introduced the concept of a fourth dimension, making *Flatland* more relevant than ever. Published by Basil Blackwell, it included a new introduction that highlighted the novel's connection to new scientific theory. A review in the February 1920 issue of *Nature* essentially pointed the public towards this 'unnoticed' piece of fiction that now demanded renewed attention. A quarter of a century later, during the 1950s, the increasing popularity of science fiction was the starting point for yet another look at *Flatland*. Since then, there have been numerous editions of *Flatland* and it has been translated into Dutch, German, Italian, French, Russian, Spanish, Japanese, Hungarian, Hebrew, Greek, Portuguese, Farsi, Polish, Turkish and Finnish. There have been editions that focus on the mathematical nature of the book, such as the recent *The Annotated Flatland* (2002) as well as a number of imitations or sequels like *Sphereland* (1965), *Flatterland* (2001) and *Spaceland* (2002). The variety of its publication history is a good indication of why *Flatland* is so hard to label. To answer the question of what type of book *Flatland* really is, one must take into account its satirical nature, its connection to geometry and mathematics and its ability to present a new world. It is as much satire as it is mathematical fiction or a science fiction classic.

Without a doubt, one of *Flatland's* most interesting editions was published at the end of 1980 by Arion Press. This San Francisco-based publishing house specializes in limited edition books with original art. The founder of Arion Press and the creative force behind the house's fine-press publications is Andrew Hoyem, an established typographer. The 1980 *Flatland* edition has been one of Arion Press's most successful books. It was published in 275 numbered copies and signed by Andrew Hoyem as well as Ray Bradbury, who wrote the introduction. Naturally, it is no coincidence that one of America's most acclaimed fantasy and science fiction authors was commissioned to write the book's introduction. Hoyem's edition has many distinct and unique features. It is bound in aluminum covers and features a hinged and clasped aluminum container. The original illustrations by Edwin Abbott Abbott in the first edition of *Flatland* were 'retouched' and hand-coloured by Andrew Hoyem. The text is written in a continuous block with squares marking line breaks and new paragraphs, a playful reminder of the book's main character. The aluminum case even comes with an instructional pamphlet for the edition's most special feature. The instructions read: '...For display purposes, the accordion-fold can stand up-right spread to zig-zag over large or small areas...' Indeed, the text pages and illustrations are joined like an accordion with a length of 10 metres (33 feet) printed on each side, making the total length of the book an impressive 20 metres (66 feet). Unfolding the book

gives the reader the chance to experience *Flatland* literally as a two-dimensional plane.

In essence, the 1980 Arion Press edition of *Flatland* not only celebrates a classic work of fiction but also elevates the book beyond the literature sphere and shapes it into an aesthetically pleasing and quite inventive object. It is an innovative tribute to a novel that has been continuously in print since it was first published in 1884 and has been a source of inspiration in fiction, science and film. *Flatland* is a book about multiple dimensions, and like any true classic it has many.



Edwin A. Abbott, *Flatland*, 1980 Arion Press edition - Copyright © Arion Press.

### Further reading

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Eva meets Uncle Tom. Illustration from the 1852 Tauchnitz edition.



*Uncle Tom's Cabin:*  
**A woman's struggle against slavery**  
marleen van os

*There is no bright side to slavery.*

– Harriet Beecher Stowe

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe was a highly influential book in the anti-slavery movement of the late nineteenth century. It centres on Tom and Eliza, two African-American slaves, each with their own families to take care of. They attempt to escape from their owners after mistreatment and threats of being sold. Eliza succeeds and survives with her child, but Tom finds a different kind of freedom: his owner, Simon Legree, whips him to death because of his devout Christian faith and his refusal to betray other slaves. The novel was successful the moment it was published and received numerous and various reactions from different groups in society. Stowe became an important figure as a white female author protesting against slavery. The book has been continuously in print since its first publication and continues to be read widely, including as a standard school text, since it was considered a book for children, albeit in a version slightly adapted from the first edition.

The book was first published as a serial in the anti-slavery journal *The Nationalist Era* in 1851. While this was going on regularly, Stowe approached publishers for a complete publication in the form of a novel. Several publishers, including the one that had already published Stowe's and her sister's earlier work, passed on the opportunity, afraid of the fierce responses the book would arouse and the possibility of losing customers for their other publications. The publisher that did take up the challenge was John P. Jewett. He advertised widely and cleverly for the book, giving it slogans like 'The Story of the Age'. Sales boomed right from the start; the first 5,000 copies were sold within a week. Many more copies were subsequently printed and in one year a total of 500,000 were sold in America and England. The first edition was available in both paper and cloth bindings; the cloth option included the possibility of a special edition with extra gilt decorations. Many other editions followed, with illustrations continually changed and added. Translations were also made from the start, eventually in over sixty languages. Special editions included, for instance, the 'Edition for the Million'. The first was created especially for common people who could not afford

expensive books. It was an unillustrated version printed rather sloppily, containing endorsements of lavish praise and large, bold typography meant to entice buyers. The illustrated edition, in contrast, was created for a more wealthy audience who could appreciate—and afford—well-printed books. This version was also often used as a gift.

From its inception *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had an enormous impact on American society. It was a response to the Fugitive Slave Act from 1850, decreeing that all runaway slaves found by officers should be returned to their masters, even if they had already reached free bordering states. They had no rights and could not defend themselves in any way. Officers who did not comply risked a thousand dollar fine. This act, and reactionary publications like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, resulted in an increasingly active abolitionist movement.

The values this book expresses reached out to a wide audience. The fact that Christian faith features centrally invoked sympathy in many readers. Stowe, as a white female writer, also set the book apart from previously published anti-slavery stories, which often came from African-American ex-slaves themselves. They did not have as great an influence as a middle class woman like Stowe, who came from an abolitionist family that protected fugitive slaves. As she herself was from the South and understood the sentimental climate, Stowe also decided not to focus on racial issues but more on values of family and religion—values that were considered universal regardless of race.

African-American slaves and the anti-slavery movement naturally applauded the book and felt supported by it. The slave-traders and employers, however, heavily opposed the book and argued that the story had no sense of truth and that slaves were happy with their situation. As a response to this, Stowe published a follow-up book called *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in which she selected only some of the many true stories she had collected from talking directly to slaves. This book served to support and verify her original story. In the introductory chapter, she writes to readers about the horrors of slavery:

Slavery, in some of its workings, is too dreadful for the purposes of art. A work which should represent it strictly as it is would be a work which could not be read. And all works which ever mean to give pleasure must draw a veil somewhere, or they cannot succeed.

Later on, however, supporters of Stowe's cause began to criticize her for adopting a condescending stance towards African-Americans and reinforcing the stereotypes in her novel. The many spin-offs and theatre adaptations that followed the book also helped perpetuate these stereotypes by over-caricaturizing the black characters. Stowe did not authorize these dramatizations of her novel, but could not act against them because of flaws in the copyright on the book.



Claims became public that the book was never properly copyrighted. This claim was opposed, but there definitely were holes in the copyright, which allowed publishers and other people to create new editions and adaptations in abundance.

All issues surrounding the book combined, it has had quite an active and tumultuous history. Despite all the criticism and legal issues, one thing that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did accomplish was to obtain a solid position in the history of the abolitionist movement and raise widespread awareness of the untenable situation of slavery. The continuing controversy surrounding the novel has perhaps only increased its fame and spread its message across America and the world.

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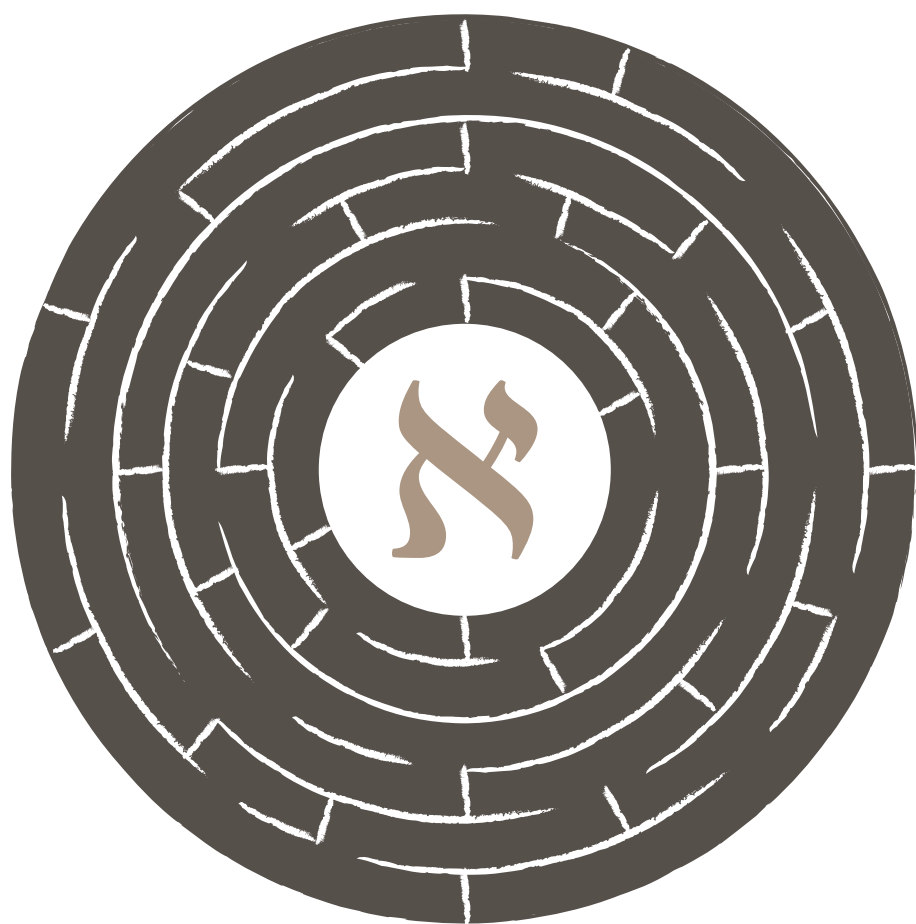


Illustration: Andrea Reyes Elizondo.

*Labyrinths:*  
**Taking a chance on translated metafiction**  
eric brotchie

Lovers of books come in many guises. Jorge Luis Borges, the author of *Labyrinths*, is doubtless one of the most celebrated bibliophiles. A keen and insightful student of history, a journalist, an editor, a translator, a librarian, a poet, a teacher, an essayist and a traveller, the man we know today as Borges loved books, and lived them in equal measure.

More than any of Borges' other collections, *Labyrinths* represents the intersection of the author's other works. Earlier compilations, notably Anthony Bonner's 1962 translation of Borges' eminent *Ficciones* (1944), fall short of appreciating the full scope of Borges' vision, one which combines literary history, sociology, and a range of political and economic discussions which perhaps ground Borges beyond his oft touted metaphysical persona. *Collected Fictions* (1998), translated by Andrew Hurley, follows the same pattern, unfortunately focusing more on Borges' fictional philosophical musings and perhaps mislaying his literary contributions to his native Argentina, its cultures and traditions, which offer a commanding critique of the South American nation. That being said, if there is anything missing from *Labyrinths* it is excerpts from Borges' poetry, which the author had also mastered.

It is in the sharp juxtaposition and interplay between physics and metaphysics that the book finds both its main inspiration and its socio-historical importance. Argentina was a murky political battleground for most of Borges' life; it was only in 1980 that he was able to speak out against the injustices of war, fascism, poverty and the fanatical factionalism that had plagued his country for so long. Literature in Argentina in Borges' time was indeed dominated by traditionalist writers. Seeking to present to the international community a national homeland of realism, class division, the countryside, hardship and struggle, Borges' imaginations fell outside of the traditionalists' scope and his writing suffered because of it. Somewhat ironically, his musings have retrospectively enabled Argentinians to understand their turbulent history more than his contemporaries; this was a man stuck in a corner, fighting with a pen to understand the world not in terms of the importance of power, but of the importance of life.

No wonder then that such a book may have appealed to its compilers and publishers, New Directions Publications in New York. New Directions was

founded in 1936 by James Laughlin (a then twenty-two-year-old Harvard student) under the guidance of Ezra Pound, whom he later published extensively. Coming off the back of strong successes in successive decades with Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* (1951) and Henry Miller's *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* (1960), New Directions had successfully navigated the Beat Generation craze and was seeking talent outside the US in its statement to provide 'a place where experimentalists could test their inventions by publication'. With Kennedy in office, a Cold War mentality focusing US attention on the increasingly unstable Cuban Missile Crisis, and Latin American communism at large, the time was ripe to pluck Borges from the relative literary ether. Penguin bought the rights to publish in the United Kingdom relatively late in 1970 and have published *Labyrinths* in a number of softback serials since.

New Directions entrusted the first edition of *Labyrinths* to two young academics who had previously been graduate school classmates at Michigan State University, Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby. Irby was brought into the project by Yates, whose dissertation on South American detective fiction had led to considerable correspondence with Argentinian writers, who pointed him in the direction of Borges. At the time, Irby was completing his own dissertation on the literary structures of Borges' short stories. Both men contributed to the translation, although Irby's particularly scholarly interest in Borges himself was of greater impact to the final copy provided for *Labyrinths*. Both men went on to become long-standing and subsequently emeritus professors in Spanish American Literature (Yates) and Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures (Irby), the latter holding this post at Princeton University.

The initial publication of *Labyrinths* in 1962 was met with a degree of uncertainty in the Western audience it was designed for. In *The Saturday Review* in New York, Saul Maloff explained the jumbled collection as rational nightmares, 'eerie emblems of the world we apprehend by the imagination'. *Time* could also do little more, it appears, than exhibit a series of clichés about Borges' style, telling readers the stories 'take place in a world that is half commonplace, half fantastic. Dreams occur within dreams; time loses its significance. What counts is a momentary impulse and observation'. In a far more considered article published in 1964, the second year of its own illustrious history, Paul de Man in *The New York Review of Books* wrote 'the success of these poetic worlds is expressed by their all-inclusive and ordered wholeness. Their deceitful nature is harder to define, but essential to an understanding of Borges'. Analysis of these texts, it appears, did little to capture the imagination of the public.

Since then, however, there has been more widespread recognition of Borges, and *Labyrinths* has become a seminal, if not perfect, edition to a better understanding of Borges, his life and works, and the indelible mark he has left on

Argentinian and world literature. In 2007 a remastered translation by Yates and Irby was published, forty-five years after the first edition, with a new introduction by contemporary speculative fiction novelist William Gibson (the original editions are introduced by André Maurois of the Académie française). Such an edition re-emphasises the importance of *Labyrinths* and its continuing importance as an artefact of literature in a world increasingly demanding a metaphysical perspective.

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Title page of *Het Schilder-Boeck*, 1604 edition. Drawing: Karel van Mander; engraving: Theodoor Matham. Image: Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

*Het Schilder-Boeck:*  
**A seminal first for Northern European art history**  
**lorne darnell**

*HET | Schilder-Boeck | Waerin Voor eerst de leerlusti- | ghe Iueght den  
grondt der | Edel Vry SCHILDERCONST in | Verscheyden deelen Wort |  
Voorghedraghen | Daer nae in dry deelen t'leven der | Vermaerde door  
luchtighe Schilders | Des ouden en nieuwentyds | Entlyck d'utlegghinghe  
op den | METAMORPHOSEON pub. Ouidij Naso | Nis Oock daerbeneffens  
uutbeeldinghe der | Figuren Alles dienstich en nut den | Schilders  
Constbeminders, en dichters, oock | Allen staten van menschen | Door Carel  
van Mander Schilder | Voor PASCHIER VAN WESBUSCH Boeck vercooper |  
Tot HAERLEM 1604 | Met Privilegie*

– Text from the title page of the 1604 edition  
(Haarlem: Paschier van Wesbuch)

Born in Meulebeke, Belgium in 1548, Karel van Mander studied drawing and painting in Ghent, Kortrijk and Rome before taking up residence in Haarlem in 1583. With Cornelis of Haarlem and Hendrick Goltzius he was the founder of an informal art academy called the Haarlem Mannerists. Influenced by classical art, the work of Michelangelo, and that of their contemporary Bartholomaeus Spranger, they were instrumental in the spread of the muscular, physically contorted Mannerist style in the Netherlands. While van Mander's own artistic output has perhaps been overshadowed by that of his fellow academicians, he is best remembered for his influential *Schilder-Boeck*, a historical and theoretical work modelled on Giorgio Vasari's *Le Vite de' più Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori, e Architettori* (1550).

Widely recognized as the foundational text of modern Western art history, Vasari's *Vite* provided the earliest biographical details for many names now synonymous with the Renaissance: Botticelli, da Vinci, and Pontormo, among others. At the same time, he provided the template which later artists' biographies would be modelled on, including sections on early life, studio training, and important works. Though he focused primarily on artists from his native Florence, Vasari also included Venetian, German, and Netherlandish figures: Titian, Dürer, and Lucas van Leyden. Much of this material forms the basis of Van Mander's work. In the *Schilder-Boeck*, Van Mander directly translates nearly half of Vasari's



biographies, supplementing them with those of his own contemporaries, both Italian and Northern, who had come to fame after Vasari's death. Thus it is from the *Schilder-Boeck* that we have the earliest accounts of the engraver and painter Goltzius, of the polymath Hans Vredeman de Vries, and of David Vinckboons, a key figure in the development of genre painting.

As the first of many who would later copy the *Vite*, van Mander at once affirmed Vasari's aesthetic judgments in the artists he chose and disseminated those judgments, acting as a sort of midwife for the burgeoning Western canon. The *Schilder-Boeck* also helped to legitimate the idea of a purely Northern tradition by putting contemporary painters of the region alongside revered masters. Some of those painters, and many who came after, were inspired by the book to travel to Italy, bringing the influence of Classicism with them as they returned home. Finally, as one of the rare art historical-theoretical texts written in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, van Mander's work offers valuable insights into the ways in which viewers of the period valued art, both on the grounds of content and style. In turn, the *Schilder-Boeck* itself became the model for those few other texts that allow us to track the progression of taste in the North: among others, Cornelis de Bie's *Het Gulden Cabinet der Edel Vry Schilderconst* (1662), Samuel van Hoogstraten's *Inleyding tot de Hooge Schoole der Schilderkonst* (1677), and Arnold Houbraken's *De Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (1718).

The book appeared in two editions. The 1604 edition includes a list of errata and an index that van Mander himself is likely to have prepared. The second edition was printed in 1618, twelve years after van Mander's death, and includes a short anonymous biography of its author. The first edition, with which this description is concerned, was published by Paschier van Wesbusch, a publisher and bookseller active in Haarlem from around 1601 until 1612. Like van Mander, van Wesbusch was a Mennonite of Southern Netherlandish origin – in his case, Menen in Flanders. His output consisted primarily of Mennonite tracts, aside from a selection of van Mander's other mostly literary works. His main audience thus seems to have been other immigrants of Southern extraction, though the *Schilder-Boeck* would obviously have had wider appeal. As van Wesbusch lacked his own press, he outsourced the work to a variety of printers, all of whom had come originally from the South as well: M. van den Vyvere in Leiden, G. and A. Rooman in Haarlem, J. Tournay in Enkhuizen, G. van den Rade in Franeker, and Jacob de Meester in Alkmaar. It is de Meester, a Brugenaar once apprentice in Haarlem to Rooman, whom van Wesbusch selected to print the *Schilder-Boeck*.

The book consists of six sections: the *Grondt*, a poem introducing the work and its intent; the lives of the painters of ancient Greece and Rome; the lives of the Italian painters; the lives of the Dutch and German painters; a translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*; and finally a discussion of the iconography of Greek,

Roman, and Egyptian antiquity. The book contains two title prints designed by van Mander himself and engraved by Jacob Matham. The first appears at the beginning as the general title page of the book, while the second appears at the head of the section featuring the *Metamorphosis*. The remaining four sections are headed by typographical title pages. The inclusion of title prints, present only in this first edition, is unusual among the works of de Meester. They are found in only one other of the approximately twenty-five books produced by him. Their inclusion in the *Schilder-Boeck* is perhaps then a mark of its status as envisioned by van Mander and his publisher. That there were two title prints is explained by the fact that the work was offered in three possible combinations: as the six sections complete, of course; or, as either the *Grondt*, with the lives of the Ancient, Italian, Dutch and German painters together; or the *Metamorphosis* with the discussion of antique iconography. As such, the latter two possibilities would each have their own title page. These smaller editions could thus be sold off more cheaply to buyers who were only interested in the respective subjects. Of this first edition, thirty-eight copies are known to have survived. Among them is an example at the Royal Library, The Hague, with van Mander's own marginalia.

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# Encyclopædia Britannica;

OR, A

## D I C T I O N A R Y

O F

A R T S and S C I E N C E S,

COMPILED UPON A NEW PLAN.

IN WHICH

The different SCIENCES and ARTS are digested into  
distinct Treatises or Systems;

A N D

The various TECHNICAL TERMS, &c. are explained as they occur  
in the order of the Alphabet.

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*By a SOCIETY of GENTLEMEN in SCOTLAND.*

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I N T H R E E V O L U M E S.

---

V O L. I.

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E D I N B U R G H:

Printed for A. BELL and C. MACFARQUHAR;

And sold by COLIN MACFARQUHAR, at his Printing-office, Nicolson-street.

MDCCLXXI.

First page of the first edition. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

## The *Encyclopædia Britannica*: A marriage of salesmanship and intellect adéla rauchová

The first *Encyclopædia Britannica* was published in 1771 as a culturally symbolic product of the Enlightenment in Scotland. The era was marked with a surge in innovative scholarly research that caused a state of information overload in an increasingly literate society. As a result, new genres of literature developed to accommodate the avalanche of new knowledge and, among them, encyclopædias became popular as systematically organized compendia of information. *Britannica* followed in the steps of Denis Diderot's bestselling *Encyclopédie* and became a leading reference work in Great Britain and North America. The year 2012 has been a landmark for the title as *Britannica* ceased to be published in print and is now only available as an online service. *Britannica's* two-and-a-half century-long history constitutes ambitious entrepreneurs and great thinkers, not to mention the door-to-door salespeople who became the purveyors of the title's immense success. What follows here is the story of *Encyclopædia Britannica* recounted from a sales and distribution perspective.

*Britannica* is currently produced by Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., a global publisher based in North America that focuses on reference and educational sectors. The rights to publish and sell *Britannica* have changed ownership several times throughout the course of the title's existence and every transfer was reflected in *Britannica's* methods of sales and distribution. Three prominent sales models accompanied the business strategies of *Britannica* during the total of 244 years in which the title was in print. The first was a combination of subscription and retail sales that applied throughout the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries. The second was a mail order model utilizing mainly press advertisements at the beginning of the twentieth century. Finally, a direct sales strategy headed by a fleet of travelling salespeople was established after the First World War. Every stage was marked by a series of radical changes in the title's content, volume, and target audiences and it was not until the third model of door-to-door sales came into operation that *Britannica* became an established household name.

Andrew Bell, originally an engraver and Edinburgh native, undertook the compilation of the first edition of *Britannica* in association with local printers, editors and writers. The book was finally published in three volumes in Edinburgh between 1768 and 1771. The initial sales model was administered by Bell and

consisted of selling individual articles on subscription. The final product consisted of three bound volumes that were then available at bookstores around Edinburgh. The success of *Britannica* grew with every issue and complete ownership was taken over by Archibald Constable when the title was in its third edition in 1813. The new owner was a prominent Scottish bookseller who had first-hand knowledge of national business networks and began selling *Britannica* throughout the United Kingdom. Moreover, Constable established links with American booksellers in Philadelphia and began importing *Britannica* into the USA.

After Constable's death in 1827, the rights to *Britannica* were acquired in an auction by the Edinburgh firm A & C Black, who later moved its headquarters to London and hired Horace E. Hooper to manage sales and distribution. Hooper was an accomplished American bookseller who took *Britannica's* sales strategy to another level by implementing a carefully orchestrated advertising campaign in partnership with the *Times* newspaper. The sales model designed by Hooper was a so-called "hire-purchase system" and emerged as the first known installment-payment plan for book buying in England. Prospective customers responded to print advertisements with a down payment of £1, upon which they received the full set of encyclopædias and paid the remaining price of £13 on the basis of a payment calendar. Hooper soon opened a sales office in New York City where he, besides the successful mail-order model, also introduced a direct-sales method with travelling salesmen canvassing towns and selling *Britannica* to households all over the USA. However, the so-called "cold-turkey" method of direct sales where salesmen randomly choose prospective customers by simply knocking on their door did not yield as many sales as the mail-order strategy. Hooper's domain was press campaigns and he continued the hire-purchase system in America as he did in Britain.

Hooper eventually obtained full ownership of *Britannica* and moved the head publishing office to the USA in 1902. *Britannica* retained its title in spite of its new status as an American product, because after more than a century of its existence the title had become more a brand than a description. William Benton, a later publisher of *Britannica*, captured the market perception of the encyclopædia by saying that he 'doubt[s] that one American in a thousand associates the name with England'. When Hooper fell ill in 1920, *Britannica* was taken over by Sears & Co., a company that had previously assisted with the title's mail-order strategy.

Hooper's "cold-turkey" method was completely overhauled by the new owner, who decided that print advertising was too expensive and full attention should be given to direct sales. Under the supervision of Elkan H. Powell, *Britannica* salesmen no longer wasted time on trying their luck on people's doorsteps; instead they began to systematically call prospects' houses and offices to set up appointments for a sales presentation. Once they had been invited in, the specially trained salesmen employed various gimmicks to secure a sale. Duffus

described the book agent of the time as having not only a 'glittering eye and a well-oiled tongue which pivoted in the middle, but also a heavy foot which he was ready to wedge into any doorway that opened far enough to permit it'. The main target audiences were families and a popular strategy among salesmen was to make parents feel guilty about preventing their children from better education by not possessing the *Britannica* sets. The business acumen and impertinent tricks of travelling salesmen were earning *Britannica's* publishers large revenues well into the 1990s.

Kogan recounts several anecdotes that illustrate the lengths that the *Britannica* sales agents would go to in order to secure a sale. The author recalls a story told by a salesman who visited a farmer in Modesto, California, and tried to convince him to buy *Britannica* for his teenage son. The farmer was reluctant to spend the money and while the men were talking, the farmer's son threw a rock and broke a living-room window. The salesman then turned to the farmer and said: 'If the schools aren't teaching your children to behave [...] something has to be done. We consider our articles on "Child Psychology" and "Child Behaviour" one of the greatest accomplishments of the new *Britannica Junior*.' The farmer decided to trust the fact that information found in an encyclopædia entry could improve his son's upbringing and responded by buying the set. A similar case was reported in Ironwood, Michigan where a different salesman kept getting a negative response from a married couple with two boys. The salesman eventually told the parents to imagine a moment ten years from now and ask themselves: 'Did we do all for those two boys of ours while they were still with us and not away? Procrastination is the thief of time'. The parents bought the entire *Britannica* set. Customer exploitation from the *Britannica* agents knew few moral boundaries and Kogan's accounts substantiate Duffus's candid description of them as 'the bookselling pests' who 'preyed on ignorance'. Interestingly, Kogan presents the anecdotes in his book as a source of inspiration for budding *Britannica* salesmen rather than obvious displays of shameless sales practice.

Sears & Co., predominantly a mail order business, had little interest in pursuing book publishing further and eventually decided to sell *Britannica* in 1943. The transfer resulted in the formation of Encyclopædia Britannica Inc. (EB Inc.); this title has been maintained to the present day. EB Inc. successfully continued the direct sales model for several decades and, following the trends of digital publishing at the end of the twentieth century, *Britannica* became the first multimedia encyclopædia available on CD-ROM. A growing demand for electronically searchable and readily updatable reference works caused EB Inc. to eventually abandon *Britannica* in printed format and transform it into an online-only service. With the discontinuation of printed volumes, the services of travelling salesmen were also no longer required, as the access and applications for using *Britannica* are now provided via online subscription. *Britannica* as a title

has then, in theory, returned to the original sales model of individual subscriptions from the days of its first issue in the eighteenth century—only now in a digital format.

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Illumination from *The Tudor Pattern Book*, MS. Ashmole 1504 f. 030v. Bodleian Library.



*Bent Onyx*, 2012. Digital offset printing, Mohawk superfine paper, Japanese tissue, hand painted edges. Binding construction by Daniel Kelm. Photos courtesy of the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

## **Bookwork #11**

### **Taubaa Auerbach**

Taubaa Auerbach created this set of three 8 x 8 x 8 inch cubic books, which illustrate the colour spectrum through digital offset printing in a page-by-page format. A digital offset print on paper with airbrushed cloth cover and book edges creates a colourful reference volume of all the colours in existence. The special binding was co-designed by the artist herself in collaboration with Daniel E. Kelm, and were bound at Wide Awake Garage by Kelm with the help of Leah Hughes.

[www.taubaauerbach.com](http://www.taubaauerbach.com)



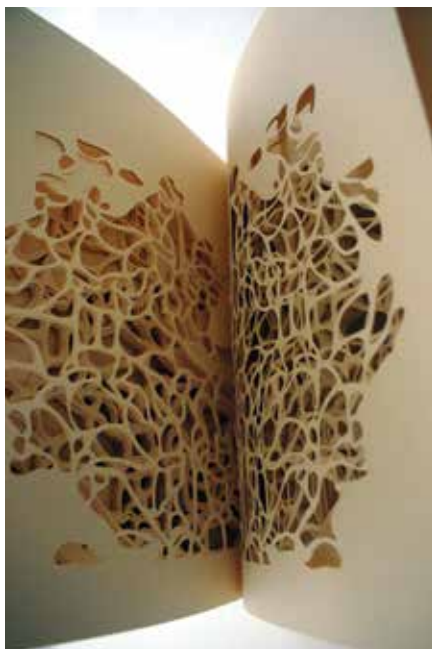
*RGB Colorspace Atlas*, 2011.  
Digital offset print on paper, case bound book,  
airbrushed cloth cover and page edges. Binding  
co-designed by Daniel E. Kelm.

## Bookwork #12

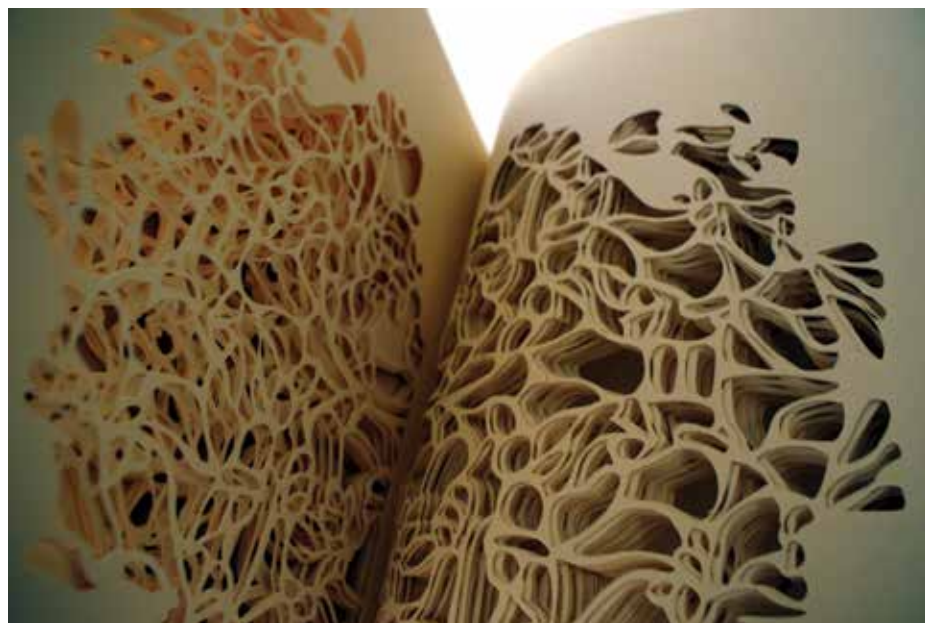
### Evy Jokhova

Evy Jokhova is a multidisciplinary artist and bookmaker. Her work explores space and the form it takes for us: the space within architecture, the notion of home and loss, the construction of dwellings and the fear of the unknown, worlds both real and fictional. Her work is an attempt to realize the need for inventions of unrestrained fantasy in our society; it defines the moment when the boundary between the real and the imaginary blurs. *The Spider's Book* is, in a sense, a metaphorical representation of "weaving a story". However, instead of adding to weave a form, she takes away, telling the story through spaces and gaps.

[www.evyjokhova.co.uk](http://www.evyjokhova.co.uk)



*The Spider's Book*, 2008. Hand bound book cut pages. Photos courtesy of the artist.



*The Spider's Book*, 2008.



*Kader Attol Portrait*, 2011. 1500 pages of paper.  
Photo courtesy of the artist.

### Bookwork #13 Nicholas Galanin

‘Culture cannot be contained as it unfolds. My art enters this stream at many different points, looking backwards, looking forwards, generating its own sound and motion. I am inspired by generations of Tlingit creativity and contribute to this wealthy conversation through active curiosity. There is no room in this exploration for the tired prescriptions of the “Indian Art World” and its institutions. Through creating I assert my freedom. Concepts drive my medium. I draw upon a wide range of indigenous technologies and global materials when exploring an idea. Adaptation and resistance, lies and exaggeration, dreams, memories and poetic views of daily life—these themes recur in my work, taking form through sound, texture, and image. Inert objects spring back to life; kitsch is reclaimed as cultural renewal; dancers merge ritual and rap. I am most comfortable not knowing what form my next idea will take, a boundless creative path of concept-based motion.’

[silverjackson.tumblr.com](http://silverjackson.tumblr.com)



*Old dog.* Photo: Junku Nishimura.

## Yapping through the ages: A timeline of literary canines

sophie boisvert-hearn

*Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend.  
Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.*

– Groucho Marx

A yapp, in book terminology, refers to a soft vellum binding that overhangs the edges of a book. Designed by William Yapp, a 19th century London bookseller, it was designed to protect pocket books, notably Bibles. A yap is what happens when small dogs get trod on, and we thought we might as well take advantage of the homophone to examine the historical connection between dogs and books. Although this edition of Yapp is big and bold—more German Shepherd or Irish Wolfhound than Chihuahua or Shih Tzu—we will now take a few pages to salute literary canines of all shapes and sizes.

The relationship between dogs and books goes back as far as the medium itself, and we now offer you a few highlights from this most storied of species. From mythical mongrel to modern-day mutts, these pups have been lauded as legendary heroes, muses, protectors, and loyal companions. All yapping aside, the following hounds (and many more) have made a clear and lasting impact on our literary history.

**800 BC - Argos the Great Dog.** In Homer's *Odyssey*, Argos endures years of abuse and mistreatment from those who have pillaged the family home in Odysseus's absence. After his very long journey, Odysseus returns, disguised as a beggar. Touchingly, Argos survives just long enough to recognize his master (he is the only one who does) before finally passing away. Loyal to the very end.

**500 BC, Anubis.** Sometimes depicted simply as a black dog, Anubis was the jackal-headed god of Egyptian mythology. Half-human and half-canine, he protected the dead during their journey into the afterlife and was said to have invented mummification. He also assisted in the death rites that allowed the deceased to pass through to the underworld.

**400-500 AD, Cavall.** Legend has it that King Arthur employed his favourite dog,



Cavall, in the hunt for the great boar Troit. According to old British lore, Cavall's pawprints are still embedded into the rock where he finally killed the beast. The legend says that, even when the stone imprints were removed, the prints unfailingly reappeared. These stories are conserved in the *Historia Brittonium*, a collection of legends that have been rewritten and transmitted since the seventh century (see *Six Old English Chronicles*, 1848, published by Henry G. Bohn).

**700-1200, Geri and Freki.** In Norse mythology, Geri and Freki are the wolf companions of the god Odin, father of all gods. Odin's role in Norse mythology is complex, ranging from symbol of war to victory to wisdom and according to legend, Geri and Freki were his constant companions. Etymologically, their names mean the hungry or the greedy ones and folklore tells us they were masters of hunting elk. The wolves are depicted in the *Poetic Edda* and the *Prose Edda*, penned by Snorri Sturluson. These works date back to the thirteenth century and are compilations of earlier written Norse tales and legends.

**1590-1600s, Richard of Gloucester.** In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, this villain is likened to a dog on multiple occasions—and not of the fluffy, faithful variety. According to the bard, Richard of Gloucester was born with a mouth full of sharp teeth, which he claims to signify that he 'should snarl and bite and play the dog.' When Richard is finally killed in Richard III, he is again compared to a canine: 'the bloody dog is dead,' Henry Richmond exclaims.

**1815, The Dandie Dinmont terrier.** The Dandie Dinmont is a lesser-known breed of dog, best recognized by his sturdy (read: large) head and short legs. The breed was named after a character in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Guy Mannering*. In the story, Dandie owns several of these terriers, which until the publication of the book had no definitive name. In this anecdotal way, Sir Walter Scott, a literary man, played a notable role in the history of terrier breeds.

**1840-1850s, Flush.** Inspired by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's love for her cocker spaniel Flush, Virginia Woolf wrote *Flush: A Biography* (1933). The novel, a blend of fiction and non-fiction, is told through the eyes of the spaniel herself. Literary analysts hail it as a modernist critique of society and also as a biographical nod to female authors of the time.

**1850, Jip.** In the famous Charles Dicken novel *David Copperfield*, Jip is the little dog belonging to David's first wife, Dora. Much like his mistress, Jip is difficult and spoiled and is arguably paid far too much attention. Nevertheless, his loyalty runs deep, and as Dora passes away, so too does he. Argos would have been proud. Bonus Jip: also the name of Dr. Dolittle's dog in Hugh Lofting's 1920s series. The

later Jip's strong sense of smell leads him to save the life of a shipwrecked man stranded on an island.

**1859, Lassie.** While Lassie's renown is in large part due to her starring cinematic roles, the most famous collie of all started out as a character in a short story. Entitled *The Half-Brothers* and penned by Elizabeth Gaskell, the story sees the wise Lassie rescuing the titular boys who are lost in a snowstorm. In the late 1930s Eric Knight expanded on the story for the *Saturday Evening Post*, and his work was eventually published as a novel, leading to a series of hit movies. Lassie spent the rest of her career saving hapless humans from harrowing situations.

**1901, The Hound of Baskervilles.** Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's third Sherlock Holmes novel begins with a murder, believed by the victim's family to have been committed by a demon dog. The author may have been inspired by British folklore and the legend of Richard Cabell, who murdered his wife in a jealous rage. The dog had belonged to Cabell's wife and enacted his revenge by ripping out Cabell's throat and haunting him into the afterlife. Now that's loyalty. Spoiler alert: the hound is real, until Holmes and Watson shoot it.

**1900s, Nana Darling.** While he was writing about Peter Pan's various adventures, J.M. Barrie found a companion in an adopted Newfoundland dog called Luath. Luath was the inspiration behind Nana, the Darling family's dog and nanny to their three children. Nana is arguably one of the most responsible characters in the entire story, playing the only adult role in a world ruled by children.

**1929, Milou.** Also known as Snowy in (the English translation of) Hergé's Tintin series. He may be a dog, but this loveable pup offers just as much comedic relief as the rest of Tintin gang. With his mocking eyebrows, astute temperament, and an ability to squeeze into very small spaces, it's unlikely that Tintin could have escaped most of the pickles he's been in without the help of his pooch.

**1956, Old Yeller.** This children's book written by Fred Gipson tells the story of a young boy in charge of the family farm while his father is away on business. He finds himself being pestered by a mongrel of a dog and, eventually, welcomes him into the family; this mongrel, Old Yeller, goes on to prove his worth by saving the family on multiple occasions. Poisoned after fighting off a rabid wolf, this faithful mutt meets a tragic, if merciful, end. A real tear-jerker.

**1961, Tock.** 'Since you got here by not thinking, it seems reasonable to expect that, in order to get out, you must start thinking'. Wise words from Tock, the philosophizing "watchdog" in Norton Juster's classic novel *The Phantom Tollbooth*

(he has a built-in clock on his tummy). Tock is the guide and protector of the story's protagonist, Milo, as they make their way through Dictionopolis to the Castle in the Air, where their mission is to free the princesses Rhyme and Reason. Spoiler alert: they make it.

**1978, Odie.** Garfield's idiotic canine companion in Jim Davis's comic strip about the cranky feline. While Garfield is reliably irritable and at times even cruel towards the goofy Odie, the slobbering pup is blissfully unaware of this antipathy and adores his chubby friend endlessly. A testament to unrequited canine love.

**1981, Cujo.** In this thriller by Stephen King, the once gentle St. Bernard is bitten by a bat and infected with rabies. However, instead of being put down like poor, sweet Old Yeller, Cujo becomes a quadruped nightmare, terrorizing the neighbourhood by committing rampant and violent murder. Bad dog.

**1997, Fang.** Fang is Rubeus Hagrid's faithful canine companion in J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Much like his owner, Fang looks rather big and dangerous but Harry and his friends soon discover that the hound is merely fiercely loyal to Hagrid and, in fact, rather cowardly. To his great merit, he nonetheless assists the group as best he can and even manages to save Harry's life at some point. Bonus dog in the HP series: Fluffy, a vicious three-headed guard dog modelled on the mythological Cerberus. Only the music of Orpheus can lull a Cerberus (and Fluffy) into a harmless nap.

**2001, Walter the Farting Dog.** Proving time and again that you really can blame it on the dog, the titular hero of this children's book series by William Kotzwinkle and Glenn Murray embarks on a variety of flatulent adventures. Walter sheepishly plays the reluctant anti-hero by using his inadvertent gastric troubles, saving his friends and family from—among other threats—bank robbers and marooned cruise ships.

#### Further Reading

Britton, C. *Dogs in Books*. New York: Mark Batty Publisher, 2011.

The book features an impressive collection of illustrations of dogs in literature, ranging from rare first editions to more contemporary pieces from the British Library.

The New Yorker Magazine. *The Big New Yorker Book of Dogs*. New York: Random House, 2012.

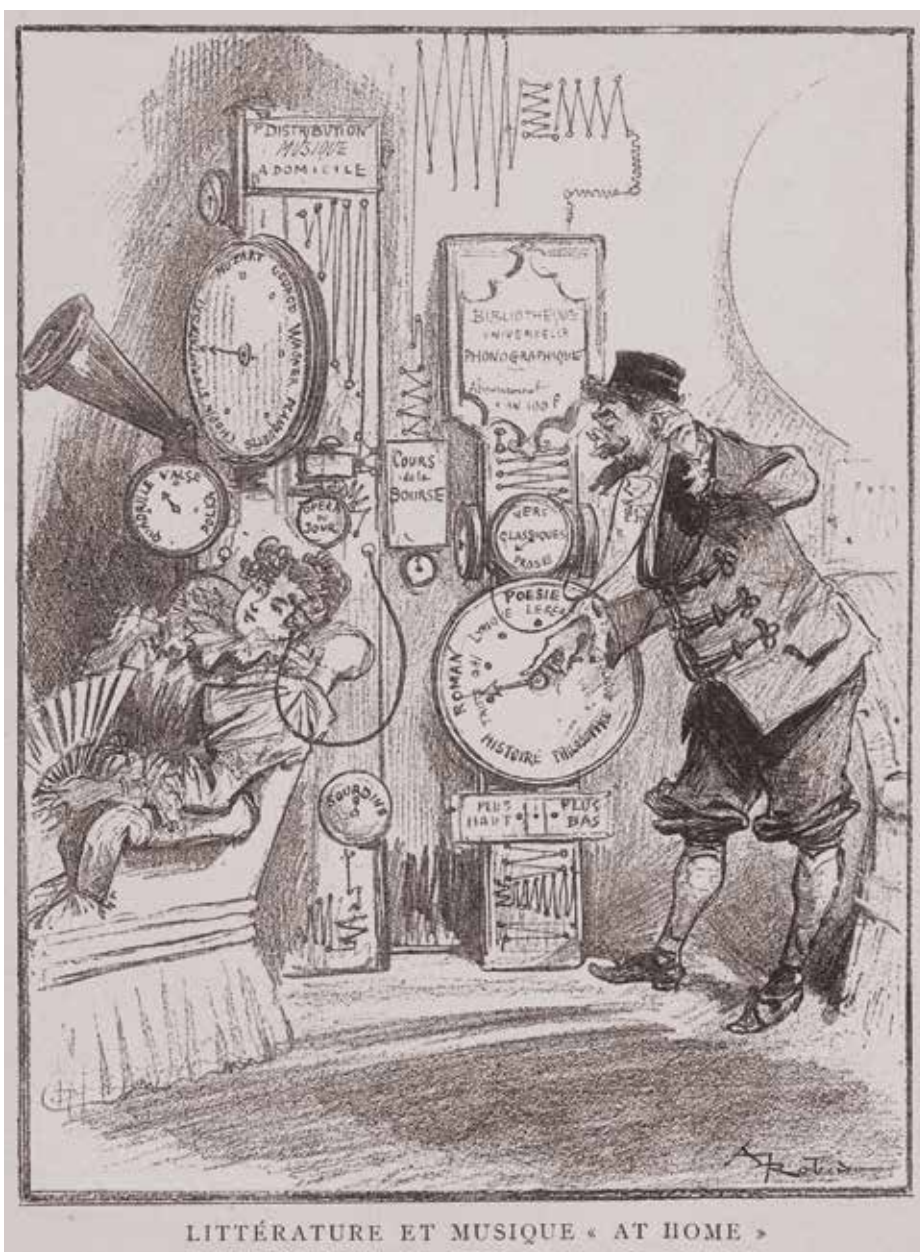
A collection of drafts, jokes, illustrations, cartoons, fiction, and articles from the magazine's archives, celebrating dogs and their roles in literature and our lives.

John, C. *Dogs: History, Myth, Art*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Combines literature with art history, this volume is 'for the dog enthusiast with a sense of aesthetics.' The illustrations depict dogs in art ranging from paintings to brooches and examine the history of canine symbolism and allegory.



Illustration from *The Tudor Pattern Book*, MS. Ashmole 1504, f. 034v. Bodleian Library.



A futuristic vision of the changing mediascape of the nineteenth century as elaborated by Octave Uzanne and Albert Robida in their illustrated story *La Fin des Livres*, originally published in France in the collection *Contes pour les Bibliophiles* (1894). Illustration by Albert Robida.

## If print is dead, anything is possible

### Book review

kate cunningham

*Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894*, by Alessandro Ludovico, Eindhoven: Onomatopée 77, 2012.

*Clotheslines, seams in stockings, books and jobs are all obsolete.*

– Marshall McLuhan, 1965

Book readers beware, your beloved medium is on a fast decline. It shall go the way of the vinyl record, of the film stock before. Release your ink and paper fetishes upon the all mighty touchscreen, for it is illuminated from within. Pay your tithes to Google, Amazon, and Apple. They know iYou, and they know what iYou want. Depth and complexity shall be placed upon the altar, and entertaining real-time updates born from the ash. *Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.*

Such apocalyptic visions and premature obituaries are what Alessandro Ludovico seeks to demystify in *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894*. Ludovico is not amongst the evangelicals of either side of the pixel versus paper debate, but rather a practitioner of print publishing and an activist for Internet-based networked communities. It is this dual role that leads him to search for strategies and alternatives for the publishing world through investigating hybrid forms, or those that utilize the best of what both digital and print can offer. Looking at historical media prophecies, strategies of underground publishing, and the critical and innovative works of contemporary media artists, he makes a strong case that progress in publishing does not lead to an inevitable supersession of one media over the other, but is rather an opportunity to reimagine the role of text within the needs of the current moment.

So what exactly is post-digital print? Personally, I have to admit to finding the oft-used prefix “post” somewhat nauseating as it often seems synonymous with “the movement is confused”. In this case, however, I believe that it works well by implying the question “How does print continue?” This is a political question. As Ludovico consistently points out, much is at stake: in-depth and long-form journalism, physical bookstores, independent publishers, obscure and experimental writers, and, on a larger scale, collective memory and the control of knowledge. Print is indeed being transformed by increased digitization,

but it is up to publishers to adjust to the changing role of paper. For example, Ludovico sees an opportunity in the prospect that cheap printed material such as paperbacks and daily newspapers may indeed go completely digital. *The Quick Brown*, a dynamic work of art by Jonathan Puckey, illustrates the struggle printed newspapers face with staying relevant. Puckey has created software that regularly checks the Fox News website and highlights any changes in the material, showing that many of its headlines are published before the story has been verified in order to grab the reader's divided attention. Could printed newspapers shift roles to complement their web-based content with longer articles and more critical analysis of "yesterday's news?" Likewise, readers may grab a Kindle when heading for the beach or the train to dig into the latest bestseller, but this may allow room for printed books to become valuable material objects, thus sparking innovation in design as well as content.

Hybridization is another characteristic of post-digital print, meaning that future publications may not be completely digital or completely analog, but will contain qualities of both. Throughout the book, Ludovico analyses the salient characteristics of digital and print to strategize ways in which they can join forces and benefit future readers. Digitization implies speed, mass accessibility, and searchability, as well as enabling updates and customization. Print brings to the table tactility, experienced users, credibility, stability, and according to Ludovico, is 'the very best "interface" ever designed'. More so, hybridization can mean using digital networks to promote and distribute printed forms. Ludovico points to a quote by Surrealist theorist and artist André Breton: 'One publishes to find comrades!'. Avant-garde artists and zine makers have been utilizing networks to spread their ideas long before the Internet was conceived. *Post-Digital Print* is, in a way, a fascinating chronicle that proves one thing: people who have something to say will find a way to say it, using whatever means necessary or available. He emphasizes that, historically, the success of underground publishing projects depended on utilizing the technology and networks of the time (sympathetic printers, mimeography, the postal service, photocopying, CD-ROMs, etc.) to further their interests and find like-minded souls. It is in this spirit that independent publishers can use the Internet to increase accessibility to their works, collaborate with other publishers, and utilize print-on-demand technology to decrease printing and distribution costs. The book itself makes use of hybrid possibilities, printed through traditional offset means, print-on-demand, and uploaded as a PDF file to peer-to-peer exchange sites. Even the cover design emphasizes its hybrid status, as the matte cover is layered with glossy fingerprint smears, mimicking the touchscreen of an e-reader.

Alessandro Ludovico has been involved in publishing for the last twenty years and is the editor-in-chief of *Neural* magazine. He is also a member of Mag.net, the Electronic Cultural Publishers Network. His interests and experiences



in publishing have led to collaborations with the hacker artist Paolo Cirio and the artist couple UBERMORGEN, most notably in the projects *GWEI - Google Will Eat Itself* and *Amazon Noir*, the latter involving software designed to exploit Amazon's "Search Inside the Book" feature in order to obtain and save copyrighted books as PDF files. I include this short biography because it is by narrating his own story that Ludovico's writing shines. His personal accounts of establishing collaborative networks are especially interesting and useful for anyone intending to go down a similar path.

This book is not perfect. The blurred line between personal narrative and academic text is problematic at times, especially when observations and historical assumptions are described as facts, without citation. Likewise his writing style is very accessible but could have benefited from more thorough proofing. That being said, this work is a wonderful resource. For those interested in the "pixel or print" debate currently happening in the publishing industry, it highlights that a prescriptive attitude on either side is neither useful for the survival of the industry nor the reader at large. For those interested in media arts, the book showcases a large number of artists reflecting on our changing attitudes towards text and technology, both historically and in the current time. Moreover, it's a useful do-it-yourself guide for publishers, writers, and all those interested in sharing and archiving cultural heritage. Finally, it prefaces the larger discussion into how technological shifts in the cultural sectors are changing political options and reshaping daily communication. In any case, since the book is available online as a free PDF, there's no reason not to take a closer look. Just Google it!



The foundry in Darmstadt. Clockwise from top: workshop, type ready to ship, discarded type.  
Photos: Hilary Drummond.

## Fading type: An interview with Europe's last type founder oliver schwab

*English translation by Oliver Schwab and Mara Calenic*

In the mid-1980s the advent of the now-familiar digital type composition heralded the slow demise of an industry that had hardly changed for the previous five centuries. As printing with lead type declined, type foundries were forced to close. One of these foundries was D. Stempel AG, founded on 15 January, 1895 in Frankfurt am Main. It had been the world's leading manufacturer of various type matrices such as the Garamond family, Unger Fraktur, Palatino and Optima. Fortunately, the company's large collection of type was not melted down as scrap or left to gather dust on a shelf. Instead, along with a number of predominantly twentieth century printing presses, it was moved to the Haus für Industriekultur in Darmstadt. Rainer Gerstenberg, the last professional type founder in Europe, works there with the numerous typefaces and forty-three printing presses from twenty-six European foundries. Yapp visited Mr. Gerstenberg in his workshop and asked him about his work.

**Oliver Schwab:** Mr. Gerstenberg, how did you come to work at the foundry in the Haus für Industriekultur?

**Rainer Gerstenberg:** I was trained at the Stempel AG. After twenty-five years in the company, at the time of its liquidation in 1986, I was the chairman of the supervisory board and therefore couldn't be laid off. The machines and the matrices of Stempel, and with them my place of work, went to the State Museum in Darmstadt. Four former employees and I signed a contract with the Haas'sche Schriftgießerei from Münchenstein, the oldest type foundry in the world and a company affiliated with Stempel, to open our own business in Darmstadt. Last year I took over the foundry on my own.

**OS:** And your former colleagues?

**RG:** They have all retired. Even then, the profession of type founder was outdated. Since 1997 I have been doing everyone's job, so to speak. For twenty-five years I was exclusively a type founder, but now I even have to repair the machines. We weren't

allowed to do that in the past.

**OS:** What about the future of the foundry? Considering that you were supposed to retire in 2012, how much longer can the foundry exist?

**RG:** Initially, I had planned to retire at age sixty-five, but now I'm sixty-six and have completely taken over the company. I will try to carry on for a few more years. There have been two candidates for apprenticeship, but they both backed out—mainly because of funding problems.

**OS:** Linotype (the company that purchased Stempel AG in 1985) planned to lure you away from your profession by offering to retrain you as a computer typesetter. Why did you decline?

**RG:** As I was member of the supervisory board, they tried to silence me. They probably thought they could push me out of my position by offering me a year's training in America, but I said: 'You don't need to worry. I'll stay in the industry'.

**OS:** Weren't you tempted to work as a computer typesetter?

**RG:** When you have done the same job for twenty-five years, you want to keep doing it. It would have been quite a leap of faith indeed, having to be retrained again. This was not easy in the beginning. I applied at the Frankfurt book fair as a printer, because I still had a small printing office. But this didn't amount to anything, so I made my own business with our associated company, the Haas'sche Schriftgießerei, and chose the path that I still follow today.

**OS:** What does your collection of fonts consist of—is it more than just the remains of Haas and Stempel?

**RG:** We have Stempel's entire collection, which consists of about one million matrices that I only take from the basement for casting. I keep another million or so matrices from Deberny-Peignot and Haas in my home in Frankfurt. Approximately three million are stored in Switzerland. For these matrices I have the casting rights from the company Frutiger AG until 31 December 2013. We also have matrices from Nebiolo, which was the largest foundry in Italy. In 1998 we brought their matrices, the wealth of a foundry, to Germany. The machines, however, were left there. The bread-and-butter type of Stempel and Haas, the font with which the company made its fortune, was formerly the Helvetica. Then there are also so-called exotic fonts in Arabic, Tibetan, Siamese, Cuneiform, Chinese and many more.

**OS:** What kinds of type do you produce today? For whom?

**RG:** We have three divisions: type casting for relief printing, stamp types from tin and aluminium, and lead short types for the labelling of, for instance, clothing. In Germany, the machines used for these types have fallen victim to new technologies and are now operated in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Poland and Romania. However, these have become niche markets. Furthermore, we produce mirror fonts for the industry. The expiry dates in the spice industry are also still partially printed with our short type letters.

**OS:** Do you also supply book printing offices?

**RG:** Yes, there are book printing offices in every major city: Hamburg, Munich, Berlin and also Amsterdam, where you still find companies that only print with lead types. Today, America is also a rising market. Of course, the transportation of type is very expensive, as we normally sell per kilo for around seventy euros. Some characters, such as the @-sign or decorative fonts, we also sell by the piece.

**OS:** At what point did you recognize a decline in demand for cast letters?

**RG:** The first noticeable decline in sales came in the 1970s, mainly due to offset printing. Suddenly even markets in other places, like South America, had been sharply reduced. For months the company had printed for Iran, buying machines and stencils... and suddenly the demand was gone. Stempel had made huge profits with lead type. As they recognized a decrease in the demand, they eagerly tried to reach new markets. Besides developing typomatic and title set machines, they produced components for Danfoss heating thermostats. Many of their investments failed, which led to great financial loss.

**OS:** What do you think are the greatest changes in book printing brought about by new technologies?

**RG:** In my opinion, typography suffers incredibly. Different fonts are thrown together without any context. Italic type is accompanied by a bold type, followed by a lighter type. The intuition for typography is fading. Previously, typesetters had to plan everything before they set the type. If they made a mistake, everything had to be redone. You could not just press a button and make bold into italic.

**OS:** Could I, as a layman, recognize the differences in production technique from the printed letters themselves? How could I tell the difference between your

method and modern production techniques?

**RG:** In texts printed with lead type, you always have the same spacing between the letters. Especially at the beginning of phototypesetting, this was not the case. Here different exposure times also caused differences in the weight of a text [shows a font family]. For example, the letter ‘r’ must match to ‘ft’. In such combinations, there can’t be larger spaces; the typesetters had to consider this in advance.

**OS:** What about the design process—was the creation of type altered by new technologies?

**RG:** Yes. Today, if only two letters are changed, a font receives a new name and you don’t have to pay licensing fees. This was different in the past. For example, take the last creations of Stempel. The company thought they would have a big financial hit with Sabon and the decorative font Present because other companies had to pay licensing fees to use these fonts. What did the so-called new type designers do? They simply changed only characters and gave the font a new name.

**OS:** How was this handled before? If a foundry had designed a font, was it only offered by that foundry? Or was there a form of exchange or cooperation between foundries?

**RG:** Each foundry had its own type designer, which created the company’s letters. Take for example Garamond, which was cast by Stempel, Bauer in Barcelona and Dröse in Ingolstadt. Each foundry made the line [position of the character on the letter] differently. Through this, the matrices of different companies could not be combined with each other. As the typeface was the same, this was a way of battling each other. At one time, if a print shop had bought Garamond at Stempel, it had to buy again and again from the same company. Today, if a customer wants a letter of Garamond recast, I ask him where he got it. The answer is usually ‘from the black market’. I then ask for an “m” and an “o” and manufacture the desired letter for the customer.

**OS:** It is often said that printing with moveable lead type almost hasn’t changed since its invention in the fifteenth century. How does the production of your type differ from Gutenberg’s?

**RG:** The machinery is significantly different. Gutenberg poured the metal with a casting ladle: he had time we don’t have today. That’s why we keep all the scripts, about fifty tons of them, in stock. And yet it seems that you never have the product your customer requests. Especially now, since we supply companies all over the

world, we need a bigger warehouse, as each language has its own accents. So we produce a standard set and then there are additions for different countries.

**OS:** And in terms of materials?

**RG:** No difference, really. The lead alloy is the same and can still be bought: five percent tin and twenty-eight percent antimony. If I cast script fonts, I need a bit more tin. Here we take six percent. For spacing matrices I need less antimony. As these parts don't have to endure pressure, they don't require any durability.

**OS:** You don't produce this yourself?

**RG:** No. We have the stoves, but due to environmental regulations this would be impossible. Today worn out type is brought to recycling companies. In the past, Stempel did this in its own building. They had a giant boiler in which the matrices were melted and, if necessary, lead, antimony or tin added.

**OS:** And how long can you print with one letter?

**RG:** It always depends on the machine and how the printer handles it. If I use a lot of pressure, the letter won't last long. But if I do it gently, I can print up to 100,000 times. The material is always the same.

**OS:** One last question: How did you come to be a type founder?

**RG:** I actually wanted to be a typesetter, so I applied at Brönnert, which was a big publisher at Frankfurt's main railway station. It had its own large printing company. At that time they still typeset by hand. However, grammar wasn't my greatest strength and it didn't work out. But my father had a barbershop in Frankfurt Sachsenhausen. The Stempel workmen always came there during and after working hours to get their hair cut. So he asked them: 'My son will soon finish school, does your company have something for him?' And, since they were looking for type founders, I became a type founder. In these days you still had a range of choices.

**OS:** Thank you for the interview.

*Original interview in German follows.*

**Oliver Schwab:** Herr Gerstenberg, wie ist die Gießerei im Haus für Industriekultur zustande gekommen?



**Rainer Gerstenberg:** Ich wurde bei der Stempel AG ausgebildet und war nach fünfundzwanzig Jahren in der Firma zum Zeitpunkt ihrer Liquidation im Jahr 1986 Betriebsratsvorsitzender im Aufsichtsrat und damit sozusagen unkündbar. Die Maschinen und Matern der Stempel AG und damit mein Arbeitsbereich sind nach Darmstadt in die Hände des Landesmuseums gegangen. Daraufhin habe ich mit der Haas'schen Gießerei aus Münchenstein, der Tochter der Stempel AG und ältesten Schriftgießerei der Welt, einen Kooperationsvertrag geschlossen und mich mit vier ehemaligen Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern hier in Darmstadt selbstständig gemacht. Letztes Jahr habe ich die Schriftgießerei dann ganz alleine übernommen.

**OS:** Und Ihre ehemaligen Mitarbeiter?

**RG:** Die sind heute alle in Rente. Der Beruf Schriftgießer war schon damals sozusagen überaltert. Seit 1997 bin ich hier als Allrounder tätig. Nur Schriftgießer war ich fünfundzwanzig Jahre lang, heute muss ich sogar die Maschinen reparieren. Das dürften wir früher gar nicht.

**OS:** Und wie lange wird es diese Schriftgießerei noch geben? Eigentlich stand Ihr Renteneintritt ja für 2012 an?

**RG:** Eigentlich wollte ich mit fünfundsechzig in Rente gehen, aber jetzt bin ich sechsundsechzig und habe die Firma ganz übernommen. Ich werde also versuchen, noch ein paar Jahre dranzuhängen. Zeitweilig gab es zwei Anwärter auf eine Ausbildung, die aber beide abgesprungen sind. Eines der Probleme war hier die Finanzierung.

**OS:** Linotype wollte Sie auch von dem Beruf abwerben und bot Ihnen eine Umschulung zum Computersetzer an. Warum lehnten Sie ab?

**RG:** Ich war damals im Aufsichtsrat und da hat man versucht, mich mundtot zu machen. Man dachte sich wohl, man könne Herrn Gerstenberg aufs Abstellgleis stellen und bot mir eine einjährige Ausbildung in Amerika an. Ich sagte aber: „Sie brauchen sich gar keine Sorgen machen, ich bleib in der Branche drin.“

**OS:** Hatten Sie keine Lust auf Computersatz?

**RG:** Wenn man das fünfundzwanzig Jahre lang gemacht hat, dann will man auch dabei bleiben. Es wär ja auch ein Sprung ins kalte Wasser gewesen und ich hätte neu angelernt werden müssen. Am Anfang war das nicht gerade einfach. Ich habe

mich bei der Messe in Frankfurt als Drucker beworben, weil ich ja nebenbei noch eine kleine Druckerei hatte. Als daraus nichts wurde, habe ich mich mit unserer Tochtergesellschaft, der Haas'schen Schriftgießerei, selbstständig gemacht und den Weg gewählt den ich heute noch gehe.

**OS:** Woraus setzt sich ihr Angebot an Schriften zusammen—haben Sie mehr als die Hinterlassenschaften von Haas und Stempel?

**RG:** Wir haben hier das komplette Programm von Stempel, das sind ungefähr eine Million Matern. Die hole ich nur zum Gießen aus dem Keller. Bei mir Zuhause in Frankfurt liegen etwa eine Million Matern von Deberny-Peignot und Haas. Ungefähr drei Millionen sind in der Schweiz gelagert. Für diese Matern habe ich das Gussrecht bis 31 Dezember 2013 von der Frutiger AG. Und dann haben wir noch Nebiolo Matern. Nebiolo war die größte Schriftgießerei in Italien. In 1998 haben wir deren Matern—das ist ja der Reichtum einer Schriftgießerei—nach Deutschland geholt. Die Maschinen aber nicht. Die Brotschrift von Stempel und Haas, also die Schrift mit der die Firma ihr Geld verdient, war früher die Helvetica. Daneben gibt es sogenannte exotische Schriften wie Arabisch, Tibetanisch, Siamesisch, Keilschrift, Chinesisch und noch viele mehr.

**OS:** Und was produzieren Sie heute?

**RG:** Wir haben drei Bereiche: Schriftguss für den Hochdruck, sowie Prägetypen aus Zink und Aluminium und Kurztypen aus Blei zum Etikettieren. Die Maschinen hierfür sind in Deutschland neuen Technologien zum Opfer gefallen und werden jetzt in Schweden, Finnland, Dänemark, Polen oder Rumänien genutzt. Insgesamt sind dies aber alles Nischenmärkte geworden. Außerdem produzieren wir Spiegelschriften für die Industrie. In der Gewürzbranche werden die Verfallsdaten auch noch teilweise mit unseren Kurztypenbuchstaben gedruckt.

**OS:** Beliefern Sie auch Buchdruckereien?

**RG:** Ja, es gibt in jeder größeren Stadt eine Buchdruckerei: Hamburg, München, Berlin, aber auch Amsterdam, dort findet man Firmen, die nur Buchdruck machen. Jetzt im Kommen ist außerdem Amerika. Aber da ist der Transport natürlich sehr teuer, da wir normalerweise das Blei nach Kilo verkaufen. Das Kilo kostet ungefähr siebzig Euro. Manche Buchstaben wie den Klammeraffen (@-Zeichen) und Schmuckbuchstaben verkaufen wir aber auch nach Stück.

**OS:** Wann konnte man einen Rückgang in der Nachfrage nach gegossenen Schriften feststellen?

**RG:** Die ersten spürbaren Rückgänge im Absatz gab es in den siebziger Jahren, vor allem durch den Offsetdruck. Auch Märkte in anderen Ländern wie Südamerika sind auf einmal alle weggebrochen. Monatelang hatte die Firma für den Iran gedruckt, Maschinen und Matern gekauft und plötzlich war das auch wieder weg. Die Firma Stempel hatte ein Riesengewinn mit den Bleischriften gemacht und, als sie einen Rückgang beim Bleisatz erkannte, sehr vieles versucht, neue Märkte zu erreichen. Neben der Entwicklung von Typomatic- und Titelsatzgeräten waren dies Komponenten für Danfoss-Heizungsthermostate. Unter den ganzen Entwicklungen waren aber viele Flops, wodurch sehr viel Geld verloren ging.

**OS:** Welchen Einfluss haben Ihrer Ansicht nach diese neuen Technologien auf den Buchdruck?

**RG:** Meiner Ansicht nach leidet besonders die Typographie unwahrscheinlich. Unterschiedlichste Schriften werden ohne Zusammenhang zusammengeschmissen, eine Kursiv mit einer Halbfette und darunter dann eine Magere. Hierfür geht das Gespür verloren. Früher mussten Schriftsetzer schon vorher im Kopf haben, was sie setzen. Wenn sie einen Fehler machten, musste alles neu gesetzt werden. Man konnte nicht einfach eine Taste drücken und aus einer Halbfett wird eine Kursiv.

**OS:** Und kann man die Herstellungsart auch an den Buchstaben selbst erkennen? Wenn ich als Laie einen Unterschied zwischen von Ihnen und modern hergestellten Schriften erkennen will, worauf müsste ich da achten?

**RG:** Ja, bei der Bleisatzschrift hat man immer den gleichen Abstand zwischen den Buchstaben. Besonders zu Beginn des Fotosatzes war dies nicht der Fall, wo unterschiedliche Belichtung auch Unterschiede in der Schriftstärke hervorgerufen hat. [Zeigt eine Schriftfamilie] So muss beispielsweise der Buchstabe ‚r‘ zum ‚ft‘ passen. Bei solchen Kombinationen darf es keine größeren Zwischenräume geben und das musste ein Schriftkünstler im Vorfeld berücksichtigen.

**OS:** Hat das auch einen Einfluss auf die Gestaltung von Schriften?

**RG:** Ja, heute werden einfach zwei Buchstaben einer Schrift geändert und dann wird der Schrift ein neuer Name gegeben und man muss keine Lizenzen zahlen. Das war früher anders. Nehmen wir als Beispiel die letzten Schriften der Firma Stempel. Besonders bei der Sabon und der Schmuckschrift Present dachte man, dass sie nochmal groß raus kommen. Wenn früher ein anderes Unternehmen diese Schriften benutzt hat, musste es auch Lizenzen zahlen. Was haben die sogenannten neuen Schriftkünstler gemacht? Die haben zwei Buchstaben

geändert und dann war es nicht mehr die Present, sondern hat einfach einen neuen Namen bekommen.

**OS:** Wie lief das früher ab? Wenn eine Schriftgießerei oder ein Anbieter eine Schrift entworfen hat, wurde die nur von dieser Schriftgießerei angeboten oder gab es dann einen Austausch?

**RG:** Jede Schriftgießerei hatte Ihre Schriftkünstler, die speziell für diese Ihre Schriften entwarfen. Nehmen wir als Beispiel die Garamond. Die Garamond ist von den Firmen Stempel, Bauer in Barcelona sowie Herrn Dröse in Ingolstadt gegossen worden und jeder hat eine andere Linie [Stellung des Buchstabenbildes auf dem Schriftkegel] reingemacht. Das wurde gemacht, damit die Schriften der unterschiedlichen Firmen nicht untereinander kombinierbar waren. Wenn eine Druckerei einmal eine Garamond von Stempel gekauft hatte, musste die immer wieder die Garamond von Stempel kaufen. Das Schriftbild war identisch—nur nicht die Schriftlinie—und so hat man sich auf diese Weise untereinander bekämpft. Wenn heute ein Kunde eine Garamond nachgegossen haben will, frage ich erst mal, wo er die her hat. Dann kommt meistens: ‚Vom Schwarzmarkt‘. Ich lasse mir dann immer ein ‚m‘ und ein ‚o‘ schicken und fertige die gewünschten Buchstaben für den Kunden.

**OS:** Es wird oft geschrieben, dass der Buchdruck sich seit seiner Erfindung kaum verändert hat. Wo sehen Sie Unterschiede in der Herstellung zur Schriftherstellung bei Gutenberg?

**RG:** Vor allem bei den Maschinen. Gutenberg hat mit dem Löffel gegossen, der hatte noch Zeit, die heute nicht mehr da ist. Darum haben wir auch die Schriften - ungefähr fünfzig Tonnen - auf Lager. Und trotzdem kann man sagen, dass man meistens nicht das Richtige hat. Besonders da wir heute in alle Herren Länder liefern, benötigen wir ein größeres Lager, da jede Sprache ihre eigenen Akzente hat. Darum gießt man einen Normalsatz und dann gibt's zu dem jeweiligen Land noch einen Zusatz.

**OS:** Und in Hinblick auf Materialien?

**RG:** Eigentlich nichts. Die Bleilegierung ist noch die gleiche: fünf Prozent Zinn und achtundzwanzig Prozent Antimon. Wenn ich Schreibschriften gieße, benötige ich ein bisschen mehr Zinn, da nehmen wir sechs Prozent. Bei Ausschluss brauche ich weniger Antimon, da braucht man keine Härte da dieser ja keinen Druck aushalten muss. Die Legierung bekommt man auch noch.

**OS:** Wird das nicht selbst gemischt?

**RG:** Nein. Die Öfen haben wir zwar noch, aber das wäre aufgrund der Umweltbestimmungen unmöglich. Heute geht das an Recyclingfirmen. Früher hatte Stempel im Firmengebäude selbst einen Riesenheizkessel, in dem die Matern eingeschmolzen und wenn nötig Blei, Antimon oder Zinn hinzugefügt wurde.

**OS:** Und wie lange kann man mit so einem Buchstaben drucken?

**RG:** Es kommt immer darauf an, mit welcher Maschine man druckt. Wenn ich auf dem Heidelberger Tiegel mit viel Druck presse dann hab ich nicht so lang Freude daran. Wenn ich das aber schön sacht drucke, dann kann ich bis zu 100.000-mal damit Drucken. Das Material ist immer das gleiche. Es kommt nur darauf an, wie der Drucker damit umgeht.

**OS:** Noch eine Frage zum Abschluss: Wie sind Sie damals zum Beruf des Schriftgießers gekommen?

**RG:** Eigentlich wollte ich Schriftsetzer werden und hatte mich bei der Firma Brönner, das war am Hauptbahnhof Frankfurt ein Riesenverlag mit Druckerei, beworben. Damals wurde noch mit der Hand gesetzt. Grammatik war aber nicht meine größte Stärke und darum ist daraus nichts geworden. Mein Vater hatte aber in Frankfurt Sachsenhausen ein Friseurgeschäft und da sind die Kollegen von der Firma Stempel immer während der Arbeitszeit und danach zum Haare schneiden gegangen und da hat er dann gefragt: „Der Sohn kommt aus der Schule, hätte eure Firma da was?“ Und zu dieser Zeit suchten sie Schriftgießer - und dann bin ich Schriftgießer geworden. Damals hatte man eben noch eine Auswahl.

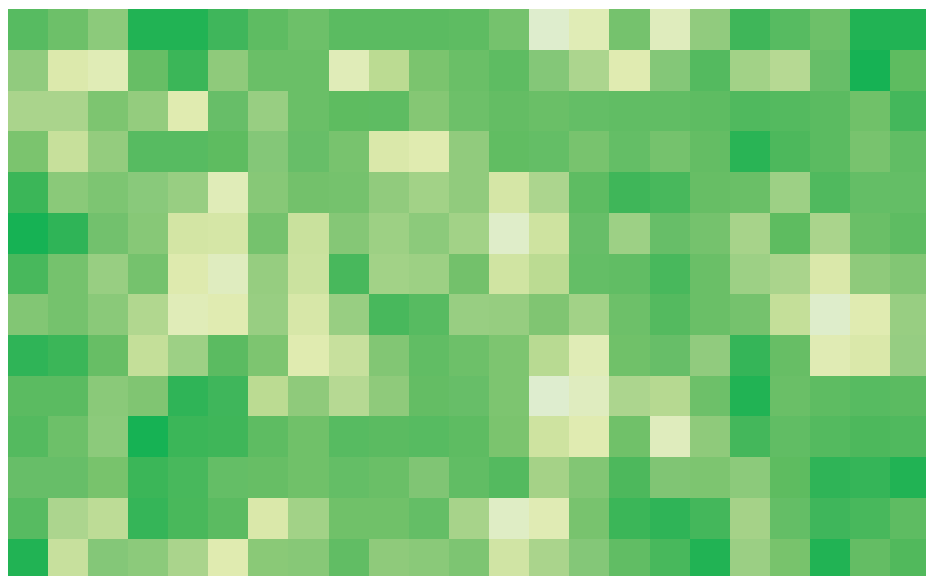
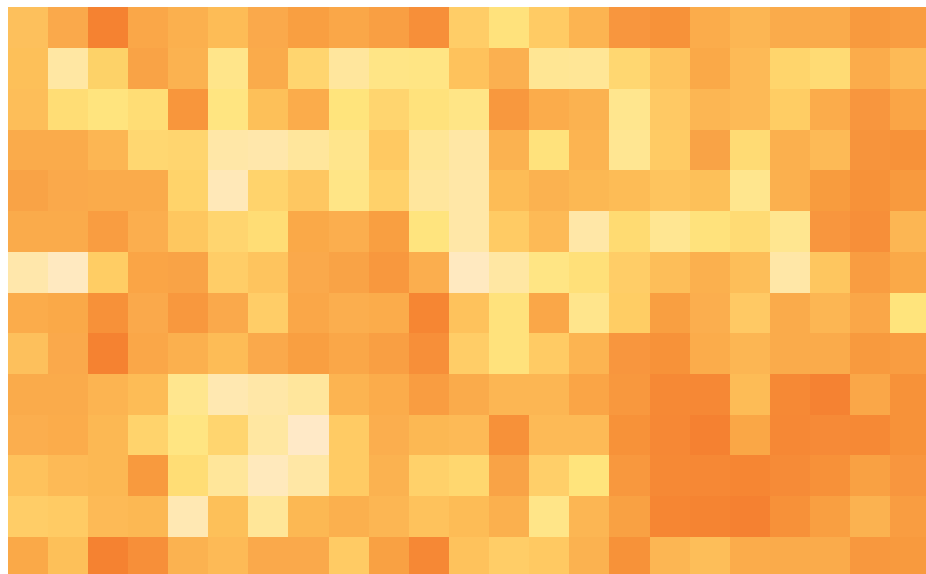
**OS:** Vielen Dank für das Gespräch.

☞ The Haus für Industriekultur in Darmstadt is open to the public. Interested parties should arrange a visit by telephone with Rainer Gerstenberg. The foundry is open Monday to Friday from 6am-12pm.

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Illustration from *Lancelot Cycle, Branch 3*. MS. Ashmole 828 f. 019r, Bodleian Library.



Artist's impression of how Ntrouka sees the words "reading" (above) and "technicolor" (below).  
Illustration: Andrea Reyes Elizondo.



## Reading in Technicolor™

anna ntrouka

You know how enhanced e-books are all the rage nowadays? How embedded interactive videos promise to transform your reading experience in a spectacular fashion? What if I were to tell you that for a lucky few, technology does not need to come to their aid when it comes to colourful reading? Ever since letters started making sense to me I became an avid reader, starting a book as soon as I had finished the previous one. I could never get enough and reading was magical, well beyond the beauty of a great story and clichés like “books are windows to other worlds”. I read everywhere and everything, including the label on my breakfast cereal. Alas, behind this intense, almost obsessive, fascination I harboured a deep, dark secret, one that I would not dare admit to anyone for fear that it sounded absolutely crazy.

Doctor, I see numbers and letters in colour.

Yes, in my head.

No, I don't hear any voices.

Melodrama aside, there was never a doctor involved. After a long period of considering my colourful letters and numbers as the norm, one day I got suspicious and the inevitable questions finally came flooding in. Was this one of these things everyone experiences but never really talks about, or was I just plain strange? Was something wrong with me? What is this thing called anyway? It took me almost twenty-five years but in the end I did confess my secret. It started as a giddy conversation with a friend but soon I felt more adventurous and did some actual research on the subject. Making my way through scattered articles and conference proceedings—which for the most part were too full of neurological terms for me to really grasp—I was relieved to find out that not only was I not alone in my bizarre visualizations but that there was a name for them as well.

Synaesthesia is medically defined as ‘a concomitant sensation and especially a subjective sensation or image of a sense (as of colour) other than the one (as of sound) being stimulated; as well as the condition marked by the experience of such sensations’. Stemming from the Greek words syn (συν,

together) and *aisthēsis* (αἰσθησις, sensation) it can be loosely translated as “sensations working together”. According to neurologists, synaesthesia is the result of what is described as “cross-talk”—that is to say accidental communication signals caused by energy transference from another circuit—between regions of the brain that ordinarily do not communicate with each other. Keeping with the popular metaphor of the brain as a circuit, the proverbial wiring is faulty... or maybe new and improved? To make matters simpler: a synaesthete may visualize music, numbers or letters in colour or hear sounds when looking at images. Even rare cases of people experiencing specific tastes when listening to music have been documented. In other words, there is a great deal of variety in synaesthetic manifestations, some more common than others—grapheme to colour, for instance, which means visualizing numbers and letters in colour, is one of the most common variations. For a synaesthete, this process has two distinct characteristics: firstly it is automatic and as effortless as breathing, and secondly it is involuntary, since there is no control over the way stimulation is perceived.

For a long period of time, people talking about their experiences as a synaesthete were simply cast off as overly imaginative or artistic and it is worth mentioning that the synaesthesia phenomenon is still rather uncharted territory. One of the great difficulties in mapping synaesthesia and its workings is the fact that it seems to be a highly individualistic affair. Even among family members who experience the same form of synaesthesia, for instance grapheme to colour, the colours they visualize specific letters in might vary significantly. To complicate the situation further, a synaesthete may experience some colours in a fixed manner, while others seem to be in flux and changing according to combinations of letters or numbers. One of the benefits of synaesthesia that has been observed so far is that it boosts memory function, as the connections synaesthetes make between stimuli are extremely powerful.

Trying to describe how this wonderful “faulty” wiring changes one’s perception is nearly impossible without providing personal examples. Luckily, there is a record of said experiences by author Vladimir Nabokov who spoke of his ‘mild hallucinations’ in his autobiography *Invitation of a Memory*. Nabokov provides his readers with a detailed account of how the outlines of various letters form in his mind in various colors, like the *a* in the English alphabet ‘in the tint of weathered wood’ but ‘polished ebony’ in French. In my very own ‘mild hallucinations’ *e* is typically yellow and *a* red but the word *reading* comes off as bright orange. Then there is *Tuesday* which contains both *e* and *a* as well, but I regret to inform you that for some inexplicable reason *Tuesday* is as yellow as a canary.

It’s true that synaesthesia is a peculiar, complex, and understudied subject, hard to put to words and quite possibly responsible for perplexed looks cast your way during social events. On the bright side, opening a book as a synaesthete means that the text jumps out in technicolor™—as if books weren’t

fascinating enough already—and it also means that the content of the book is easier to remember. It looks like what neurologists frequently describe as a defect that also has its perks. And even though it is slightly awkward and intimidating, it needs to be said: I wouldn't give up my faulty wiring for the world.

My name is Anna and I'm a synaesthete.

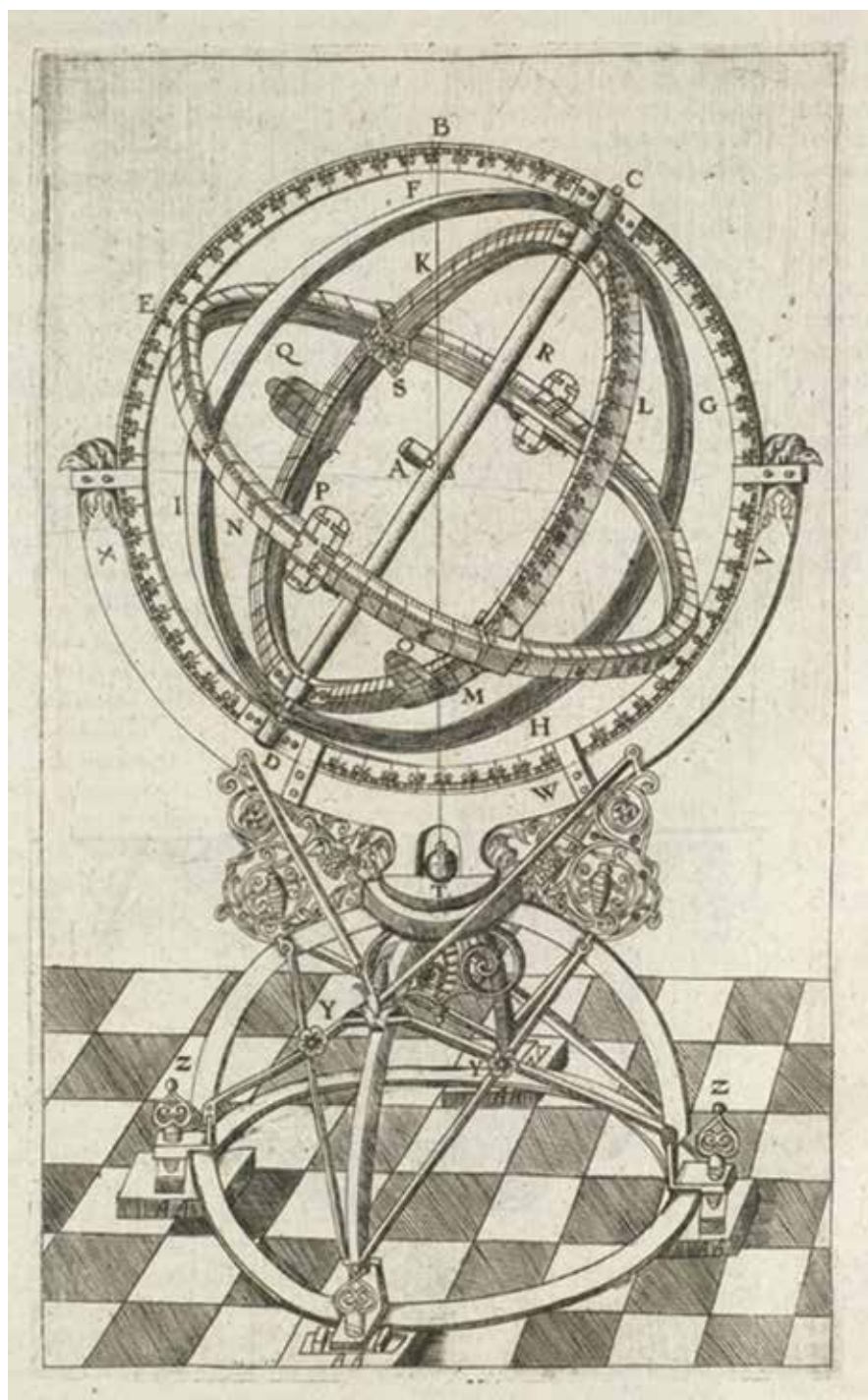
#### **Further reading**

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Equatorial armillary instrument. Illustration from *Tychonis Brahe Astronomiae instauratae mechanica*. Image: Smithsonian Institution Libraries, digital edition, 1999.

**Verba nostrum:**  
**For our teachers...**  
**eric brotchie**

*Tell us muses, what you saw  
Betwixt the masses gone before,  
Of misfits come from battles long  
Across the seas to sing their song.  
For we would know, at journeys end  
Exactly how to call you friend.  
A memory, or but a dream,  
...In Leiden then we lay our scene...*

In Leiden then we lay our scene  
Midst windmills spinning, pastures  
green,  
And introduce a motley crew,  
A duo known, perhaps, to you:  
Electra? Yes, and Romeo  
(how, you wonder? Time will show)  
Have found their way, although absurd  
By sailing down the Rapenburg,  
And though the chill of evening nigh  
And though the gulls shriek in the  
sky  
Our heroes brim with victor's joy  
All reminisce of ancient Troy,  
And here they station, here and now,  
'neath Academiegebouw,  
Sit and joke of battles won,  
Lovers lost and wisdom shunned,  
An empty town, the silent night,  
But hark, my friends, a fateful light  
Is shining forth as twilight poaches  
Day, a mystic blind approaches...  
Stick in hand and torch ablaze,  
Mumbling in morbid haze:

'Nothing good will come of this!  
Take it from Tiresias,  
You have landed, you will see,  
In distant lands unknown to thee.  
You will suffer, you will crane,  
Test the limits of the sane,  
Sirens you have seen before  
But this is Leiden, mi amour,  
And you are null, and you are void,  
Ne'er again shall man be buoyed  
By stories of a lover's curse,  
Daughter pulling mother's hearse!  
Look here at my fingers pointing,  
Digitizing you, anointing  
You to death, now overtaken,  
Literature has now forsaken  
You, to meet a scrapheap growing,  
Boiling, bubbling, overflowing.  
O, the heroes of the stage!  
Welcome to a time and age where  
Soon you'll be a single byte,  
Ones and zeroes, out of sight  
And out of mind, the world has  
altered,  
Books have died and fables faltered.  
Romeo, Electra who?  
Facebook doesn't know you two,  
No more travels, no more trips,  
This is your apocalypse.'

And with these words to R and E,  
Forged in perfect symmetry,

Ambled off the prophet wise  
Leaving both with widened eyes.  
Electra first to interview:

Romeo can this be true?  
Have we come to Satan's shore?  
This the Styx and us no more?"

And Romeo with shining eye,  
Offered this bemused reply:

'But who then could replace our  
stories?  
Philosoph and lover's glories.  
We are all that can be known, and  
From our texts is wisdom sown,  
And as we trek from place to place  
So too does the human race!  
Scribes have scribbled countless ages,  
Pens have peppered parchment  
pages,  
Gutenberg constructed presses  
To deliver our excesses!  
Nay, I can't believe this spectre,  
Who is he to even lecture  
Us, on what has always been,  
What is here and yet unseen?  
Let him say what all deny,  
E, I say, let such dogs lie.'

And with that promptly shut up shop,  
One might hear a penny drop...  
Or could they? Was that not a hiss?  
Now a growling midnight kiss?  
Panting, barking, haunting drums,  
Something wicked this way comes:  
What approached could neither guess,  
Quickly filling with distress  
Electra cried, and clearly knew  
That death was coming into view!  
Then from the dark with hellish

sound,  
Came the great three-headed hound!  
And where to run to? What to trust?  
How to face this Cerberus!?  
Fly you fools, the Gods assist,  
Make your way to Lipsius!  
Run! Be sure to make no error  
To evade this dreadful terror!  
So they bolted, making haste,  
Down the cobblestones so laced.  
Past De Koets, the dog pursued them  
Heartlessly so to subdue them.  
Romeo, his hope at random,  
Couldn't heed the words: "Abandon  
Hope all ye who enter here!"  
Written 'pon the gates of fear  
And yet they tumbled out of sight  
into doors bereft of light,  
Landing then on solid ground,  
Somehow losing yapping hound,  
And yet around them, all they saw,  
Cold and bitter dread, no more.  
And finding themselves lost, alone,  
Amidst the darkness and unknown,  
here and there the sighs and screams  
Coffee dripping from machines,  
Striking flame, in voice now weak,  
Romeo was first to speak:

'And where is this, Electra dear?  
Damn that horrid, blinded seer!  
Was he right to jinx us so,  
Here where not a man should go,  
Dark and damp, a musty smell,  
Could this be a living hell?  
What a place for us to land,  
Not a trace of where we ran.  
How will we escape this pit?  
Get back to our thrones and sit.  
Among our people, widened eyes  
Will look to us as if the skies

Are falling down and we, you see,  
Can save them from their misery!  
For literature, for which we stand,  
May soon evade the modern man  
Unless we live. There is no buffer,  
Tragedy and romance suffer,  
So somehow we must endure,  
Get back to our boat secure.'

And as in uffish thought they sat,  
A quiet tapping, pitter-pat  
Was heard as chill descended there,  
Draughty, windy, nasty air.  
Now a hum, and now an echo,  
Now a scuttle of a gecko,  
Candle lit from nowhere known,  
Now a cloak in brightness grown.  
Muses, be this some protector?  
Or a violent, fiendish spectre?  
Silence reigned while darkness stood:  
Who is this beneath that hood?

'I am not alone,' it slithered,  
Bowling, masking figure withered.  
Electra, now in agitation,  
Took control the situation:

'Show yourself, you strange unknown!  
Romeo and I have blown  
The winds across a thousand seas,  
Seizing opportunities  
To sail around and give men joy,  
Of literature for girl and boy  
And men and women, freemen, slaves  
Have loved us unto all their graves,  
And here we come, are we to die?  
Or are we dead, and you we spy  
A Ghost, a Beelzebub or Bale  
And all you have for us this tale  
That you are not alone? For shame!  
How can you make such bold a

claim?  
My eyes are straining in the light,  
But I suggest to you, my Wight,  
That you are just as lost as we,  
Where your friends are, none can  
see.'

And this the spectre took with poise,  
Straining in the echoed noise  
As Electra's voice resounded  
In the hall round which it bounded,  
Lifting up the cloak's dark hood  
To surprise beneath it stood  
Two children, resting, knee on  
shoulder,  
One the younger, one the older,  
One a maiden, one garcon,  
Shabby looking, downtrod-on.  
Romeo could only stare  
As if his eyes could not repair  
Themselves to see this oddest sight  
In the darkness of the night.  
But finally, his works of art,  
His words flowed, spoken from the  
heart:

'This no place for children surely!  
This no place for those of purely  
Graceful hearts and growing minds,  
Why the muses so unkind?!  
Little ones, we beg of you,  
Tell us how you got here too.  
For if 'twas through a different route,  
We should know, and we should  
shoot  
And you may come with us from now  
Until we find our vessel's bough,  
Under wing and safe from fear,  
Join us till we haste from here.'

'How we got here, we can't say,

Lost forever, it's our way.  
The truth, you see, is hard to spill, we  
Didn't know each other 'till  
We came here! Romeo, your grace,  
Myself, I thought a change of pace  
Would suit adventure, then unclear,  
I would be a musketeer, and  
Jill here had a pail in hand  
When I found her, understand?  
The Famous Five and Hansel, Gretel,  
They are here as well, but settle  
Down, it's dark, but in these halls  
You see the writing on the walls.  
This is where we all have nooks:  
Memories of reading books.  
This is where our stories' lives  
Are kept, and thus our hope survives  
That one day, in the coming age,  
Yet again we'll find a page  
And yet again the real world,  
Will see which they abruptly hurled  
From libraries and shops, en masse,  
Into clouds of glass and gas  
Leaving tactile sheets of yore:  
Broken, burnt, and read no more.'

The pair were shocked, reviled,  
blunted:  
'Children, innocence has stunted  
You, for you would have us think  
That living here in Satan's clink  
Is normal, that we're meant to be  
Committed to our misery!?  
Nay, come with us, this will not do:  
Together we will see this through.'

And so the foursome, newly met,  
Took to find an exit yet.  
Slowly night turned into day,  
But none could tell, not one could  
say...

Tiresias! Your emperor's gown  
Must surely lurk about this town  
And yet our heroes need your flame:  
Guide them man, in heaven's name!  
'Twas you who cursed them, you who  
know  
How desperate this scenario.  
So can you hear us, can you see  
(Regardless disability)?  
That just like them, constructed  
shaman,  
Fate will find you too, and laymen  
Everywhere will ne'er read  
The Greeks, the Bard, and so the seed  
Of knowledge from our stories old  
And new, and yours, will not be told.  
You wretched soul, your time has  
come,  
Work your magic, beat your drum,  
And do whatever 'tis you do:  
iPad? Android tablets too?  
And find a way, for wisdom's sake,  
To get them from their hell, and  
make  
Our foursome sail in fairer seasons,  
Find their rhymes and find their  
reasons,  
That is all we have to say,  
Our trust in you, let all dismay...

And outside on the banks of Singel,  
Who stands now? The spine must  
tingle  
At the sight, like Tolkien's wizard,  
Draped in white, a human blizzard  
Hands outstretched, blindfolded still,  
Cane in one, the other nil  
And murmuring into a sky  
Adorned with sunlight, lord on high,  
Tiresias, you've come at last!



Save them! They are dying fast!

But deep inside the darkened tomb,  
Suddenly there heaved a boom  
So loud it shook the walls and dust  
Fell quickly from the roof and clust-  
red now in piles around the four  
The building shook unto its core.  
Electra cried, 'This is a quake!  
We must escape for goodness' sake!  
And so they threw themselves to  
sprinting  
Through the halls now faintly  
glinting  
Of the sunlight pushing peeling  
Paint and cracks found in the ceiling:  
Lipsius, the captain manic,  
Sinking like the damned Titanic!  
Yet our friends cannot get out!  
They will drown, a buoy without!  
Now another blast so strong,  
Now the cave a fitful song  
Of water gushing from the sides,  
How to face the rising tides?!  
Crashing plates of glass are raining,  
Romeo, Electra straining,  
Holding on to Jill, d'Artagnan,  
Could this be the end, Cro-Magnon?  
Where to swim and how to scream  
Against the noise, this hellish  
dream...

But what is this? Amidst the bedlam  
Was it not the seer who led them  
To their doom? The devil be!  
Through the wall now all could see,  
Squinting out to open space  
Romeo could see his face:  
The prophet, summoning these waves,  
Had changed his tune, and so the  
caves

Though crumbling were slowly  
starting

To unhinge: the Singel parting!  
'Come this way!' cried Jill, surrendered  
To the waves now so suspended  
In aqueous corridor  
For the safety of the four.  
Tiresias heard through the throng:  
'Hurry, for it won't last long!'  
Straining with his superpowers,  
Controlled the final blasting showers,  
And as the quarto, safe to say,  
Made their epic get-away  
Up there came a giant tail  
Of a beast so large in scale  
That the building rent in twain  
Could do little to remain  
Intact, Lipsius shook its last!  
Took its final heaving gasp!  
Crashing down, alarming rate,  
Moby Dick had sealed its fate.

Now resting by their vessel so:  
Five brave souls we've come to know  
Rinsing waters from their clothing,  
Recent dreams of fear and loathing.  
Sunlight breaks, the clouds retract,  
Red brick finds the warmth it lacked,  
Glimmering, the water sparkles  
Aft the quintet dour debacles.  
So they load their boat to take  
The five and leave all in their wake,  
Set their compass, plot their course,  
No regrets and no remorse  
To spread the word and mark the  
maps  
That stories be not caught in traps  
Of media; of men who's ease  
Has led them to technologies.  
For Romeo, our famous prince,  
Electra too, her tragic jinx,

D'Artagnan also, Jill of rhyme,  
Tiresias the seer of time  
Sail but one vessel, on these oceans,  
Vast replete with lover's potions.  
Dragons, castles, princess bride,  
Humans souls with human pride,  
Computer, brightest future slated,  
You alone have not created  
This, the words are ours, and while  
The boat departs in epic style  
And sunset falls across the sea  
We leave you then our melody:

*Tell us muses, what you saw  
Betwixt the masses gone before,  
Of misfits come from battles long  
Across the seas to sing their song.  
For we would know, at journeys end  
Exactly how to call you friend.  
A memory, or but a dream,  
...In Leiden then we lay our scene...*

FIN



Illustration from *Anvār-i Suhaylī* (*The lights of Canopus*). Walters Art Museum Ms. W.599, f. 30a.

## Index of contributors

**Tauba Auerbach** lives and works in New York, where she is currently represented by the Paula Cooper Gallery. She is originally from San Francisco.

**Cara Barer** lives and works in Houston, USA. Her work has appeared in *New York Magazine* (2008), *Photonews* (2008) and *The Houston Press* (2006), amongst others. Barer's photographs can be found in several private and public collections including the Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), UCLA Special Collections, and Lehigh University.

**Betsy Birkey** is a Chicago-based artist. In addition to being shown at Chicago's Las Manos gallery, her book art has been featured on the design website vandm.com, in *Uppercase magazine*, *Luxury Home Quarterly* and *The Chicago Sun Times*.

**Sophie Boisvert-Hearn** holds a BA in psychology and French literature from Queen's University (Ontario, Canada). She currently works at the Centre for Science and Technology Studies in Leiden and hopes to pursue a career in digital or academic publishing.

**Wim Botha** lives in Cape Town. His work has been featured in major international group exhibitions of the work of African and South African artists, including *Africa Remix* and *Personal Affects: Power and Poetics in Contemporary South African Art*. Other group shows include *The Rainbow Nation*, Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague, the Göteborg Biennial in Sweden, and the eleventh Triennale für Kleinplastik in Fellbach, Germany.

**Eric Brotchie** scrapped his way onto this list via a significant amount of talking and writing, which he has been engaged in on-and-off for circa twenty-four years. As a human, he excels in higher-level thinking and used this excellent ability while working with the Yapp team as well as countless other projects, all of which cannot possibly be listed here. Look him up. He just hopes you're having a really great day.

**Ruben Burbach** lives in Amsterdam, where he currently works as an online

project manager at Atlas Contact publishers. He is particularly interested in web design, online marketing, and user experience.

**Mara Calenic** received her BA at University College Maastricht, where she was encouraged to explore a variety of subjects and the ways they are interlinked. She is very interested in copyright law with regards to cultural production. Curious about the developments of modern-day publishing, she is eager to start pushing its boundaries. She is the Content Editor of Yapp.

**Kate Cunningham** is an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose research focuses on accidents, alternatives, and personal freedom within mass mediated environments. She received a MMU from the ArtScience Interfaculty within the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague in 2011, and a MFA from the University of Notre Dame in 2008. She is currently based in The United States. More information can be found at [www.katherinecunningham.net](http://www.katherinecunningham.net).

**Lorne Darnell** was born in Detroit, MI. He received a BA in philosophy in the US and worked nearly ten years in shipping before coming to Leiden. He is currently enrolled in the Research MA program for Arts and Culture at Leiden University.

**Brian Dettmer** currently resides in Atlanta, GA. He has had solo shows in New York, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, Atlanta and Barcelona. His work has been exhibited throughout North America and Europe and has been featured in, among others, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Guardian*. Dettmer's solo show, which debuted at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, is travelling around the U.S. throughout 2013.

**Hilary Drummond** is from Nova Scotia, Canada, where she received a BA in Russian Studies and Linguistics (Dalhousie University). She is currently an editorial assistant for the Nabokov Online Journal and also works as a freelance editor. She was most recently a contributor to *Lolita - The Story of a Cover Girl: Vladimir Nabokov's Novel in Art and Design* (NY: Print, 2013). She is the Managing Editor of Yapp.

**Grațiela Elena Dumitrică** gets easily involved in everything she's passionate about: books and libraries, photography, musing on a bench in the sun. She loves Art Nouveau and Gaudí, getting lost in big cities, and the sea. She has a BA in Political Science and an MA in Publishing from the University of Bucharest, Romania. She is the Online Editor of Yapp.

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**Giulia Furegato** holds a BA in Linguistic and Intercultural Mediation from the University of Bologna, where she studied English, French and Japanese. She loves reading, writing and learning foreign languages, and has a passion for Paris, psychology, and cats. After graduating from Leiden University, she will return to Italy, or perhaps move to yet another European country.

**Nicholas Galanin** was born in Sitka, Alaska. He received a BFA with honours in Jewelry Design and Silversmithing at London Guildhall University and an MFA in Indigenous Visual Arts at Massey University in New Zealand. He has exhibited extensively in both solo and collective exhibitions and is currently Visiting Professor at the University of Victoria.

**Rainer Gerstenberg** works as Europe's last type founder in the Haus für Industriekultur in Darmstadt. There he holds the remaining fonts of the once leading manufacturers of matrices, D. Stempel AG, Haas, Deberny-Peignot and Nebiolo. To the Yapp team, he gave a tour through his office and talked with us about the work of a type founder today.

**Marcus Graf** is a composer and software artist. He has worked in the fields of space science, film, theatre, dance and new media. He has collaborated with Andrea Reyes Elizondo on several works, which have been shown at a variety of art festivals. His latest work is *Rosis Tres*, a prosthetic organ of artistic creation in which he demonstrates that the creation of art can be left entirely to a machine. He received a master of music from the ArtScience Interfaculty in 2012. More information can be found at [www.marcusgraf.com](http://www.marcusgraf.com).

**Jodi Harvey-Brown** studied art at Seton Hill University. She has exhibited work worldwide, including Dancing Tree Gallery (US), Studio B (US), The Jaffa Museum of Antiquities (Israel) and Van Blijshof Gallery (Netherlands). She currently lives and works in Delta, Pennsylvania, USA.

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**Matej Kren** studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, where he currently lives and works. He has held exhibitions in Amsterdam, Berlin, Chicago, Paris, Philadelphia, Prague, Seoul, and Vienna. In 2000 his installation *Gravity Mixer* was featured the Czech pavilion at EXPO in Hanover. He is also the recipient of the Critics' Prize and the Viewers' Prize from the Bienal de São Paulo.

**Noora Lamers** is an avid reader with a terrible memory. She always has to stay active and is often organizing something (if not several things simultaneously) in her spare time. She holds a BA in English Language & Culture from Leiden University and is currently working in online marketing & sales at Singel Uitgevers. She is the Editor in Chief of Yapp.

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**Pablo Lehmann** studied at the National School of Arts in Argentina. Since 2000 he has held the position of Professor at the IUNA. He has held solo and collective exhibitions in Argentina, USA, Chile, Uruguay, Colombia, and Spain. In 2008 he received the First National Award/Textile (Salón Nacional). He has participated in many international art fairs, including Pinta (London), Pulse (New York & Miami), Scope (Miami), ArteBa (Buenos Aires), ArtBo (Bogotá), and BaPoto (Buenos Aires).

**Giulia Moriconi** holds a BA in Classics and an MA in Classical Philology from the University of Siena (Italy). She moved to the Netherlands to follow her dream of working in publishing. The MA in Book and Digital Media Studies is only the first step in a life dedicated to books.

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**Silvia Zwaaneveldt** became fascinated by the traditional printing process during her Dutch Book History studies. After using the press room of the Academic Press Leiden, she decided to start her own private press, *De Baaierd*.  
[www.drukwerkindemarge.org/drukkers/de-baaierd](http://www.drukwerkindemarge.org/drukkers/de-baaierd)

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