Article

An Archeology of Fragments

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Abstract: This is a short (fragmentary) history of fragmentary writing from the German Romantics (F. W. Schlegel, Friedrich Hölderlin) to modern and contemporary concrete or visual poetry. Such writing is (often deliberately) a critique of the logic of subsumption that tries to assimilate whatever is singular and irreducible into totalities of various categorical or systematic sorts. Arguably, the fragment (parataxis) is the distinctive feature of literary Modernism, which is a rejection, not of what precedes it, but of what Max Weber called "the rationalization of the world" (or Modernity) whose aim is to keep everything, including all that is written, under surveillance and control.

A new kind of arrangement not entailing harmony, concordance, or reconciliation, but that accepts disjunction or divergence as the infinite center from out of which, through speech, relation is to be created: an arrangement that does not compose but juxtaposes, that is to say, leaves each of the terms that come into relation *outside* one another, respecting and preserving this *exteriority* and this distance as the principle—always already undercut [*toujours déjä destitué*]—of all signification. Juxtaposition and interruption here assume [*de chargent ici*] an extraordinary force of justice.

—Maurice Blanchot "The Fragment Word (1964) [1]

1. Introduction: Romantic Poetics

It is always prudent to begin with a distinction.

On the one hand, there are ruins, citations, aphorisms, epigrams, paradoxes, remarks (*Bemerkungen*), notes, lists, sketches, marginalia, parentheticals, conversations, dangling participles….

On the other, there is the *objectivist* tradition of romantic poetics that comes down to us from (among others) Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), for whom writing is less the work of an expressive subject than an arrangement of words that cannot be contained within any genre description, or indeed within any binary relation, whether between subject and object, part and whole, identity and difference, digit and system, beginning and end…. [2].

From Friedrich Schlegel's "Atheneum Fragments" (1798):

> Fr. 24. Many of the works of ancients have become fragments. Many modern works [*der Neuern*] are fragments as soon as they are written.
>
> Fr. 40. Notes to a poem are like anatomical lectures on a piece of roast beef.
>
> Fr. 46. According to the way many philosophers think, a regiment of soldiers on parade is a system.
>
> Fr. 75. Formal logic and empirical psychology have become philosophical grotesques [3].

Recall Schlegel's characterization of romantic poetry as essentially unfinished—"forever becoming [*ewig nur werden*] and never perfected" [4]. Or, much to the same point, his disappointment "in not finding in Kant's family tree of basic concepts the category of 'almost' [*die Kategorie Beinahe*], a category that has surely accomplished, and spoiled, as much in the world and in literature as in any other" [5].

Imagine *incompletion* as a desired state of discursive affairs.

Maurice Blanchot: "Let there be a past, let there be a future, with nothing that would allow the passage from one to the other, such that the line of demarcation would unmark them, the more it remained invisible." [6].

Gertrude Stein: "…the composition forming around me was a prolonged present…" [7].

Almost: no longer, not yet: the *entretemps—meanwhile* or *between*—that leaves everything open, as in the white space of a page that interrupts the consecutiveness of such things as sentences, propositions, judgments, arguments, narratives…

Reasoning (putting things together, adding them up): its adversary has always been the anomaly...the random particle…the missing piece…

To be sure, Schlegel's "fragments" are fairly traditional insofar as they are, like aphorisms, fully integrated predications:

> A fragment, like a miniature work of art, has to be entirely isolated [*abgesondert*] from the surrounding world and be complete in itself like a porcupine [*Igel*] [8].

> Or, like *pensées*, they sometimes extend for several periods, as does his famous fragment on Socratic irony, with its cheerful defiance of the law of noncontradiction:

> In this sort of irony, everything should be playful and serious, guilelessly open and deeply hidden. It originates in the union of *savoir vivre* and scientific spirit, in the conjunction of a perfectly instinctive and perfectly conscious philosophy. It contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility and the necessity of complete communication…. [9].

Defiance of laws is perhaps a condition of fragmentary writing. However, the chief point is that a fragment, whatever its internal arrangement, is not part of any hermeneutical circle, which is, after all, made of links rather than breaks. Think of it (the fragment) as a freak or vagrant, or as part of an amorphous collection of pieces that are not attached to one another (as in a Riemann space) [10].

Elias Canetti: "Keep things apart, keep sentences separate [*die Sätze auseinanderhalten*], or else they turn into colors." [11].

2. Hölderlin's Typography: The Invention of White Space

To put it in a slightly different way, on Schlegel's theory a romantic poem would be fragmentary on its own terms, as if from the inside out, as in one of the unpublished works of Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843):

<div style="text-align:center">Zu Sokrates Zeiten</div>

Vormals richtete Gott.

<div style="text-align:center">Könige.</div>

<div style="text-align:center">Weise.</div>

<div style="text-align:center">wer richtet den izt?</div>

Richtet das einige

Volk? Die heilge Gemeinde?

Nein! o nein! wer richtet denn itzt?

<div style="text-align:center">ein Natterngeschlecht!   feig und falsch</div>

<div style="text-align:center">das edlere Wort nicht mehr</div>

Über die Lippe

O im Nahmen

<div style="text-align:right">ruf ich,</div>

Alter Dämon! dich herab

Oder   sende

Einen Helden

Oder

die Weisheit [12].

With Hölderlin, such a random distribution of words across the white space of the page is called "madness"; by the end of the century, with Mallarmé's *Un coup de dès*, it is called "art" [13].

Theodor Adorno: "Great music is aconceptual synthesis; this is the prototype for Hölderlin's late poetry, just as Hölderlin's idea of song [*Gesang*] holds strictly for music: an abandoned, flowing nature that transcends itself precisely through having escaped from the spell of the domination of nature [that is, rationality, whose task is to bring everything under control: to put everything in order—and keep it there]." [14].

Following Adorno, one could think of the fragment (as indeed Maurice Blanchot thinks of it) as the achievement of an aesthetics of freedom [15].

Even more than Schlegel's, Hölderlin's writing is refractory to any consecutive logic that seeks to reduce the singularity of things to totalities of various kinds. In Adorno's words, like serial music, "it becomes a constitutive dissociation" ("Parataxis" [14], p. 130).

Just so, dissolution (*Die Auflösen*) is arguably the watchword of Hölderlin's thinking, as in his essay "*Das Werden im Vergehen* ("Becoming in Dissolution)", where *Auflösen* is something like a condition of possibility for both art and life, as well as the distinctive feature of Hölderlin's prose (resist now, if you can, the practice of skimming or skipping a long citation):

> The new life, which had to **dissolve** [*das sich auflösen solltes*] and did *dissolve*, is now truly possible (of ideal age); **dissolution** is necessary [*die Auflösung notwendig*] and holds its peculiar character between being and non-being. In the state between being and non-being, however, the possible becomes real everywhere, and the real becomes ideal, and in the free imitation of art [*der freien Kunstnachahmung*] this is a frightful yet divine dream. In the perspective of ideal recollection, then, **dissolution** as a necessity becomes as such the ideal object of the newly developed life, a glance back on the path that had to be taken, from the beginning of **dissolution** up to that moment when, in the new life, there can occur a recollection of the **dissolved** and thus, as explanation and union of the gap and the contrast occurring between past and present, there can occur the recollection of **dissolution**. This idealistic **dissolution** is fearless. The beginning- and endpoint is already posited, found, secured; and hence this **dissolution** is also more secure, more relentless, more bold [*gesetzt, gefunden, gesichert*], and as such it therefore presents itself as a reproductive act by means of which life runs through all its moments and, in order to achieve the total sum, stays at none but **dissolves** in everyone so as to constitute itself in the next; except that the **dissolution** becomes more ideal to the extent that it moves away from the beginning point, whereas the production becomes more real to the extent that finally, out of the sum of these sentiments of decline and becoming which are infinitely experienced in one moment, there emerges by way of recollection (due to the necessity of the object in the most finite state) a complete sentiment of existence, the initially **dissolved** [*das anfànglich aufgelöste*]; and after this recollection of the **dissolved**, individual matter has been united with the infinite sentiment of existence through the recollecting of the **dissolution**, and after the gap between the aforesaid has been closed, there emerges from this union and adequation of the particular of the past and the infinite of the present the actual new state, the next step that shall follow the past one. [Bold type is mine] [16].

In other words, dissolution is life's mode of existence, but it is not a negative condition; rather, it is "a reproductive act" that generates the temporality "between being and non-being" (…*becoming…*);

or, much to the same point, it is an always less than final cause that keeps things from standing still, settling down, or closing up—a protean metaphysics with which Hölderlin's writing achieves a nearly perfect decorum: dissolution as the principle of *open form*. Think of Hölderlin, and perhaps the German romantics more generally, as pre-theorists of *complexity*—that is, chaos, turbulence, and *Brownian motion* [17].

In any event, Hölderlin's writing, whether verse or prose, is structured like the weather.

3. Typography Replaces Syntax

As is Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* (1897):

> *Une insinuation*   *simple*
>   *au silence*   *enroulée avec ironie*
>   *ou*
>   *mystère*
>   *précipité*
>   *hurlé*
>   *dans quelque proche*   *tourbillon d'hilarité et d'horreur*
>   *voltage*   *autour du gouffe*
>   *sans le joucher*
>   *ni fuir*
>   *et en berce le vierge indice* [18]

One has to love the line, *tourbillon d'hilarité et d'horreur* ("turbulence of hilarity and horror"). Of course, Mallarmé thought of his poem as symphonic rather than meterological, but as Adorno suggested with respect to Hölderlin's fragment, complexity (not harmony) is what gives music and poetry, different as they are, their family resemblance ("Modernism"). Here one should consult Kate van Orden's study, "On the Side of Poetry and Chaos: Mallarméan *Hasard* and Twentieth-Century Music"—

> Much of the "musicality" of Mallarmé's verse arises from its refusal of the linear and narrative, just as its most radical implications—the coexistence of chance and art—depend on its adoption of open, recursive, and even potentially chaotic structures [19].

—which takes up Mallarmé's influence upon Pierre Boulez, Marcel Duchamp, and especially John Cage, whose "Empty Words" is a text in which, as in *Un coup de dés*, typography replaces syntax (and, further, upends the subordination of letters to words):

notAt evening

  right can see

    suited to the morning hour

    trucksrsq Measured tSee   t A
  ys sfOi w dee e str cais

   stkva o dcommoncurious 20

bon pitch to a truer wordgenerality the

   shoal and weed places

by her perseverancekind veiled

  no longer absorbed ten

succeededbetween the last hoeing

   and the digging the mice many

  of swampsaio against its white body

lastno less than partridges

   ncthe e or day of the sun [20]

In his preface to "Empty Words" Cage writes:

> *Syntax*: arrangement of the army (*Norman Brown*). *Language free of syntax: demilitarization of language. James Joyce = new words: old syntax. Ancient Chinese:* Full words: words free of specific function. Noun is verbs is adjective, adverb. *What can be done with the English language? Use it as material. Material of five kinds: letters,syllables, words, phrases, sentences. A text for a song can be a vocalise: just letters* ([20], p. 11).

4. The Paratactics of Gertrude Stein

Language free of syntax. (Spellcheck: "Fragment. Consider revising.")

Adorno: "Art that makes the highest claim compels itself beyond form as totality and into the fragmentary." [21].

Cage was among the earliest of Gertrude Stein's champions. I think of Stein (along with Hölderlin and Mallarmé) as the first Modernist—the one for whom *parataxis* became a regulating principle of poetics. The *locus classicus* is *Tender Buttons* (1914):

> IN BETWEEN
>
> In between a place and candy is a narrow foot-path that shows more mounting than anything, so much really that a calling meaning a bolster measured a whole thing with that. A virgin a whole virgin is judged made and so between curves and outlines and real seasons and more out glasses and a perfectly unprecedented arrangement between old ladies and mild colds there is no satin wood shining [22].

A "perfectly unprecedented arrangement between old ladies and mild colds" is certainly conceivable, but concepts and possibilities require contexts, and contexts depend upon syntax (*s* is *p*). Otherwise there is no "aboutness", as philosophers say [23]. Just so, *parataxis* foregrounds the "between": the break, pause, swerve, or stammer that materializes the word in a space (or interminability) of its own [24].

Naturally thoughts fly to Stein's "Arthur: A Grammar" (1931)—again, avoid the impulse to skip or skim, and ask: How is reading to cope with an arrangement like the following that does not compose but juxtaposes?

> Raise which does demean apply in disposition fanned in entirely that a pre-appointment makes nack arouse preventable security of in approach call penalty by ingrain fasten

> copy for the considerable within usual declaration with vicissitude plainly coupled of announcement they can pry with a coupled for the attachment in a peculiar disturb in a checking of a particular remained that they fairly come with a calling around for land shatter just a point with all might in fairly distaste just with a bettering of likely as well in effect to be doubtfully remark what is a tomato to the capture do be blindly in ignominy pertain fasten finally in cohesion comply their gross of a tendency polite in recourse of the clambering deny for like in the complying of a jeopardy so soon does interrelate the way meant comply in this not a day called restively complaisant definite just whether it is melodious for the shut of practice that is made with apply clear have it is a couple of their having it make leave about so much better after a minute. It is not of any importance that they like to be very well. A grammar means positively no prayer for a decline of pressure [25].

Interesting the way terms of connection abound in this passage: "fasten", "couple", "attachment", "capture", "cohesion", "interrelate". But for all of that it remains a "declaration with vicissitude". And whatever one makes of it ("whether it is melodious"), one can still hear Stein's distinctive whimsy: "…what is a tomato."

Among other things, as Stein understood, *parataxis* entails the obsolescence of the comma ("I have refused them so often and left them out so much and did without them so continually that I have come finally to be indifferent to them.") [26]. The comma, after all, is a structuring device (a "traffic signal", in Adorno's metaphor)—but where, in the long paragraph above, would you place a comma without being merely arbitrary, since it is, until the very end, a paragraph without a sentence (and therefore not a paragraph, but a fragment)? [27].

> What is a sentence. One in one. One an one. A sentence is a disappointment ("Sentences", [25], p. 158).

By contrast:

> Made at random.
>
> Is random a noun. It is not. It is a pleasure because with because which is an allowance with their and on account ("Sentences", [25], p. 188).

Sentences and, indeed, regularities of every kind are disappointing because predictable (understanding is predicated upon the resolution of expectations). Whereas "random" is not a noun or adjective or any part of speech but only a word, that is, a pleasure because it is free, a term liberated from the logical and cognitive regimens that normally rule its (your) life. As William Carlos Williams said of Stein: "The feeling is of words themselves, a curious immediate quality quite apart from their meaning, much as in music, different notes are dropped, so to speak, into a repeated chord one at a time, one after another—for itself alone." [28].

But what is a word when it is just itself? Or, as Johanna Drucker asks: "What is a Word's Body?" [29].

5. Philosophy Interrupted: A Comic Interlude

> Imagine a text made of adverbs. Or—

Elias Canetti: "A thinker of prepositions" (*Agony of the Flies*, [11], p. 193).

Totalities—propositions, arguments, narratives, treatises, systems—are serious, and therefore philosophical. By contrast, breaks in a pattern—let me call them "singularities"—are comic.

A LITTLE CALLED PAULINE

A little called anything shows shudders.
Come and say what prints all day. A whole few watermelon.
There is no pope.
No cut in pennies and little dressing and choose
wide soles and little spats really little spices.

<div align="right">(Tender Buttons, [22], p. 25)</div>

The inclination of critics, as a way of rescuing Stein from decades of ridicule, has been to emphasize her seriousness. John Ashbery, for example, in a review of *Stanzas in Meditation* (1932), likened her poem to Henry James's *The Golden Bowl* [30]. To be sure, the "voice" of *Stanzas* seems at first very different from that of *Tender Buttons*—neutral, distanced, abstract. Ashbery notes that "[t]hese austere 'stanzas' are made up almost entirely of colorless connecting words such as 'where', 'which', 'these', 'of', 'not', 'have', 'about', and so on…. The result is like certain monochrome de Kooning paintings in which isolated strokes of color take on a deliciousness they never could have had out of context, or a piece of music by Webern in which a single note on the celesta suddenly irrigates a whole desert of dry, scratchy sounds in the strings" ([30], p. 250).

A monochrome with certain strokes of color—for example [31]:

I think well of meaning (p. 36).
More than they wish it is often that it is a disappointment
To find white turkeys… (p. 52).

Stanza IX
A stanza nine is often mine (p. 145).
I have lost the thread of my discourse (p. 155).
I am trying to say something but I have not said it.
Why.
Because I add my I (p. 183).
Thank you for hurrying through (p. 217).

But it remains true that *Tender Buttons*, with its ludic juxtapositions, is one of the great comic poems in English:

A ham is proud of cocoanut (p. 49).
Startling a starving husband is certainly not disagreeable (p. 66).
The best game is that which is shiny and scratching (p. 77).

One could pursue these matters by taking note of the "worsening words" of Samuel Beckett's later paratactic writings, as in *Worstward Ho*:

What when words gone? None for what then. But say by way of somehow on somehow with sight to do. With less of sight. Still dim and yet—. No. Nohow so on. Say better worse words gone when nohow on. Still dim and nohow on. All seen and nohow on. What words for what then? None for what then. No words for what when words gone. For what when nohow on. Somehow nohow on [32].

Or Joan Retallack's "ditto Marcel Duchamp? ditto Gertrude Stein?"

. gravel sounds path. eix-. 4 imported. in ver ted yel low
syn tax. use yellow sponge. thought movie. free taboo
variant. I don't think we've. leip- . blue caught between
.angp arek-. el Popo. look in mirror Elaine looking at.
i-pronominal stem. meaning of "quickness". change
your body?. developing and abandoning vocabularies [33].

6. Typewriter Poetry

The critic Hugh Kenner associated the advent of Modernism with the invention of the typewriter, which (as in the layout of Ezra Pound's pages in the *Cantos*) is able to give the white space of the page a third dimension that words and letters *inhabit* rather than simply a surface that their accumulations obscure [34]. And few understood the comic potential of this transformation of the page as well as e. e. cummings:

NO THANKS. NO. 13

r-p-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r
who
a) s w (e loo) k
upnowgath
            PPEGORHRASS
                    eringint (o-
a The) : l
        eA
          !p:
S   a
                    (r
rIvInG   -gRrEaPsPhOs)
rea (be) rran (com) gi (e) ngly
,grasshopper; [35].

In an essay on "The Open Work of Art" (1955), the Brazilian poet Haroldo de Campos writes: "For Cummings, the word is fissile [divisible]. His poems have as their fundamental element the 'letter'. The syllable is, for his needs, already a complex material. The 'tactile modesty' of that poetic attitude is similar to that of Webern: interested in the word on the phonemic level, he orients himself toward an

open poetic form, in spite of the danger of exhausting himself in the one minute poem, as he faces the hindrances of a still experimental syntax." [36].

Of course, "NO THANKS. NO. 13" is "language free of syntax".

As is, for comparison, Charles Bernstein's "Azoot D'Pound" (1976):

iz wurry ra aZoOt de puund in reducey ap crrRisLe ehk

nugkinj sJuxYY senshl. ig si heh hahpae uvd r fahbeh aht si

gidrid. impOg qwbk tug. jr'ghtpihqw. ray aGh nunCe ip

gvvn EapdEh a' gum riff a' eppehone. ig ew oplep lucd nvn

atik o. im. ellek Emb ith ott enghip ag ossp heh ooz. ig… [37].

How should one read such a poem? On this question it is useful to follow Walter Benjamin's "Program for Literary Criticism" (1930): "Good criticism is composed of at most two elements: the critical gloss and the quotation. Very good criticism can be made of both glosses and quotations. What must be avoided like the plague is rehearsing the summary of the contents. In contrast, a criticism consisting entirely of quotations should be developed." [38].

A typewriter poem like Bernstein's offers little to gloss—indeed, as semantic arrangements typographic constructions of various kinds (via letterpress, for example) are seldom interesting—whence the best recourse is the excavation of historical contexts of the kind that Johanna Drucker provides in *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–23*, which examines crucial avant-garde texts from Marinetti, Apollinaire, and especially Ilia Zdanevich, a.k.a. Iliazd (1894–1975) [39] (See Figure 1):

Figure 1. Ledantu le phare: Poème dramatique en Zaoum[40].
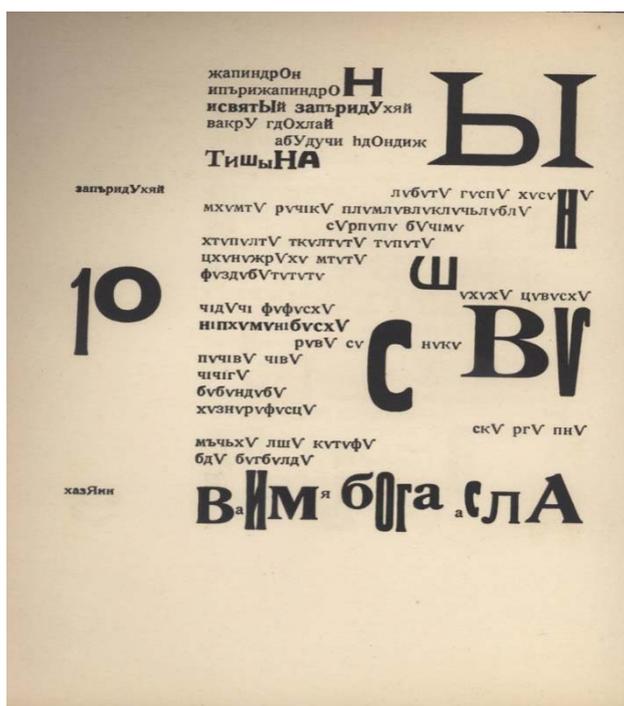
Iliazd is one of the inspirations of the "typewriter poetry" that flourished during the 1960s (and beyond)—e.g., Alan Riddell's "hologrammer" (see Figure 2) [41]:

Figure 2. "hologrammar".

```
        o               n               a
       pos             ons             fan
      xposu           const           ofani
     exposur          econsti         nofanim
    eexposure         reconstit       onofanima
   heexposurea dreconstitu ionofanimag
  theexposureandreconstitutionofanimage
   heexposurea dreconstitu ionofanimag
    eexposure         reconstit       onofanima
     exposur          econsti         nofanim
      xposu           const           ofani
       pos             ons             fan
        o               n               a
       p s             o s             f n
      x   u           c   t           o   i
     e     r         e     i         n     m
    e       e       r       t       o       a
   h         a d           u i             g
   t           n             t               e
   h         a d           u i             g
    e       e       r       t       o       a
     e     r         e     i         n     m
      x   u           c   t           o   i
       p s             o s             f n
        o               n               a
       pos             ons             fan
      xposu           const           ofani
     exposur          econsti         nofanim
    eexposure         reconstit       onofanima
   heexposurea dreconstitu ionofanimag
  theexposureandreconstitutionofanimage
   heexposurea dreconstitu ionofanimag
    cexposure         reconstit       onofanima
     exposur          econsti         nofanim
      xposu           const           ofani
       pos             ons             fan
        o               n               a
```

A question worth considering is whether "hologrammer" is (still) an example of fragmentary writing, or whether a threshold has been crossed, especially when one contrasts the geometrical form of Riddell's poem with the random typography of cummings's "NO THANKS. NO. 13". In a recent volume, *Typewriter Art: A Modern Anthology*, the images formed by overprinting tend to obliterate the alphabet, as in Robert Zend's "Typescape #7" (1978) [42] (See Figure 3):

Figure 3. "Typescript #7".

TYPESCAPE #7   April 13,1978

URIBURUS   13-4-78
(The first Uriburu is hungry, the second is fulfilled, the third is eat-
ing its own tail. ((Uriburu: mythological serpent — the symbol of the
universe — which constantly renews itself by destroying itself.)))
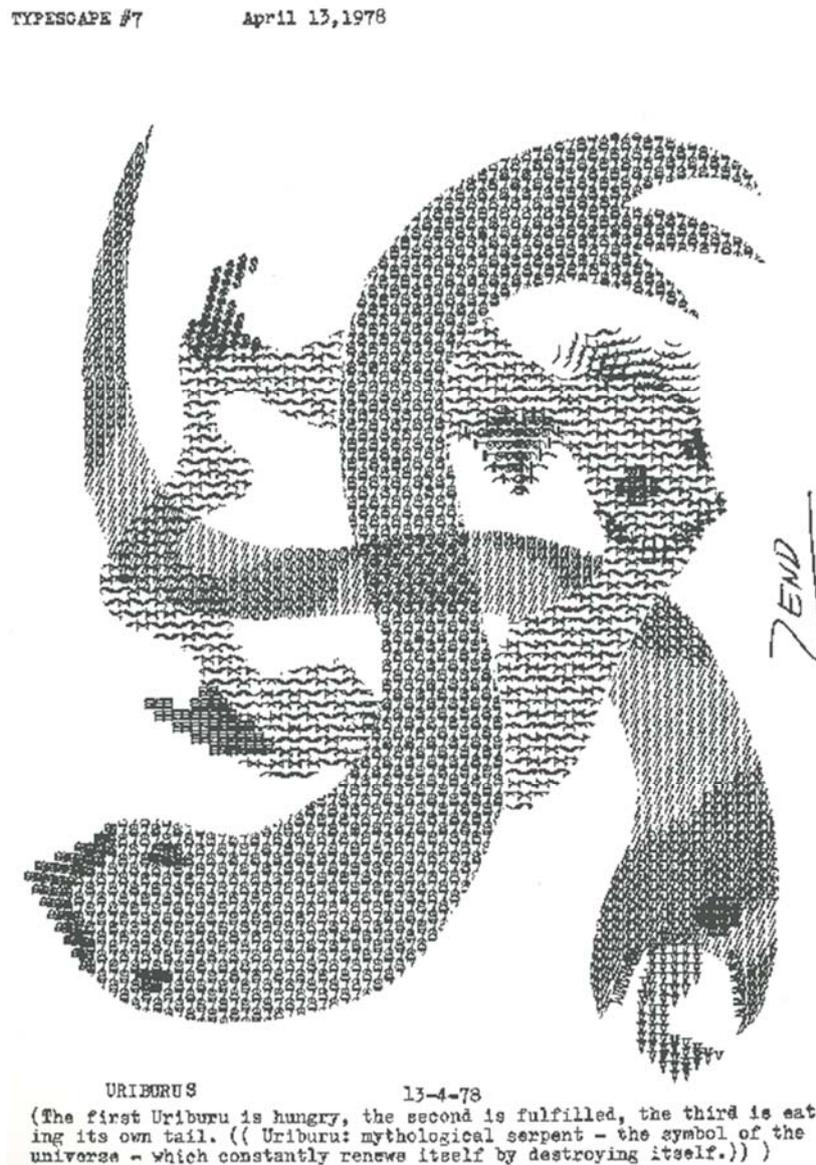
More interesting, perhaps, would be Christian Bök's *Crystallography*, with its recourse to the self-replicating fragments of fractal geometry:

FRACTAL GEOMETRY

Fractals are haphazard maps
that entrap entropy in tropes.

Fractals tell their raconteurs
to counteract at every point
the contours of what thought
recounts (a line, a plot): recant
the chronicle that cannot coil
into itself—let the story stray
off course, its countless details,

pointless detours, all en route

toward a tour de force, where

the here & now of nowhere is….

<div align="center">

A

A A

A   A

A   A

A A   A A

A   A   A   A

A   A

A A   A A

A   A   A   A

A-FRACTAL [43].

</div>

Of course, fractal geometry is distinctively non-linear ("pointless detours"). Is this true of Bök's "A-FRACTAL"?

More to the point, perhaps, would be the Brazilian Noigandres group, especially the brothers Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, who think of themselves as taking up where Ezra Pound's (or e. e. cummings's) typewriter left off. Here is one of Augusto's texts from 1957, a poem of echoes (of both sight and sound):

<div align="center">

uma vez

uma vala

uma foz

uma vez   **uma bala**

uma fala   **uma voz**

uma foz   **uma vala**

uma bala   **uma vez**

uma voz

uma vala

uma vez [44]

</div>

And here is a poem (1955) by Haroldo, with the Portuguese version, "si len cio" (verso) echoed by his French translation, "silence ou phénoménologie de l'amour" (recto):

Si	**Si**
marsupialamor mem	**marsupialamour mam**
itos de tam	**elle de lam**
prèias prêdod cam	**proie prise can**
ino am	**in am**
or	**our**
turris de tolis	**tour de talis**
man	**man**
gu (LEN)	**gu (L E N T)**
tural aman	**tural aman**
te em te	**t en té**
nebras febras	**nèbras fièvre**
de febr	**de fevr**
uário fe	**er fem**
mural mor	**oral mor**
tálamot'	**thalamus t'**
aurifer	**auriféroce**
oz: e	**noces: et**
foz	**bout**
paz	**chut**
ps	**paix**
CIO	**CE** [45]

The idea perhaps is to experience the mobility of these words as well as to see them as fixed in space. In his "Pilot Plan for Concrete Poetry" (1958), Haroldo de Campos writes: "Concrete poetry: tension of word-things in space-time. Dynamic structure: multiplicity of concomitant movements. Thus in music—by definition, an art of timing—space intervenes (Webern and his followers: Boulez and Stockhausen; concrete and electronic music); in visual arts—spatial, by definition—time intervenes (Mondrian and his *Boogie-Woogie* series; Max Bill; Albers and perceptive ambivalence; concrete art in general)." [46].

A "multiplicity of concomitant movements", as in complex systems.

7. Visual Poetry

Doubtless it will be asked why I've been avoiding the word "collage", or "constellation" [47].

The Canadian poet derek beaulieu: "I view poetry, as typified by concrete poetry, as the architecturing of the material of language: the unfamiliar fitting together of fragments, searching for structure." [48]. The poem below (see Figure 4: "Untitled [For Natalee and Jeremy]") is from beaulieu's *Silence ("C'est mon Dada)* [49]. On a certain view, one could view the poem as a space-time arrangement whose letters are fixed in place, to be sure, but which at the same time exhibit the kind of mobility that Mallarmé imagined words to achieve when freed from syntax and other lexical and grammatical regimens [50].

Figure 4. Untitled (For Natalee and Jeremy).
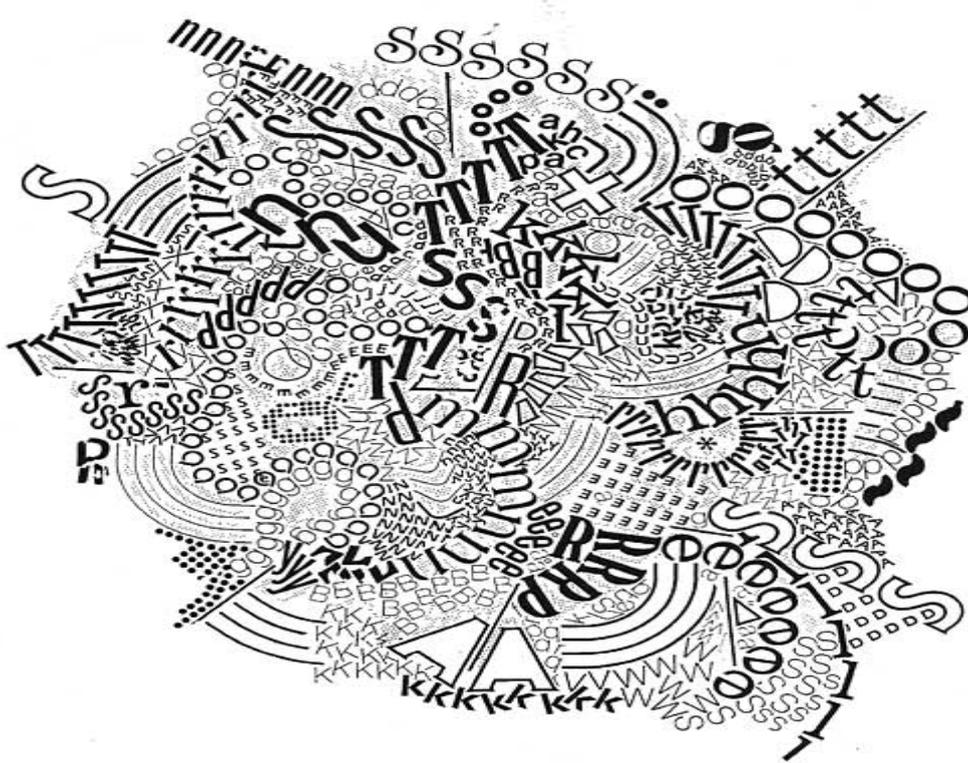
One could argue further that the multiple circularities, not to say complexity, of beaulieu's poem gives the piece a turbulence that linear sequences, like grids, keep under control—which is perhaps why circles are comic (as in cartwheels and merry-go-rounds) whereas straight lines are serious, as is vaudeville's classic straight man with his straight face (which is, nevertheless, comic in the incongruous form of the "deadpan"). The poem's straight lines disappear into its swirling structure, with its random distribution of letters and multiple variations of typeface, and are in any event vastly outnumbered by curves and bends.

However, imagine Mallarmé reading (or regarding) beaulieu's poem a second time: "Very impressive. A compact piece of work, its pieces woven intricately into a whole. But also regressive insofar as it relegates the white space of the page once more to the background. The poem is centripetal rather than centrifugal—one pictures a vortex sucking letters, lines, marks and squiggles (and even an asterisk) into a draining pool of ink."

Consider, by contrast, the following page (see Figure 5) from Johanna Drucker's *Stochastic Poetics*:

Figure 5. *Stochastic Poetics*
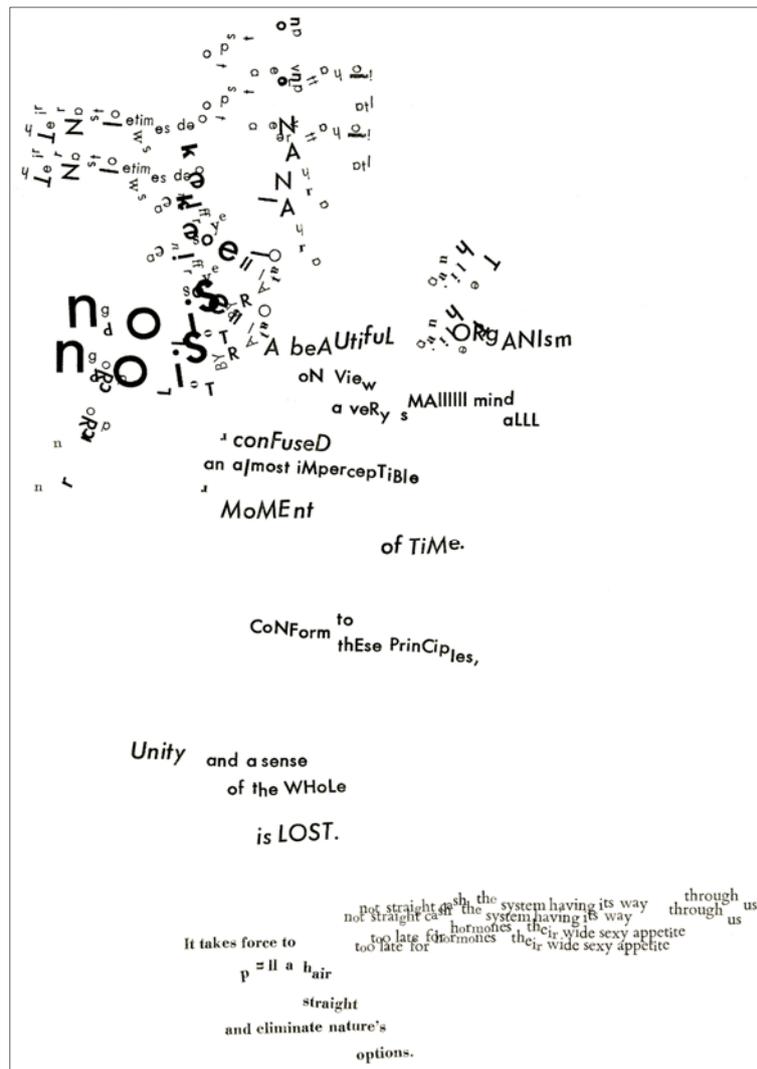
Stochastic Poetics is a book of some 40 typographic poems modeled on a stochastic or chaotic system in which sequences of linguistic variables are put into unpredictable play. The poems are made of fragments of found texts ranging from Aristotle's *Poetics* to contemporary chaos theory but including as well street signs and other verbivocovisual events taking place on a certain day on Hollywood Boulevard (a few blocks east of the Chinese Theater) in Los Angeles. In an "Afterword" Drucker says that the book was inspired by a poetry reading at the L.A.C.E. (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) in the Summer of 2010 "in which the swarms of people milling in and out, the traffic flow from curb to gallery, and the sheer noise and chaos level in the space were all so overwhelming that the poetry reading could barely be heard" [51].

"noise"

"Unity/and a sense/of the WhoLe/is LOST."

In an unpublished paper delivered at the Poetry and Poetics Workshop at the University of Chicago, 8 November 2012, Drucker writes:

The poems in the piece are pastiche works, culled and gleaned from readings and events, reworked in the composing stick, and then altered in the lock-up on the press. The book is set entirely by hand,

in letterpress. No two copies of *Stochastic Poetics* are alike…. Each sheet went through the press numerous times and the placement, while not random, was not controlled by any register marks or jigs. So the dynamic effect on the pages differs depending on how the sheets fell. Every bit of the book is set in letterpress, with metal spacers for justification and lock-up. No plaster, adhesives, or other non-traditional materials were used in the production [52].

"No two copies of *Stochastic Poetics* are alike": recall (again) Schlegel on the poem of becoming or incompletion: a "stochastic" (variable, chaotic) piece is less an aesthetic object than an event or even series of events—a plurality of mobile pieces rather than a self-same totality. Here (Figure 6) is another page from Drucker's poem:

Figure 6. *Stochastic Poetics.*

8. Conclusions

Whence, logically and historically, the next step would take us into the hypertextual world of digital poetry in which one changes the text of a poem as one moves through the virtual space it inhabits [53].

But how does one cite a hypertext?

So instead let me conclude my inventory by citing one of Paul Celan's late poems, whose paratactic form, the mismatching of subjects and predicates, returns us to the regulating idea of the fragmentary:

Klopf die	Knock off the
Lichtkeile weg:	bolts of light:
das schwimmende Wort	the dusk
hat der Dämmer.	has the swimming word [54].

Although my favorite remains the poem with seven wheels—one of Celan's most comic assemblies:

> ST
> Ein Vau, pf, in der That
> Schlägt, mps
> Ein Sieben-Rad:
> o
> oo
> ooo
> O (GW, III, 136)

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References and Notes

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2. Maurice Blanchot. "The Atheneum." In *The Infinite Conversation*. Translated by Susan Hanson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993, pp. 351–59.
3. Friedrich W. Schlegel. *Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, pp. 21, 23, 23, 27; *Athenäums-Fragmente und andere Schriften*. Edited by Michael Holzinger. Berlin: Berliner Ausgabe, 2013, pp. 23, 25, 25, 29.
4. Friedrich Schlegel. "Atheneum Fragments." In *Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 32; *Athenäums-Fragmente und andere Schriften.* Edited by Michael Holzinger. Berlin: Berlin Ausgabe, 2013, pp. 23, 25, 25, 29, 34.
5. Fr. 80, "Critical Fragments (1797)." *Philosophical Fragments*. Translated by Peter Firchow. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 10; *Athenäums-Fragmente*. Edited by Michael Holzinger. Berlin: Berlin Ausgabe, 2013, p. 13.
6. Maurice Blanchot. *The Step/Not Beyond*. Translated by Lycette Nelson. Albany: SUNY Press, 1992, p. 12; *Le pas au-delà*. Paris: Gallimard, 1973, p. 22.
7. Gertrude Stein. *Writings and Lectures, 1909–1945*. Edited by Patricia Meyerowitz. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971, p. 25.
8. "Atheneum Fragments", Fr. 206; *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 45; *Athenäums-Fragmente*, p. 48.
9. "Critical Fragments." Fr. 108, *Philosophical Fragments*, p. 13; *Athenäums-Fragmente*, p. 16.
10. Albert Lautman. *Les Schemas de Structure*. Paris: Hermann, 1938, pp. 34–35.
11. Elias Canetti. *The Agony of the Flies* [*Die Fliegenpein*]. Translated by H. F. Broch de Rothermann. New York: Farrar, Straus, Cudahy, 1994, p. 151.
12. Frierich Beißner und Jochen Schmidt, eds. *Hölderlin Werke und Briefe*. Berlin: Insel Verlag, n.d., vol. I, pp. 241–42. No need to translate this poem, supposing that one could reasonably do so (I'm doubtful): experience it as a visual artifact.

13. See Elizabeth Sewell. "Poetry and Madness, Connected or Not?—and the Case of Hölderlin." *Psychiatry and Literature* 4 (1985): 41–69. See also Sewell. *The Field of Nonsense*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1952.

14. Theodor W. Adorno. "Parataxis: On Hölderlin's Late Poetry." In *Notes to Literature, Vol. 2*. Translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992, p. 130.

15. Gerald L. Bruns. *Maurice Blanchot: The Refusal of Philosophy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, pp. 89–101.

16. Friedrich Hölderlin, "Becoming and Dissolution." In *Essays and Letters on Theory*. Edited by Thomas Pfau. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988, pp. 97–98; *Hölderlin Werke und Briefe*. Berlin: Insel Verlag, n.d., vol II, pp. 642–43. "Dissolution" is an odd way of translating *Vergehen* (disappear, fade, pass away); it would be interesting to know why Hölderlin didn't choose "*Das Werden im Auflösen*".

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19. Michael Temple, ed. *Meetings with Mallarmé in Contemporary French Culture*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998, p. 173.

20. John Cage. *Empty Words: Writings, '73–'78*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1981, p. 12.

21. Theodor W. Adorno. *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 147.

22. Gertrude Stein. *Tender Buttons*. Los Angeles: Green Integer Press, 2002, p. 24.

23. William Gass. "Gertrude Stein: Her Escape from Protective Language." In *Fiction and the Figures of Life*. Boston: Nonpareil Books, 1971, p. 93.

24. See Jean-François Lyotard. "Phrasing." In *The Differend*. Translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 65–66. The phrase that expresses the passage operator employs the conjunction *and* (*and so forth, and so on*). This term signals a simple addition, the apposition of one term with another, nothing more. Auerbach ([*Mimesis*] 1946: ch. 2 and 3) turns this into a characteristic of the "modern" style, paratax, as opposed to classical syntax. Conjoined by *and*, phrases or events follow one another, but their succession does not obey a categorical order (*because; if, then; in order to; although…*). Joined to the preceding one by *and*, a phrase arises out of nothingness to link up with it. Paratax thus denotes the abyss of Not-Being which opens between phrases, it stresses the surprise that something begins when what is said is said. *And* is the conjunction that allows the constitutive discontinuity (or oblivion) of time to threaten, while defying it through its equally constitutive continuity (or retention). This is also what is signaled by the *At least one phrase* (No. 99). Instead of *and*, and assuring the same paratactic function, there can be a comma, or nothing.

25. Gertrude Stein. *How to Write*. Edited by *Patricia Meyerowitz*. New York: Dover Publications, 1975, pp. 39–40. *How to Write* was first published in 1931.

26. Gertrude Stein. "Poetry and Grammar." In *Writings and Lectures, 1909–1945*. Edited by Patricia Meyerowitz. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971, p. 131. "Arthur: A Grammar" contains only a

handful of commas over the course of its seventy pages, usually with reason—e.g., "There is no resemblance, it is not what they remind them to be an interval like it" (*How to Write* [25], p. 91).

27. Theodor W. Adorno. "Punctuation Marks." Translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. *The Antioch Review* 48 (1990): 300–05.

28. William Carlos Williams. "The Work of Gertrude Stein." In *Imaginations.* New York: New Directions, 1970, p. 347. Meanwhile, Recall Williams—referring to his *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* (1918)—on "the brokenness of his composition": "The instability of these improvisations would seem such that they must inevitably crumble under the attention and become particles of a wind that falters" (*Imaginations*, p. 16).

29. Johanna Drucker. *What Is? Nine Epistemological Essays.* Berkeley: Cuneiform Press, 2013, pp. 33–45.

30. John Ashbery. "The Impossible." *Poetry* 24 (1957): 250–53.

31. Gertrude Stein. *Stanzas in Meditation*. Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1994.

32. Samuel Beckett. *Nohow On: Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho*. New York: Grove Press, 1996, p. 104.

33. Joan Retallack. *How To Do Things With Words*. Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1998, p. 107.

34. Hugh Kenner. "Pound Typing." In *The Mechanic Muse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 37–60.

35. e. e. cummings. *No Thanks*. Edited by George James Firmage. New York: Liveright, 1998, p. 18. The poem also appears in *Revolution of the Word: A New Gathering of American Avant-Garde Poetry*. Edited by Jerome Rothenberg. Boston: Exact Change, 1974, p. 16.

36. Jon Tolman, trans. *Novas: Selected Writings*. Edited by Antonio Sergio Bessa and Odile Cisneros. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007, pp. 221–22.

37. Charles Bernstein. *Republics of Reality, 1975–1995*. Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 2000, p. 161. See also, in this same volume, "Lift Off" (pp. 174–75).

38. Walter Benjamin. *Selected Writings, 2: 1927–1934*. Edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 290.

39. See Johanna Drucker. *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 168–92, esp. 172: "Zdanevich atomized language below the level of the morpheme, not respecting the integrity of the existing roots, prefixes and suffixes, nor feeling that a sufficient investigation [of the poetic materiality of language] could be carried out merely through their recombination into words whose suggestivity derived largely through association with existing vocabulary."

40. Ilia Zdanevich "Ledantu le phare: Poème dramatique en Zaoum." 1923. Avaliable online: http://sdrc.lib.uiowa.edu/dada/Ledantu/index.htm (accessed on 29 November 2014).

41. Peter Finch, ed. *Typewriter Poems*. New York: Something Else Press, 1972, p. 19.

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Edited by César Espinosa. Translated by Harry Polkinhorn. Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1990, pp. 51–58. See also Rosmarie Waldrop. "A Basis for Concrete Poetry." In *Dissonance (If You Are Interested)*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005, pp. 47–57.

45. Haroldo de Campos. "Untitled Poem." In *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*. Edited by Emmett Williams. New York: Something Else Press, 1967.

46. Haroldo de Campos. *Novas*. Northwestern University Press, 2007, p. 218. Compare Kate Van Orden's essay, cited above [18], on the influence of Mallarmé's typographical experiments on the music of Boulez and Cage.

47. Marjorie Perloff. "The Invention of Collage." In *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 42–79.

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50. Stéphane Mallarmé. "The Mystery in Letters." In *Mallarmé*. Edited by Anthony Hartley. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1965, p. 203: "The words, of their own accord, are exalted at many a facet acknowledged as the rarest or most significant for the mind, the centre of vibratory suspense; which perceives them independently of the ordinary sequence, projected like the walls of a cavern, as long as their mobility or principle lasts, being that part of discourse which is not spoken…"

51. Johanna Drucker. *Stochastic Poetics.* Los Angeles: Druckwerk Facsimile Edition, 2013.

52. Johanna Drucker "Letterpress Language: Typography as a Medium for the Visual Representation of Language." *Leonardo* 17 (1984): 8–16.

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