Recovery and Transgression

Recovery and Transgression:

Memory in American Poetry

Edited by

Kornelia Freitag

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Recovery and Transgression: Memory in American Poetry

Edited by Kornelia Freitag

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Kornelia Freitag and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-8045-0
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-8045-9

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1
Kornelia Freitag

Part I: From Modernist to Postmodernist Memory

Chapter One 21
The Modernist Poetics of Urban Memory and the Structural Analogies between "City" and "Text": *The Waste Land* and Benjamin's *Arcades Project*
Jens Martin Gurr

Chapter Two 39
Replaying *The Waste Land*: Memory, Maneuver, Modern Times
MaryAnn Snyder-Körber

Chapter Three 55
"The fading memory of those flowers": Poetic Selves and Metaphorical Lineages in William Carlos Williams's Later Poetry
Simone Knewitz

Chapter Four 71
"Historical imagination gathers in the missing": History, Memory, and Strategies of Commemoration in the Poetry of Susan Howe
Heinz Ickstadt

Chapter Five 89
"Traces in a geography": Susan Howe's Memorious Landscapes
Mandy Bloomfield

Chapter Six 103
In Praise of Boxes
Michel Delville

Chapter Seven 121
Allegory as an Aid to Writing Memory: Lyn Hejinian and Surrealism
Michael Golston

Part II: Poetic Memory Across Nations

Chapter Eight 139
The Shine and the Shadow: John Tranter Re-Views John Ashbery
Brian M. Reed

Chapter Nine 157
James Merrill and the "unresolved" Memory of Hans Lodeizen
Diederik Oostdijk

Chapter Ten 173
Lawrence Ferlinghetti and the Global Poetics of Italian American Poetry
Clemens Spahr

Chapter Eleven 187
In "living separation": *Xenitiá* in Contemporary Poetry of the Greek Diaspora
Evangelia Kindinger

Chapter Twelve 209
"Eurydice": Agha Shahid Ali's Poetry of Memory
Kornelia Freitag

Chapter Thirteen 223
Death on TV: The Holocaust in Transnational American Poetry
Susanne Rohr

Chapter Fourteen 233
"Who do the saying": Amiri Baraka's Transnational Counter-Memory of Violence
Christian Klöckner

Chapter Fifteen 249
Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio's "Kumulipo" at the White House: Performing Cultural Memory in Slam Poetry
Martina Pfeiler

Part III: Poetic Memory between Science and Emotion

Chapter Sixteen 265
Emily Dickinson's Poetics of the Brain and the Memory of Dickinson in Science Writing
Sabine Sielke

Chapter Seventeen 281
Forgetting Memory: Poetry and Alzheimer's Disease
Rüdiger Kunow

Chapter Eighteen 297
"Nothing stays put": Displacement and Environmental Memory in American Poetry
Christine Gerhardt

Chapter Nineteen 313
Alice in Wasteland: *EXIT 43* by Jennifer Scappettone in the Transnational Environmental Crisis
Daniela Daniele

Acknowledgements 333

Contributors 337

Introduction

Kornelia Freitag

> *He wishes he could figure out how memory acts.*
> *Or how an act remembers.*
> —Keith Waldrop, "First Draw the Sea"

Memory is one of the most basic and important features of human beings. Thus it has fascinated scholars, scientists, and artists since antiquity. Poetic texts shape and are shaped by personal, collective, and cultural memory. The past is recovered in poetry in manifold moves that are, despite, or rather because of, their unquestionable relation to the past, their *Nachträglichkeit*, always also multidirectional and transgressive. While we tend to think of memory as serving the *recovery* of the past by safeguarding and containing it, as "retaining and recalling past experience" (*Webster's* 1995, "memory"), the workings of memory are much more complex. They are, in fact, often *transgressions* of what "really" happened, of good taste, of what is officially sanctioned; they "go beyond or over," even "act in violation of" the limits (*Webster's* 1995, "transgress") of "past experience."

In a somewhat different context, Bernard Stiegler explains the contradictory dynamics of memory production:

> The preservation of memory, of the memorable (selection for inclusion in the memorizable, the retention of this memorable element, creates it as such), is always already also its elaboration: it is never a question of a simple story of "what happened," since what happened has only happened in not having completely happened; it is memorized only through its being forgotten, only in its being effaced; selection of what merits retention occurs in what should have been, and therefore also in anticipating, positively and negatively, what soon will have been able to happen (retention is always already protention). (Stiegler 2012, 126)

Literature has always been a primary medium for the selective/exclusive, preservative/creative, repetitive/elaborative, illuminating/obfuscating, retaining/forgetting, representing/effacing, backward-/forward-looking tradi-

tion of re/making memory. "Literature is news that STAYS news" (Pound 1960, 29), as Ezra Pound famously summarized the contradictory momentum that propels literary texts. As much as this conviction seems to be focused on the present and the future ("news"), it is, basically, an observation concerning poetic memory: what *stays* is what is *remembered* and included in "the memorizable" (Stiegler 2012, 126). *What* gives *which* works their staying power, what makes readers and writers remember some but not other texts, has as much to do with the textual structures themselves as with the cultural situation in which they are re-collected: both establish the "selection of what merits retention" (Stiegler 2012, 126).

This becomes clear in all of the essays in this collection, which were originally delivered as papers at a 2012 international poetry conference at Ruhr-University Bochum, in Germany. These essays are devoted to the manifold transgressive moves by which different pasts have been and are recovered in American poetry and thereby "made new." The focus is on the effects of the cultural interaction, mixture, translation, and hybridization of the memory *of*, *in*, and *mediated by* poetry (Erll and Nünning 2005, 264-65). The interest is in American poetry as an integral part of literary developments that transcend U.S. national borders and as integrally connected to other fields of cultural knowledge. The contributions are devoted to poetic memories that result from the recovery and transgression of real and imaginary boundaries between geographical spaces, cultural archives, national traditions, disciplines and forms of writing and thinking in different times up to today.

Before introducing the scope and variety of essays in this volume, I will look at a question that was not directly addressed during the conference, focused as it was on memory and the transnational: namely, memory and the lyric. While this topic (extending from the definition of "the lyric" to the varying ideological baggage of the term and mode) is much too large to be tackled comprehensively in an introduction to an essay collection, it remains an intriguing phenomenon. Hence, I will present on the next pages a number of observations on ways that American writers today react self-consciously to the well-established lyric tradition of addressing memory.

What will become obvious from both the essays in the volume and my cursory glance at four American poems penned after the turn of the millennium is not only that memory remains an important topic in today's American poetry but also that strategies that de-center the poetic subject are especially fruitful to engage with the lyric tradition of writing memory. By "de-center[ing] the subject," a strategy is used that Richard Sennett has, in an article presenting sociological findings on the shaping of collective memory,[1] called instrumental for the development of a productive memory, since "a searching memory requires a de-centered subject" (Sennett 1998, 20). He is following insights of Maurice Halbwachs, according to whom, in Sennett's words,

> Recall will remain active only if narrating remains restless. The facts of the past have to be used to combat people's tendency, in his words, to "center themselves in their memories" . . . [C]ritical voices both stimulate recall and destabilize narrative reconstruction. (Sennett 1998, 20)

While it is not really surprising that memory in poetry should follow the same basic rules as in other arenas of life, the essays in this volume suggest that one of a variety of ways to bring about a "de-center[ing] of the subject" (Sennett 1998, 20)—and the lyric tradition based upon it—has always been to transnationalize the lyric subject or text. Yet another way to "de-cente[r] the subject" (Sennett 1998, 20) in poetry is calling upon *scientific* knowledge and methods of engaging with memory—as can be observed in the poems by Peter Gizzi, Pimone Triplett, and Keith Waldrop that I discuss below (and as is certainly observable in texts by a host of other poets writing and publishing today). In other words, in order to transgress the long established tradition of using the lyric to write about memory, these three poets choose to emulate or play upon discourses outside the humanities and thereby disentangle themselves decidedly from a specifically "literary" realm, which in poetry today is often thought to be synonymous with the "lyric." That the leap to the other, the extra-poetical culture is never complete, is enabled by and couched in a multiplicity of literary and poetical strategies, goes without saying. The texts by Gizzi, Triplett, and Waldrop are resolutely poetry and not science writing; they are examples of "the *language art*" that uses, in Marjorie Perloff's formulation, "language that is somehow extraordinary, that can be processed only on re-reading" (Perloff 2006, 143, emphasis original).

Still, an important trend related to memory in today's poetry scene is nonetheless the continuation of the lyric tradition. The most interesting examples acknowledge this tradition while also transgressing it. John Ashbery's "Obsidian House," included in *A Norton Anthology of New Poetry: American Hybrid*[2] (Ashbery 2009, 25-26) and first published in

---

[1] Sennett studied the collective memory associated with the loss of jobs of computer programmers who worked for IBM in New York.

[2] Edited by Cole Swenson and David St. John. The volume's subtitle indicates the editors' aim to showcase that the two-camp-model of American poetry, in which the "innovators," were set against the "traditionalists," "is no longer the most

Chinese Whispers (2002), is a good case in point. It unquestionably invokes the lyric tradition by an epigraph from the beginning of the first stanza of Friedrich Hölderlin's famous "Mnemosyne" (ca. 1803).[3] The German poet's anguished recollection of the dead Greek heroes and their time announces already by its title his engagement with the question of memory and, specifically, with cultural memory. Hölderlin's stanza starts optimistically: "*The Fruits are ripe, dipped in fire, cooked / and tested here on earth*" (Ashbery 2009, 25, Ashbery's emphasis)—and this is where Ashbery breaks off the quote. The original sentence continues, in fact, with a complete reversal of the Dionysian mood established so far: "and it is a law / Prophetic, that all things pass / Like snakes" (Hölderlin 1984, 197, ll. 2-3). Thus, the left-out rest of the sentence expresses—contrary to its life-affirming beginning—Hölderlin's acknowledgement of the inevitable power of mortality and forgetting. This acceptance of forgetting presupposes memory—which is further stressed in Hölderlin's twofold use in this stanza of "behalten" (Hölderlin 1984, 196, ll. 8 and 14),[4] German for "to keep" and "to keep in mind," i.e., to remember.

Despite Ashbery's meaning-changing truncation of the quotation, his stance is not at all more confident than that of the older poet. In fact, it is every bit as tragic. As Luke Carson has argued regarding the function of Hölderlin for Ashbery, "the tragic appears in Ashbery's work specifically through a series of allusions to the work of the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin" (Carson 2008, 182). Yet, this tragic mode is finely calibrated to our postmodern or post-postmodern cultural moment by the "self-contradiction of Ashbery's poetics[, which] makes him such a unique—but also curiously elusive—figure in the annals of late twentieth-century [and early twenty-first-century] poetry" (Perloff 2013, 14-15).

Ashbery further complicates Hölderlin's poem, which alternates between optimism ("the fruits are ripe") and resignation ("all things pass"), by what Brian Reed has called in another context "attenuated hypotaxis": a meandering from one grammatical unit to another that allows for "some relation of subordination" while also "blur[ring] those connections and inhibit[ing] the formation of clear, neat, larger units"

accurate one and that . . . the contemporary moment is dominated by rich writings that . . . hybridize core attributes of previous 'camps' in diverse and unprecedented ways" (Swenson 2009, xvii).

[3] I follow Beissner's opinion of the stanza's function as a variant for the first stanza of "Mnemosyne" (cf. Sieburth 1984, 277).

[4] Sieburth translates Hölderlin's "behalten" the first time as "to bear in mind" (l. 8) and the second time as "to retain" (l. 14) (Hölderlin 1984, 197).

(Reed 2000, 117). The third stanza of "Obsidian House" may serve to illustrate the structural "attenuation" of Ashbery's verse:

> Further, one was sure
> one had come to pass,
> yet no slovenly proof was
> ever forwarded.
> (Ashbery 2009, 25, ll. 9-12)

This is a full grammatical sentence in simple, everyday language. The second line is clearly subordinate to the first, and the last two lines are subordinate to the first two lines. Yet it is not clear whether "one" in the second line is the same "one" as in the previous line, or perhaps some-"one" else, not to mention the open question of who is meant by "one" in the first line and what "one was sure" about or what "had come to pass," no matter by whose agency. Moreover, the last two lines that assure the reader that "no . . . proof was / ever forwarded" unexpectedly void the assurance that was presented in the first two lines ("one was sure"), an assertion that makes the attribute "slovenly" for "proof" not only superfluous but semantically mistaken. Yet while there is no definite meaning to ascribe to any given line within the stanza, meaning is mockingly remade and/or postponed time and again. The stanza definitely thematizes knowledge about the past and how one may prove it; it is "somehow about" memory and how it can(not) be proven, (not) even if "slovenly."

The overall disjointed impression of the poem is augmented (or intensified) by Ashbery's strategies of subverting the lofty style of Hölderlin's hymn by abrupt stylistic changes (as between the prophetic and the profane from the second to the third line in the example above) and of stripping his poem of any consistent use of a poetic speaker. The third-person speaker of the beginning (ll. 1-22) is supplanted in line 23 by a first-person speaker, who starts confiding that "I hoped (was hoping) . . . ," only to be replaced by a "we" in the next (and last) stanza, which concludes the poem with the three lines "We *forgot* about the / treasure, *forgot* it happened / among the madness of whirling wheat" (ll. 34-36, emphasis added). The repeated non-sequiturs notwithstanding, this ending establishes unmistakably that mortality and forgetting are the very topics that Ashbery negotiates in his poem, just as Hölderlin does. Even in its repeated denial of their persistence, the poem conjures ghostly memories of mythical heroism ("treasure" and something that "happened")—without presenting a hero or a consistent remembering subject.

Indeed, Ashbery is following Hölderlin more closely than one might think, despite the fact that Ashbery abstains from any direct topical reference to memory while Hölderlin's title "Mnemosyne" expressly invokes the Greek Goddess of remembrance and mother of the muses. Hölderlin obviously struggled writing "Mnemosyne" and he composed three introductory stanzas. The stanza that begins "The fruits are ripe," chosen by Ashbery as epigraph, seems to have been written to replace the two earlier versions. The one designated the second version by Beissner (cf. Sieburth 1984, 277) starts full of doubt and bitterness ("A sign we are, without meaning . . . and have nearly / Lost our language") to move to an assured ending ("But there is *One*, / Without doubt, who / Can change this any day. He *needs / No law*;" Hölderlin 1984, 117, emphasis added). In the version that Ashbery selected for his epigraph, this movement from despair to hope has been reversed to lead from an optimistic ("The fruits are ripe") to a sober mood ("All things pass"), as argued above. In particular, the possibility of Christ's second coming ("One . . . who . . . needs no law" in the previous version) is clearly negated by a stress placed on the applicability of the *law* of transience to *all*: "it is a law / . . . that *all* things pass" (Hölderlin 1984, 197, ll. 2-3, emphasis added). No exception is made for Christ, the "One" is not mentioned anymore.

Looking back at Ashbery's four-line stanza quoted earlier, it becomes evident that he is playing on the wording of both of Hölderlin's versions ("there is *One*, / Without doubt" *and* "*All* things *pass*") in order to perform the same move from assurance ("one was sure") to complete negation of hope for higher interference ("no . . . proof was / ever forwarded") in one stanza that Hölderlin performed between his two stanzas. He repeats Hölderlin's move, only that he "attenuated" (Reed 2000, 117) the connection of "one" to Jesus by spelling it with a small "o" and changed to an overall lower register.

"Obsidian House" recalls and repudiates Greek myth, Biblical prophecy, and German Romantic poetry; Ashbery recovers and transgresses cultural and poetic memory. Much more could be written on Ashbery's memorial strategies: how his "elaborate artifice . . . contradict[s] the close to life quality" of his language, how "literary citation . . . undercut[s] the surprise element" (Perloff 2013, 15), and how, "[i]n spite of many ironies," his take on memory "is solidly grounded in the lyric tradition" (Carson 2008, 181). Yet for reasons of space I move on to another and opposite trend in writing memory in poetry that tackles the tradition of embracing (and revising) memory's lyric and/or tragic representation by approaching it head-on in quasi-scientific fashion.

Peter Gizzi, for instance, starts with a number of perfectly confident theses in his poem "Human Memory is Organic," first published in *The Outernationale* in 2007 and also included in *A Norton Anthology of New Poetry* (Gizzi 2009, 155-156). The poem's title is already a complete proposition. It is followed by the restatement of a fact from physics: "We know time is a wave" (l. 1); by a petrological observation: "You can see it in gneiss" (l. 2); and the statement "everything crumbles" (l. 3). This is a far cry from the narrative of Mnemosyne in Greek myth, Hölderlin's groping for the right way to begin "Mnemosyne," and even from Ashbery's ironic despair that "We *forgot* about the / treasure, *forgot* it happened / among the madness of whirling wheat." Gizzi seems almost to talk back to Ashbery, whose memory seems stuck in the prison of lava, in an "Obsidian House," when he cautions in the next two lines "Don't despair. / That's the message frozen in old stone" (ll. 4-5).

Of course, Gizzi's poem is vastly different than a scientific treatise, and its different "propositions" are much too open to make for a rational scientific argument on the "organic quality of memory." "Organic" alone has seven different meanings listed in *Webster's New College Dictionary*, ranging from "1. Of, relating to, or affecting an organ of the body" to "3 b Free from chemical additives" to "7. *Chem.* Of or designating carbon compounds." Hence, what it actually means that "Human Memory is Organic" is open to question. The poem—which proceeds in fast motion from "I" (ll. 6 and 8) to "us" (twice l. 18), from "water" (l. 8) to "consciousness" (l. 10), from "seeing" (l. 11) to "story" (ll. 14 and 15), and from "message frozen in . . . stone" (l. 4) to "all unstable and becoming" (l. 19)—does not really answer this question precisely. It opens all kinds of collective memory narratives—related to community, life, literature, and communication—that make the poem strikingly exploratory. It perfectly exemplifies Gizzi's explanation that "I write to discover what I might know only in the act of making the poem itself. Writing as an aid to discovery, and to hold always a space open, to give this openness some relief" (Gizzi 2007, 47). The answer aligns him with Lyn Hejinian's *Writing Is an Aid to Memory* (discussed in this volume by Michael Golston) and also with the poetics of writers like Susan Howe and Rosmarie Waldrop, who are—like Gizzi—indebted to Jack Spicer and Charles Olson, whose poetics of the "open field" Gizzi evokes at the end of his explanation quoted above.

Whatever else one can say about "Human Memory is Organic," its mood is unemotional. Notwithstanding the two sentences beginning with "I" and covering five and a half lines, the poem is anything but lyrical, and

it ends with something that can be read as a closing announcement on the tragic-lyrical memorial tradition:

> The organic existence of gravity.
> The organic nature of history.
>
> The natural history of tears.
> (Gizzi, 2009, 156, ll. 22-24)

A final effort at definition in these lines characterizes organically based "Human Memory" as the expression and result of coordinates that are natural ("gravity's"), historical ("history's"), and also emotional ("tears'"). Emotions, symbolized by the word "tears," would, of course, necessitate a human subject—which has, at this point of Gizzi's poetic "discovery," been removed as subject of enunciation. The lyric subject, as the *one* who is speaking and feeling memory, is absent. It is in this sense that Olivier Brossard is right when he writes that "it is true to state that Peter Gizzi aims at renegotiating the lyric tradition" (Brossard 2008, 2). It is a renegotiation from the outside, presented by an interested observer looking on. The short and belated nod to memory's connection to "tears" reminds one of the way neuroscientist and director of the Brain and Behavior Research Group at the Open University, Steven P. R. Rose refers to affect. As an afterthought to his overview on "Neuroscience and Memory" (Rose 1998, 135-139) and before he starts laying out "The Taxonomy of Memory" (Rose 1998, 139-142), Rose notes that "human memory . . . demands not just cognition but affect too" (139). For both the poet and the neuroscientist, affect needs to be mentioned but it is not the topic of concentration.

Keith Waldrop's "First Draw the Sea" in *A Norton Anthology of New Poetry* (Waldrop 2009, 441-445), first published in *The House Seen from Nowhere* (2002), also engages the question of memory's "nature," likewise approaching it from outside the traditional realm of lyrical poetry, and likewise bridging the gap between C. P. Snow's "two cultures"—i.e., the humanities and the sciences. Yet Waldrop chooses to clearly anchor in a persona the freewheeling thoughts of what he calls "Interludes" (Waldrop 2009, 441)—some cross between Blaise Pascal's *Les Pensées* and Bertolt Brecht's *Keuner-Geschichten*. Waldrop names this persona "Herr Stimmung" (Waldrop 2009, 441; in English, something like Mr. Mood, Mr. Sentiment, or Mr. Humor). Here is a passage concerning Herr Stimmung's thoughts on memory:

> He wishes he could figure out how memory acts.
>
> Or how an act remembers.
>
> Struck by the intelligence of his hands, he would like to disguise us as animals.
> (Waldrop 2009, 443)

Herr Stimmung approaches the problem that memory cannot be seen, smelled, tasted, or touched but is only perceptible in act(ion)s or/and especially when it fails. While memory is essential for thought, speech, *and* bodily functions, the latter is often forgotten—especially by people working in the lofty realms of the humanities and in the even loftier realms of literature. This is exactly the point, or at least one of the points Keith Waldrop discloses with the help of his naïve and curious protagonist. Through Herr Stimmung, he can raise basic questions: the connection between "memory" and "an act," who "acts" and/or "remembers," and how procedural memory, "the intelligence of his hands," connects humans to "animals" (humans are not animals, or else it would be unnecessary "to *disguise* us as animals").

Not surprisingly—if one is familiar with Waldrop's strategy of condensing, defamiliarizing, and thereby highlighting the knowledge (and the limits of knowledge) of our time in his epigrammatic and ironic long poems—the three lines unfold an entire, quite serious research program. As if taking his cue from Waldrop's last line quoted above, Steven P. R. Rose explains his own method:

> I shall begin with human memory, but will be arguing quite strongly that we can learn a great deal about the brain mechanism of human memory, and even about the strategies for repairing damaged memory, on the basis of studies of non-human animals. (Rose 1998, 134-135)

Moreover, Rose insists that "the study of learning and memory will be the key to deciphering the translation rules which lie between the languages of brain and mind, the Rosetta Stone of the neuroscience" (Rose 1998, 135), and that this study is based upon measuring behavioral changes (Rose 1998, 136). In other words, Rose literally "wishes he could figure out how memory acts. / Or how an act remembers," and he pursues this wish by correlating "memory" and the way it is materialized in "act[s]," exactly as Herr Stimmung does.

Pimone Triplett goes one step further in the direction of science in a three-part poem from her *The Price of Light*, titled "Hippocampus" (Triplett 2005, 70-73). As Rose explains the term:

> the deep, neuron-rich region of the cerebrum, called the hippocampus for its fancied resemblance to a sea horse, [has been taken for] a structure essential for memory, or at least for the registration of short-term memory and its subsequent transfer to long-term store. The hippocampus [is] a controversial focus of physiological attention . . . [A] word of caution is required. Inferring function from dysfunction is notoriously difficult . . . (Rose 1998, 141-142)

Rose's words suggest that Triplett does not start by trying to find a metaphor for memory (Hölderlin and Ashbery) or to pin it (mockingly) down (Gizzi and Waldrop). She begins her poem with the bodily organ, the "neuron-rich region of the cerebrum" that is (thought to be) responsible for the physiological part of remembering (Rose ibid.). Actually, she has "it" speaking, and its speech unfolds a mind-boggling space between mind and brain, between remembering and its biological basis, that keeps the reader's mind reeling between the body's activity and passivity, humanity and nature, animate and inanimate matter:

> "Remember me? Think sputum
> threaded to spud, a root-bulb coiffed
> across cortex. Think split
>
> In fissure without whom who's to hold down
> brain's duff and dander,
> your forest floor.
> (Triplett 2005, 70, ll. 1-6)

In a series of stanzas of two and a half lines, the poem wavers persistently between hippocampus and memory.

The shortened third line of each stanza functions as both link to the next stanza and flipping point from the middle line of one stanza to the first line of the next, which mirror each other: "now" (l. 9) links "you can't feel it" to "feel it" (ll. 8 and 10); "seen" (l. 12) links "that first being" to "Like Mother" (ll. 11 and 13), and so on. The fluidity between physiology and psychology, the unconscious and consciousness, the natural and the cultural, is further evoked in the Pavlovian-reflex-scenario of "the way a train whistle becomes / midnight meeting" of lovers (ll. 25-26) and in the concluding two lines: "Sing *I was hewn down at the wood's edge* / (love), *taken from my stump*" (ll. 29-30). The quotation is from "The Dream of the Rood," which, as Triplett's note explains, is "an anonymous tenth-century poem in which the cross as wooden object speaks of its own transformation" (Triplett 2005, 81, emphasis original).

The ending highlights both the text's consistency with the poetic tradition and the change that has occurred in it. Just as a wooden cross became—as sacred center of Christian religion—the speaker of its own miraculous transformation in the tenth century, in the science-focused twenty-first, the hippocampus—as "a structure essential for memory" (Rose 1998, 141-142)—tells in Triplett's poem of his own metamorphoses. Thus the ambiguous quotation (besides the cross and the hippocampus, "I" may also refer to the lover remembering midnight meetings in the lines before) lands an arguably scientific topic unmistakably in the realms of faith, poetry, and—as a word intervening between the two parts of the quotation indicates—"love." This first part and the next two parts of the sequence containing quotes from *Gray's Anatomy* and the famous Anglo-Saxon "The Wanderer," resonate with Rose's credo that "[i]t is not brains that make memories; it is people, who use their brains to do so" (Rose 1998, 134).

I have quoted Rose's and Sennett's articles in order to bring out the scientific undertones of the poems by Gizzi, Waldrop, and Triplett. Their two articles were part of the excellent essay collection *Memory* (1998) that aimed at bridging C. P. Snow's "two cultures" in the context of memory research (Fara and Patterson 1998, 2). The two editors, historian of science Patricia Fara and neurologist Karalyn Patterson, explain in the introduction that "[w]e expect *scientists* to be concerned with studying the *processes involved in remembering*, and *humanities scholars* to be interested in the *products of memory*," but that their collection was meant to "expos[e] the falseness of this dichotomy" and sought "to explore the insights into memory which can be gained by juxtaposing the complementary perspectives of *specialists* who venture beyond normal disciplinary confines" (Fara and Patterson 1998, 2, emphasis added).

As my reading of the three poems has illustrated, extending *scientists'* and *scholars'* explorations of memory to *artists'* and *poets'* is possible and revelatory.[5] Gizzi, Waldrop, and Triplett even *perform* and *highlight* the interdisciplinary nexus between science and the humanities in their poems. On the one hand, they ask basic questions and establish links that are common in "studying the processes involved in remembering." On the other, they display their "interes[t] in the products of memory" through specifically poetic ways of "remembering"—which, basically, come down to one method: repetition. Poetry's "long-term memory" might be said to rest on more or less intricate intertextual relationships (to Hölderlin or an

[5] An essay by novelist A. S. Byatt is included in *Memory*, but she has contributed not a literary but a scholarly text that explains "Memory and the Making of Fiction" (47-72).

anonymous tenth-century poem), and its "short-term memory" upon rhyme, meter, anaphora, and other formal features. The basic memory technique is repetition-with-a-difference. This procedure is clearly observable in the mirror structures in all of the discussed poems; for instance in Ashbery's "one was sure / one had come to pass" (Ashbery 2009, 25, ll. 9-10); Gizzi's "The organic existence of gravity. / The organic nature of history" (Gizzi 2009, 155, ll. 22-23); Waldrop's "how an act remembers / how memory acts" (Waldrop 2009, 443); and Triplett's mirroring second and first lines in subsequent stanzas.

The essays in this volume discuss how a number of American authors have addressed memory. These essays are arranged in three clusters that give a certain consistency and are meant to make for good reading. The attribution of an essay to one cluster does not necessarily exclude its association from the other two. The first section addresses different transgressive memorial strategies and techniques in famous modernist (in the first three essays) and a number of experimental postmodernist poems (essays numbered four to seven). The second section is devoted to contemporary poems that concentrate on memory with a clear emphasis on its transnational quality. The third and last section collects various approaches to and by poetry that are decidedly interdisciplinary and reach out into brain science, disability studies, and ecology, thereby coming the closest to my objectives in the discussion above.

The section "From Modernist to Postmodernist Memory" starts with two essays on *The Waste Land.* Martin Gurr reads T. S. Eliot's poem in light of Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project.* His discussion of the representation of layered urban memory, the role of the *flâneur*, and Baudelaire serves not only to show the parallels between Eliot's and Benjamin's urban imaginaries but also to take their works as two paradigmatic examples illuminating points of contact between the discourses of modernist poetry and urban studies in the first decades of the twentieth century. While Gurr highlights the transnational urban memory in *The Waste Land*, MaryAnn Snyder-Körber aims at unearthing specifically American memories underlying the poem. Based upon a close reading of an earlier and very different version of the beginning of Eliot's long poem, Snyder-Körber argues that Eliot inscribes his text with a new and specifically American rhythm by working the syncopated and sensuous time of *ragtime* into its structure. The third essay in this section, in which Susanne Knewitz reads William Carlos Williams's late love poem "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower," also highlights memory's innovative function for modernist writers. Starting from Williams's poetic definition of memory as "a kind / of accomplishment / a sort of renewal" (Williams 1991, 245), Knewitz shows how the poet refashions in "Asphodel" the trope of the flower, which he had often used before, through a performative play of memories.

Heinz Ickstadt's discussion of the memorial strategies in Susan Howe's poetry establishes the link between the discussion of modernist and postmodernist poetry. It starts with a short and highly informative overview of the continuities and ruptures between modernist and postmodernist poetics, between Ezra Pound and Charles Bernstein, William Carlos Williams and Susan Howe. In the second part of his essay, Ickstadt reads Howe's *THIS THAT* as an example of the ways in which Howe merges personal recollection and historical commemoration, myth and history, in poetic texts that are emphatically language-centered in order to express a Transcendentalist vision, however broken and subdued. Howe's fashioning of this vision as an alternative to official versions of American history is also traced in Mandy Bloomfield's reading of three long poems by Howe that chart American geographies, namely *Secret History of the Dividing Line*, *Thorow*, and *Souls of the Labadie Tract.* Bloomfield, though, is interested specifically in the paradoxical fact that Howe uses in all three works earlier texts that tended to *silence* alternative voices, even as her aim is to *liberate* these voices in an alternative literary and cultural history. Michel Delville shows in the following essay on Charles Simic's and Rosmarie Waldrop's poetic appropriation of Joseph Cornell's boxes what also Bloomfield finds in her readings of Howe's appropriation of various historical and literary source texts, namely that the foregrounding of (trans)form(ation) and fragmentation in poetic collage—be it the visual explosion or disfigurement of texts in Howe or the formal restrictions of miniature prose poems in Simic and Waldrop—allows the poet both to preserve and to open historical sources, to refer to collective and insert personal memory, to write within and transcend a tradition. In this section's final essay, Michael Golston looks at Lyn Hejinian's somewhat different, epistemological take on writing and memory. He argues that since the 1970s Hejinian's poetry has been *formally allegorical* so that the logic of metaphor, normally connecting two semantically different fields, works itself out in the syntactic, grammatical, and visual organization of her texts on the page. The result is poetic montage that foregrounds less the textuality of history (and its gaps) and more the processes of reading and knowing—thus disclosing the memory of *Writing [as] an Aid to Memory*.

The second section, "Poetic Memory Across Nations," is introduced by Brian Reed's discussion of a contemporary Australian poet whose work is

as postmodern and experimental as Howe's, Waldrop's, or Hejinian's, but whose specifically and consciously transnational quality is the focus of the essay. Reed traces the shrewd moves by which John Tranter claims and advertises his connection to the American poet John Ashbery in a poem that re-members an Ashbery poem from the mid-1960s in order to comment on the modes of writing and reading Australian poetry at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Reed's illumination of the transpacific poetic dynamics between Ashbery and Tranter is followed by Diederik Oostdijk's account of the transatlantic link between the American poet James Merrill and the Dutchman Hans Lodeizen, whose memory remained important throughout Merrill's career and manifested in works like *The Changing Light of Sandover*. Further transatlantic connections are explored in Clemens Spahr's account of Lawrence Ferlinghetti's continuation of the internationalist Italian American literary tradition of the first half of the twentieth century and Evangelia Kindinger's outline of various late-twentieth-century circulations of *xenitiá* in Greek American poetry. In their respective essays, Kornelia Freitag and Susanne Rohr discuss poetry that remembers the trauma of past genocide. Rohr argues that poetry is a significant site where the cross-national memory of the Holocaust is staged and that the Shoah has become central to American self-understanding. Freitag analyzes a poem by the Kashmiri American poet Agha Shahid Ali that evokes a surrealist Bergen-Belsen in order to address the genocidal atrocities in his native land. The section closes with explorations of the transnational dynamics in two overtly political poems. Christian Klöckner characterizes Amiri Baraka's "Some-body Blew Up America" as a timely, if not uncontroversial, interruption of a consoling and nationalist post-9/11 commemorative discourse. Klöckner argues that Baraka's poetic assemblage of vigorous and transnational counter-memories of imperialist violence inside and outside the U.S.A. was a Foucauldian insurrection of subjugated knowledges. Martina Pfeiler reads the performance of "Kumulipo," based upon the Hawaiian creation chant *Kumulipo*, by the Hawaiian slam poet Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio at the White House and its subsequent representation in the media as an example of the possibilities and contradictions of public constructions of the cultural memory of ethnic and racial minorities.

Sabine Sielke's re-reading of Emily Dickinson's poetry on and in memory opens the third section of the volume. After sketching the ways in which Dickinson renders the human brain and consciousness in her poetry, Sielke expounds how and why contemporary science and philosophy draw on what she calls the "poetics of the brain" of the nineteenth-century poet. Rüdiger Kunow creates a very different link between poetry and the brain

in his essay on Alzheimer's poetry. While he starts by elucidating the transnational cultural overdetermination of the illness and introduces texts written by patients (alone and with the help of others), he ultimately comes to inspect the status of these texts as poetry and the ethical questions that the negotiation of Alzheimer's poetry in literary and cultural studies entails. The last two essays in the collection are devoted to poetry that grapples with ethical questions in the realm of ecology. Christine Gerhardt devotes her exploration of displacement and environmental memory in American poetry to Amy Clampitt's "Nothing Stays Put," the Chicana poet Lorna Dee Cervantes's "Freeway 280," and the Cuban American Carolina Hospital's "The Gardener." Spiritually akin in its focus on poetic environmental awareness but—as an experimental mixed-media long poem—notably different in form is *Exit 43* by the Italian American Jennifer Scappettone, the subject of Daniela Daniele's contribution to the volume. Daniele situates the postmodern, semi-autobiographical, and ecocritical poem in the tradition of modernist and postmodernist writing and art by William Carlos Williams, Clark Coolidge, Robert Smithson, and others. With the discussion of Scappettone's experimental interweaving and juxtaposing of transnational, personal, and collective memories of migration and ecological disaster, the volume comes full circle, and the way in which American poetry recovers cultural and personal memory in order to transgress and "make it new" is demonstrated once again.

The essay collection at hand would not have come into being without the indefatigable efforts and boundless patience of Hans Niehues, the expert corrections by Heather Arvidson, and tireless proofreading by Anna Bongers, Evangelia Kindinger, and Heike Steinhoff. Thank you all for your diligence and travails. Special thanks, as always, to my friend and colleague Brian Reed, whose wisdom and support has been, again, infinitely valuable.

This volume results from the contributions to a conference and hence lays no claim to thematic completeness or balance. The contingencies that characterize such a project notwithstanding, it has shown a wide variety of topics and approaches that deal with the representation of memory in poetry. May it inspire further explorations of the ways in which *memory* functions in poetry to make it "*news* that STAYS news" (Pound 1960, 29, emphasis added).

Works Cited

Ashbery, John. 2009. "Obsidian House." In *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, ed. Cole Swenson and David St. John, 25-26. New York, NY: Norton, 2002.

Brossard, Olivier. 2008. "Peter Gizzi's Hypothetical Lyricism: *Some Values of Landscape and Weather* (2003) and *The Outernationale* (2007)." In *Études anglaises* 61, no. 2:146-163.

Carson, Luke. 2008. "'Render unto Caesure': Late Ashbery, Hölderlin, and the Tragic." *Contemporary Literature* 49, no. 2 (Summer): 180-208.

Erll, Astrid, and Ansgar Nünning. 2005. "Where Literature and Memory Meet: Towards a Systematic Approach to the Concepts of Memory Used in Literary Studies." In *Literature, History, and Cultural Memory: Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* (REAL) 21, ed. Herbert Grabes, 261-294. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.

Fara, Patricia, and Karalyn Patterson. 1998. Introd. to *Memory*, 1-9. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gizzi, Peter. 2007. "An Interview with Robert N. Casper." *Jubilat* 14:47-61.

—. 2009. "Human Memory is Organic." In *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, ed. Cole Swenson and David St. John, 155-56. New York: Norton, 2007.

Hölderlin, Friedrich. 1984. *Hymns and Fragments*. Trans. Richard Sieburth. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Perloff, Marjorie. 2006. "Screening the Page / Paging the Screen." In *New Media Poetics: Contexts, Technotexts, and Theories*, ed. Adelaide Morris and Thomas Swissl, 143-164. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

—. 2013. "La Grande Permision: John Ashbery in the 21st Century." *TAB: The Journal of Poetry and Poetics* 1, no. 2:14-29.

Pound, Ezra. 1960. *ABC of Reading*. New York, NY: New Directions.

Reed, Brian. 2000. "Hart Crane's Victrola." *Modernism/Modernity* 7, no. 1:99-125.

Rose, Steven P. R. 1998. "How Brains Make Memories." In *Memory*, ed. Patricia Fara and Karalyn Patterson, 134-161. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sennett, Richard. 1998. "Disturbing Memory." In *Memory*, ed. Patricia Fara and Karalyn Patterson, 10-26. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sieburth, Richard. 1984. "Notes to the Poems." In *Hymns and Fragments*. Transl. Richard Sieburth, 255-288. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Stiegler, Bernhard. 2012. "The Industrialization of Memory, 1996." In *Memory*, ed. Ian Farr, 126-128. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Swenson, Cole. 2009. "Introduction." *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, ed. Cole Swenson and David St. John, xvii-xxvi. New York, NY: Norton.

Triplett, Pimone. 2005. "Hippocampus." In *The Price of Light*, 70-73. New York, NY: Four Way Books.

Waldrop. Keith. 2009. "First Draw the Sea." In *American Hybrid: A Norton Anthology of New Poetry*, ed. Cole Swenson and David St. John, 441-445. New York, NY: Norton, 2002.

Webster's New College Dictionary. 1995. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Williams, William Carlos. 1991. *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*. Vol. 2, 1939-1962, ed. Walton A. Litz and Christopher MacGowan. New York, NY: New Directions.

CHAPTER SIX

IN PRAISE OF BOXES

MICHEL DELVILLE

> *Childhood is a piece of ground bathed in water, with little paper boats floating on it. Sometimes, the boats turn into scorpions. Then life dies, poisoned, from one moment to the next . . . The poison is the dream.*
> —Edmond Jabès, *The Book of Questions*

One way of apprehending the shape and structure of Joseph Cornell's boxes is to relate it to Rosalind Krauss's notion of the grid, which she describes, in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde,* as an emblem of modern art's turn to anti-mimetic models, proclaiming its own radical autonomy from the outside world, landing in a place representing a kind of frozen present and displaying "its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse" (Krauss 1985, 9-10). Krauss distinguishes two types of uses of the grid: the first is centrifugal and "extends, in all directions to infinity" (Krauss 1985, 18); the second is centripetal and is characterized by a "within-the-frame attitude" which lays more emphasis on the materiality of the artwork. Strangely enough, Krauss's book includes a reproduction of Cornell's "Nouveaux Contes de Fées" ("New Fairy Tales," aka "Poison Box")—presumably as an example of the centripetal grid—but leaves it uncommented, as if the image box spoke for itself and sufficed to illustrate her theories about the underlying structures of collage in contemporary art. As we will see, Krauss's description of the grid as a figure trapped in a frozen moment, uncontaminated by the contingencies of narrative, fails to do justice not only to Cornell's own collage aesthetics but also to the interplay and reversibility of history, syntax and memory as they manifest themselves in Rosmarie Waldrop's and Charles Simic's respective rewritings of Cornell's boxes.

If we consider modern art's gradual move away from representation to presentation and the foregrounding of the physicality of the art object, it is difficult not to agree with Krauss's definition of the grid as the symptom of an art which is increasingly turned upon itself, "follow[ing] the canvas

surface, doubl[ing] it" so that it becomes "a representation of the surface, mapped . . . onto the same surface" (Krauss 1985, 161), in a rather Borgesian fashion. Krauss's general claims about the grid's "imperviousness to language" (Krauss 1985, 158), however, are more difficult to apply to the whole history of collage aesthetics and become requalified in her own reading of Picasso's synthetic Cubism. Picasso's collages, she writes, create "a system of signifiers" (Krauss 1985, 37) which, far from manifesting its "hostility" to the printed word, incorporates the world of signs in a way that questions modernism's search for "unimpeachable self-presence" (Krauss 1985, 9). Instead, it achieves a "metalanguage of the visual" which engages in "a systematic exploration of the conditions of representability entailed by the sign" (Krauss 1985, 9-10).

If we look closely at Cornell's "Poison Box," the artist's appropriation of mass-produced textual material extends to the frame (on which cuttings from Victorian fairy tale books have been glued), and the readable textual fragments still allow viewers to identify some of the specific sources of the fifteen parallelepiped paper boxes stored in their respective niches. Cornell's three-dimensional collages do not fundamentally differ from their Cubist predecessors in their relationship to textual material. Rather than rejecting narrative as such, Cornell's boxes—based as they are on an art of collection, selection and contrast—"make art out of fragments without denying fragmentary character" at the same time as they "reanimat[e] bits of the past without asserting that such signs of life constitute a veritable resurrection" (Levy 2011, xxvii). In light of this analysis, Cornell's cabinets of curiosities effect a "revisitation" of the past which is literally "haunted" by their own ambivalent relationship to historical and cultural memory as it slides between the surrealist and the archival, the universal and the anecdotal, or, as Lindy Hartigan puts it, "between minutiae and art and between public and private attention" (qtd. in Levy 2011, 201).

Cornell's status as a collagist "reanimator" of the smashed bits of Western culture and history is perhaps best examined in the light of John Ashbery's insistence on the importance of the "collectable" in poetry, a notion he defines as "something that doesn't yet have the status of an antique" (qtd. in Levy 2011, 201). Referring to Ashbery's own practice of collecting unused vomit bags from airplanes, Ellen Levy writes that

> as it has become progressively harder to perform what Benjamin calls the "Sisyphean task of divesting things of their commodity character," the collector has been forced to seek out ever more unlikely combinations of the abjectly nostalgic and harshly anti-aesthetic. (Levy 2011, 201)

From Lautréamont's celebration of the beauty of "the fortuitous encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table" (Lautréamont 2004, 193) to Cornell's boxes and beyond, all manner of quirky Surrealistic jumps and verbi-voco-visual non sequiturs have endeavored to sever found objects from their historical context, detach them from their commodity status and draw attention to their own condition *as* autonomous objects. From a Marxist perspective, these examples suggest that the "revolutionary" character of Cornell's work is primarily related to his desire to "bestow on [things] only connoisseur value, rather than use value" (Benjamin 1999, 19)—Benjamin's choice of the word connoisseur points both to the artist's refined position as a man of taste and to his non-antagonistic, affectionate relationship to his found objects—and free them from what he called "the drudgery of being useful" (Benjamin 1999, 19).

Despite their truncated, incomplete condition, however, the traceable textual sources of "Poison Box" point to a cultural heritage (the fairy tale) which is generally perceived as universal and thus prevents any reading of the box based exclusively on private and enigmatic meanings and relationships. In other words, one of the specificities of Cornell's work is that it does not assimilate "historical junk" to an assemblage of displaced, free-floating textual or visual objects. For Cornell, recombining mass-produced cultural items does not amount to an ironic, parodic or self-deflating gesture. Rather, it addresses the fate of objects through time in a way which simultaneously addresses production and consumption and offers an affectionate critique of the logic of the collector: the desire for the accumulation of objects, which is an integral part of the market economy within which it operates and which it nonetheless seeks to complicate and disrupt from within.

Duchamp vs. Cornell?

Because they lack a firm theoretical apparatus and do not display the "aggressiveness of the historicizing thinker" (O'Doherty 1973, 257), Cornell's collage-boxes could stand accused of developing an aesthetic of nostalgia, to be likened to "surrealist toys" (Blair 1998, 102) for children. Worse, they could be blamed for conferring a superficial, picturesque or decorative value to Cornell's found materials and thus cater to the bourgeois need to experience them as purveyors of comfort and solace, rather than cultural disquiet and iconic subversion. The danger of converting surrealist juxtaposition and *détournement* into a pleasurable and soothing experience of the domestic uncanny is precisely what Brian O'Doherty expresses in his reading of the opposition between Duchamp's

"acrid and aristocratic ironies" (O'Doherty 1973, 273) and Cornell's "good breeding, appropriate to one who bore major responsibilities as a curator of culture" (O'Doherty 1973, 257).

One of the major objections which can be raised against O'Doherty's radical opposition between the two artists is that it fails to recognize the similarities between Duchamp's ready-mades and Cornell's boxes, as attested by, for example, the glass cube "diamonds" of Cornell's "Taglioni's Jewel Casket"—which immediately evoke Duchamp's marble "sugar cubes" in "Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?" As for Lindsay Blair's list of the underlying tensions behind Cornell's work—which is poised between "a desperate need to . . . frame the flow of reality" and "art as a process" or between the "erudite" and the "non-intellectual" (Blair 1998, 34)—it is much too vague and general, when it is not dubious (e.g., the opposition between a "European"-Aesthetic frame of mind and an "American" "fascination with science"), to be truly useful in establishing the specifics of Cornell's contribution to Surrealist collage, especially in the absence of patient close readings of the works themselves.

And, indeed, an examination of the full range of Cornell's boxes, from his sinister "Habitat Group for a Shooting Gallery"—with its bullet cracked glass pane and its murdered parrot splattered with red paint—to the doll bound by her wrists and ankles of the Hans Bellmer-like "Sequestered Bower," reveals a rather different, and significantly less benevolent, outlook towards history and humanity. More generally, the very format of the box suggests various forms of physical and psychological confinement, and Cornell's oeuvre abounds in works that resemble compartmentalized cells or cages in which people, animals and objects are irremediably trapped. The dark and threatening content of such works casts doubt on certain interpretations of Cornell's images of domesticity and childhood as a kind of "toy world" which, for John Ashbery, expresses the "sanctity of childhood" and seems entirely consistent with a project where

> the world of childhood is characterized by order . . . the memory of a cultured, civilized upbringing in which there was an insistence on custom and ritual, family ties, innocent behavior ("I never remember anything nasty") and an attention to the sensuous surface of things. (Blair 1998, 101-102)

Charles Simic's *Dime-Store Alchemy*

Charles Simic's *Dime-Store Alchemy* (1992) is neither a book of poems nor an essay on Cornell but, rather, a collection of poetic, narrative and

philosophical vignettes which seeks to create a discursive locus which is no longer subject to such firm generic distinctions. Simic's take on Cornell echoes Baudelaire's portrait of the modern poet as a ragman consulting "the archives of debauchery, the shambles of rubbish" and collecting "all that the great city has cast away, all that it has lost, all that it has disdained, all that it has shattered" (Baudelaire 1972, 74).

Simic's miniatures endeavor to convert into poetry what Cornell himself termed a "metaphysique d'ephemera" (Levy 2011, 81). A true, self-declared (post-)Surrealist, Simic also reveals a melancholy (rather than merely nostalgic) aspect to Cornell's boxes, which he compares to America itself, "a place where the Old World shipwrecked": "The Church of Divine Metaphysics, with its headquarters in a Bowery storefront, advertises funerals and marriages on a handwritten sign" (Simic 1992, 17); "Around the corner, Salvation Army Store and a junk shop," "flea markets and garage sales cover[ing] the land" (Simic 1992, 17) with "everything the immigrants carried in their suitcases and bundles to these shores and their descendants threw out with the trash" (Simic 1992, 17):

> A pile of Greek 78 records with one Marika Papagika singing; a rubber-doll face of uncertain origin with teeth marks of a child or a small dog; sepia postcards of an unknown city covered with greasy fingerprints; a large empty jewel case lined with black velvet; a menu from a hotel in Palermo serving octopus; an old French book on astronomy with covers and title page missing; a yellowed photograph of a dead Chinese baby. (Simic 1992, 17)

Far from deploring the disappearance of old, stable frames of cultural reference, Simic prefers to praise Cornell's boxes as so many "dream machines constructed to generate strange doubles of the unconscious from the most banal objects" (Simic 1992, 28). The dream machine allows the solitary, expatriate flâneur to investigate a world of infinite psycho-geographies while staring at his own altered reflection in the mirrors of the vending machines. In "Medici Slot Machine" (Simic 1992, 26), where Lauren Bacall makes a cameo appearance, the penny arcade represents nothing less than a world of unlimited reverie and a mise an abyme of chance aesthetics in a city landscape seen as the supreme producer and converter of its own images: "A slot machine for the solitaries. Coins of reverie, of poetry, secret passion, religious madness, it converts them all. A force illegible" (Simic 1992, 28). Elsewhere in the collection, Simic fondly describes Cornell's boxes as "the smallest theater[s] in the world," where "the bread crumbs speak" (Simic 1992, 47). He also likens them to "imaginary hotels" for insomniacs and experimental movie houses

designed for an audience which "love[s] watching movies from the middle on" (Simic 1992, 59).

However, for an expatriate writer such as Simic, who was born in Belgrade and arrived in the United States at the age of sixteen, Cornell's found objects represent so many residual hauntings and feelings of the postcultural and postlapsarian palimpsest of the American nation. As Simic put it in *Dime-Store Alchemy*, "[t]he New World was already old for Poe" (Simic 1992, 17). In such pieces as "Street-Corner Theology," "Naked in Arcadia" or "The Romantic Movement," for example, one cannot help but relate Simic's fascination with displaced objects to his own experience of physical, mental and linguistic displacement as an immigrant to the United States and a poet/translator/flâneur ("The city is a labyrinth of analogies, the Symbolist forest of correspondences" [Simic 1992, 11]), collecting "fragments of an utterable whole" (Simic 1992, 70), "rid[ing] the web of occult forces" (Simic 1992, 11) of the pulsating metropolis:

> It ought to be clear that Cornell is a religious artist. Vision is his subject. He makes holy icons. He proves that one needs to believe in angels and demons even in a modern world in order to make sense of it.
> The disorder of the city is sacred. All things are interrelated. As above, so below. (Simic 1992, 70)

A Surrealist Archivist

It is hardly surprising that Simic found in Cornell's boxes a vehicle by which to expand and interrogate his own surrealist poetics. As suggested above, for all their affinities with found art and Duchampian ready-mades, Cornell's boxes are an odd fish in Dada and Surrealist waters alike. On a less formal level, interpretations of Cornell's boxes have varied over time, ranging from the strictly materialist to the spiritual—because of his devotion to Christian scientism his boxes have been likened to idiosyncratic reliquaries (Solomon 1998). Despite their common attraction to dream visions and visual narratives, Cornell's general attitude to art also differs from many of his surrealist and neo-surrealist or neo-dada counterparts: his relationship to the world of objects, in particular, is characterized by the impulse of a collector and an archivist, rather than the imperatives of innovation. Cornell's art is more often than not an art of preservation (an attitude which, incidentally, has little to do with what O'Doherty characterized above as Cornell's "well-bred" stance as a "curator of culture" [O'Doherty 1973, 273]) rather than of destruction or disfigurement, one which overtly aims to cherish discarded, commonplace objects in a

nostalgic and often melancholic gesture which "transcend[s] . . . the dust heap & ruthlessness of time" (Hauptmann 1999, 3).

More importantly, the gift economy which characterizes the circulation of Cornell's boxes (many of them were designed as specific gifts for particular friends, poets and actresses) also makes him something of an exception in the contemporary art world. Cornell instead appears as a *bricoleur céleste* who had to make a living as a door-to-door salesman to support his family during most of the 1920s and early 1930s and only began to sell his boxes in the late 1940s, until which time he thought of his boxes less as sellable artifacts than as experimental toy boxes or "time capsules," a term also used by Andy Warhol in the early 1960s, albeit in a rather different sense. As art historian Anna Dezeuze remarks rather severely, Warhol's cardboard boxes filled with objects, photographs and printed material (Warhol created more than 600 boxes from 1974 until his death in 1987) were informed by a significantly different, and less discriminating "archivism" than his predecessor:

> When Cornell used the term "time capsule" in a 1963 Christmas card, he obviously had a more poetic image in mind than a miscellaneous array of photographs, envelopes, receipts, baseball caps and t-shirts thrown together into a box. The visual aspect of Warhol's *Time Capsules* recalls the stacked boxes of Cornell's studio, with their handwritten labels denoting their contents. In Cornell's working process, these boxes contained parts to be used in the future, and their selection and categorization constituted only one stage in an ongoing project. (Dezeuze 2004, 5)

More generally, Dezeuze dismisses Warhol's boxes as

> merely symptoms of the artist's urge to acquire objects, a tendency which would turn into a full-blown frenzy once he had enough money to spend in the 1970s, cramming his house with collections ranging from space toys to art deco Cartier watches. (Dezeuze 2004, 5)

Whatever we make of Dezeuze's reservations about Warhol's project, the point here is to understand the ways in which Cornell's boxes can be viewed as so many acts of re-appropriation of what Graham Hough once called "the limitless junk shop of the past" (Hough 1978, 214). As suggested by Simic's "Naked In Arcadia," Cornell's found objects and assemblages are clearly the medium of an imaginary reconstruction of American culture and history, orchestrated with a view not to produce a unified perspective but, to quote Rosmarie Waldrop, to "assemble old materials into new shipwrecks" (Waldrop 1998, 36). The question of whether his boxes should be regarded as the equivalent of visual poetry

matters less than the suggestion that the collage embodies a particular movement in time, one which introduces gaps in a picture of cultural evolution all too often perceived as a seamless continuum. As for the three-dimensionality of Cornell's collages, it further emphasizes the artist's attempt to capture the movements of consciousness as they find themselves contained in a limbo between past, present and future impressions, as the viewers of his boxes are encouraged to convert the fleeting emotions, connections and associations generated by the juxtaposed objects into a coherent narrative colored by their own personal experience.

Rosmarie Waldrop's "Cornell Boxes"

Like Simic, Waldrop's sequence "Cornell Boxes" resorts to the prose poem form to do justice to the structural dynamics of Cornell's art. But whereas Simic's poetry is clearly in line with the surrealist paradigms with which Cornell's work is rightly or wrongly associated, the basic dynamics of Waldrop's poems lie elsewhere, as her "readings" of Cornell tend to resist the ekphrastic tendency and focus, instead, on the very structure of the boxes themselves.

I have discussed elsewhere the mimetic power of the square or rectangular shape of prose poems—especially when the right margin is justified, which is the case in both Simic's *Dime-Store Alchemy* and Waldrop's *Blindsight*. The poem's overall shape evokes that of the closed square, rendered unragged by line breaks. This perception is shared by many practitioners of the form. Whereas James Tate considers "the deceptively simple packaging: the paragraph" (qtd. in Lehmann 1996, 202) as the genre's principal "means of seduction" (qtd. in Lehmann 1996, 202), Russell Edson considers "the ideal prose poem" as "a relatively short work without obvious ornament (if indeed this is not an ornament), presented on the page with the simplicity of a child's primer, including proper paragraph indents" (Letter to the author, 4 December, 2005). As another American prose poet, Louis Jenkins, writes:

> Think of the prose poem as a box . . . The box is made for travel, quick and light. Think of the prose poem as a small suitcase. One must pack carefully, only the essentials, too much and the reader won't get off the ground. (Jenkins 1995, unpag.)

Waldrop's "Cornell Boxes," collected in her 2003 collection *Blindsight* and first published in 1998 as a chapbook by Instress Publishing, are no exception. The section includes eight poems, each containing four paragraphs of four sentences with four footnotes. Waldrop's use of constraints further emphasizes the sense of containment conveyed by the shape of the prose poem and suggests that her prose entries can be seen to convey the literary equivalent of the "framing" effect of Cornell's boxes, an aspect which they share of course, at least to some extent, with painting in general but which is especially salient in the format of the box with its room-like appearance and its suggestions of domestic intimacy and containment.

This first impression soon proves to be deceptive as the entries fail to deliver an identifiable, albeit loosely defined, description of "what happens in the boxes." The interest of Waldrop's "Cornell Boxes" lies precisely in the fact that they do not describe the exact content of the boxes, nor do they seek to elucidate what the boxes may or may not be about. The recognition that "the center is always dissolving, hole nailed through line, sentence, and the demon of analogy" (Waldrop 2003, 107) stands both as a manifesto of Waldrop's collagist poetics and a requalification of Stein's differential poetics—"act so that there is no use in a center" (Stein 1967, 196), to quote the opening sentence of the Rooms section in *Tender Buttons*—enacting what Stein would call a "spreading of difference" across the crevices, displacements and slidings of the printed page.

As for Waldrop's Mallarmean warning against the "demon of analogy," it stands as a reminder that writing about visual art is like dancing about architecture. Aware of the dangers of uncritical rapprochements between Cornell's boxes and poetic language—according to which the hole nailed through the wooden panels would "resemble," say, the empty spaces or caesurae between the lines and sentences—Waldrop supposes that all knowledge can only arise from the potential of combinations and permutations (rather than analogies and resemblances) to multiply the vectors of meaning and coordination.

Waldrop sees both the resistance to analogy and "the refusal of metaphor" as a recurrent concern in post-Modernist poetry: "for the long stretch from romanticism to modernism, poetry has been more or less identified with metaphor, with relation by analogy. In linguistic terms, this has been an emphasis on the vertical axis of the speech act: the axis of selection, of reference to the code with its vertical substitution-sets of elements linked by similarity, rather than on the horizontal axis of combination, context, contiguity, syntax, and metonymy" (Waldrop 2005, 105). Discussing Anne-Marie Albiach later in the same chapter, she nonetheless recognizes the impossibility of escaping analogy: "every linguistic act involves both selection from the code . . . and combination in

the horizontal dimension of contiguity." "All we can do," she concludes, "is put our emphasis more on one axis than on the other" (Waldrop 2005, 117). Such a position implies a radical rejection of metaphor and, in the context of Waldrop's rewritings of Cornell's art, a refusal to abide by the rules of ekphrasis: the poem does not reconstruct the box, it creates a world which does not exist elsewhere prior to its formulation as poetry. Like Cornell's collage boxes, it establishes "a different relation to knowing" in which there is "no sharp line of demarcation between organism and environment" (Waldrop 2003, 109) as "the pursuit cannot define the object of the pursuit even if the road is lit by a crystal cage, lighthouse, bright red plumage, high noon" (Waldrop 2003, 108). Rather than trying to establish one-to-one ekphrastic relationships between the verbal and the visual, Waldrop's anti-expressive/constructivist poetics—"nothing is given. Everything remains to be constructed" (Waldrop 2003, 206)—is rooted in an interest in the shape of words and things, the multiplication of non-exclusive focal points, the curves of thinking, the meanders of the psyche and, above all, the molecular texture of objects, which is the subject of investigation of "Star Box" (Waldrop 2003, 105), which incidentally appeared under the title of "Grid Box" in Jonathan Safran Foer's collection of Cornell-inspired fiction and poetry (Foer 2001, 181-182).

The Return of the Grid

A close reading of the poem shows that Waldrop's take on the grid is very different from Krauss's. With its description of star charts juxtaposed with "Victorian dress no safeguard against excess or waning empire" (Waldrop 2003, 106) the poem immediately alludes to Cornell's "Verso of Cassiopiea #1" (1960), a vivid visual representation of a vision of history as a "mishap in the statistics" (Waldrop 2003, 106) whose "course of ruin can be put in reverse in the sky" (Waldrop 2003, 105). But the poem also incorporates many other references to other Cornell boxes, including the "Untitled (Pink Palace)" (1964), countless bird habitats and the "yellow painted sun" and "sea salt" of "Suzy's Sun (For Judy Tyler)" (1957), which was dedicated to the actress Judy Tyler shortly after her tragic death in a car accident. As for Waldrop's "feather on the floor, foot fetish," it might hint at a 1942 untitled "Habitat," although the "pigeon on the roof" may reference "Untitled (pigeons on rainy street) (1972)," in which the photograph pasted on top of the collage is likely to cause viewers to mistake the street for the roof. Other poems, such as "Tool Box," reference

Cornell's film works, such as *The Midnight Party* (directed in collaboration with Larry Jordan; 1940s-1969).

Deriving its main conceptual model from modern physics, mathematics and statistical mechanics, the coalescing syntax and semantic openness of Waldrop's poem redefines the grid as an unstable delineator of interstitial spaces through which she allows the reader to delve into the molecular constituents of the box, meanwhile alluding to the gaps and fractures of history and politics, which are captured by way of local, tentative visions and interpretations—"I prefer local intervals in ideology" (Waldrop 2003, 105). The "partition particles" (Waldrop 2003, 106) measured by the observing eye follow post-Newtonian "reluctant gravities" (Waldrop 1999) and test space-time curvatures (Waldrop 2003, 100), glimpsing "the severest and most frightening transformations of the infinite" (Waldrop 2003, 108). Ultimately, they convert the gridwork into a "fragile world" (Waldrop 2003, 102) of "fading passages" (Waldrop 2003, 102), the constellations into a mere "trick of perspective" numbing the observer's mind—"the idea of sleep replaced by sleepiness" (Waldrop 2003, 106).

In the last analysis, Waldrop's collagist and writing-through techniques in "Cornell Boxes" testify to the interplay of meaning, syntax and memory in Waldrop's writing as well as to the extent to which textual or visual collage can manifest a particular movement in consciousness and time. Alternately somatizing the text and textualizing the body, her rewritings of Cornell's "time capsules" create leaps from the most specific and personal to the widest collective forms of experience.

But perhaps the final word on "Cornell Boxes" should be left to Waldrop herself, who, in the opening paragraph of "Cinder Box" writes of the difficulty of imagining or enacting the reversibility of history and memory:

> Warning cry, raven, more in my head, lunar eclipse, she cries, not stored in the brain but spread throughout the body, rewind of nightmare to single out the actual kingdom among possible untitled. (Waldrop 2003, 109)

Split Infinites: Subject, Syntax, Memory

In different but related ways, *Blindsight* and *Split Infinites* illustrate Waldrop's relentless exploration of how the workings of syntax and memory manifest themselves in her writing, or, rather, how memory translates into syntax while converting poetry into "an alternate, less linear logic" (Waldrop 1993). This begs a reconsideration of her notion of the "split infinite," which becomes a physical extension of the grammatical "split or

cleft infinitive" in which an infinitive is split into two by an adverb or adverbial unit. As we know, the creation of a disjunctive "cleavage" (the split infinitive is also referred to as the "cleft" infinitive) between the marker "to" and the uninflected form of a verb introduces a grammatical disjunction which changes the emphasis of what is being said (as in the difference between "you have to really watch him" and "you really have to watch him"). Waldrop's foundational pun is less a reference to her own use of adverbial structures than to her constant clinamenic "splitting" of the syllogistic progression of her narratives of consciousness.

Waldrop's frequent use of subjectless or nominal sentences induces a constant postponement of narrative while suspending the linear development of subjectivity. The grammatically subjectless sentence urges the reader to imagine or look for the absent as an "implied" subject in the neighboring sentences and paragraphs, which in turn becomes modified by the subjectless predicate. Any such reading is bound to remain both ambiguous and ambivalent, but the urge to cultivate this ambiguity and fill in the gaps where the subject or agent is missing remains strong, as in the following poem from the 1981 collection *Nothing Has Changed*, which recalls the sparse disjunctive cadences of Claude Royet-Journoud and Anne-Marie Albiach to whom the collection is dedicated:

> In part however rapidly
> you were attracted
> don't leave
> it would
> the first time of your
> (Waldrop 1981)

The implications of this are important as they are central to Waldrop's use of the lyrical mode. Waldrop's de-centered lyric often points to an "omitted" agent which compensates for the lack of a nominative argument. The dominant impression is that of a lyric of uncertainty in which the omitted speaker returns with a vengeance, exploring the mystery of causes and circumstances, building a space of infinite suggestiveness, unfurling many different levels of sensuous and sexual experience, psycho-somatic micro-distinctions and interstitial complexities. This process is particularly apparent in the "Seven Senses" section in *Split Infinites*:

> The body, indeed, distinguishes. More than one set of darkness. But physical forces almost never create simple geometrical structures. Boundless hope, yes. The infinite come wet, and a little death goes a long way. I turned, because. Even rough, fearless warriors swoon on this occasion. (Waldrop 1998, 74)

The loss of the self-present speaker, a trademark of post-war experimental poetry, is examined along the lines of ellipses and irresolutions, pointing to gaps in the memory process. In the opening section of *Split Infinites* (entitled "Pre & Con, or, Positions and Junctions") the poem's syntax is contaminated by various conjunctions and prepositions, which emerge as so many particles of writing that are meant to interrupt any seamless reading of what might otherwise be perceived as a conventional love poem. Here, the casualties of language and the casualties of the body merge into each other as the gaps in language and experience deliberately undermine Waldrop's variations on the reflexive mode:

> The sun's light and
> is compounded
> and lovers and
> emphatically
>
> and cast long and shadow
> of and a look
> and on the
> and face of a girl
>
> waiting for and
> the night and with imperfect
> repose and secret
> and craving
> (Waldrop 1998, 10)

In a characteristic move from the visual to the philosophical, Waldrop's "long shadows" translates into the elongated time between experience and enunciation, a process interrupted by the persistent undermining of the poem's syllogistic progress by the conjunction "and." Like the shadows cast by the objects trapped in Cornell's boxes, the shadows of Waldrop's untitled poem appear as ghostly manifestations of a "revisitation" (in the literal sense of the word) of a past which, in other poems from *Split Infinites*, relates to specific aspects of contemporary experience. The metaphysical implications of this process are apparent in "Association," which returns us to the speaker's experience of wartime Germany. The poem ambivalently addresses the themes of violence, childhood, sexual awakening and unwanted pregnancy:

> Explosives. It was war. There were no condoms. We swapped knives to peel off childhood like so many skins. Cause, far from being opposed to

> pregnancy, is in truth the most exquisite species of proximity in time. (Waldrop 1998, 50)

In "Star Box," Waldrop writes of the necessity to extend narratological considerations to a more general, radical questioning of realism and historiography which blurs accepted boundaries between the physical and the psychological. From a personal as well as historical perspective, such poems produce the effect of obliterating the "constellations" where the dots are still visible and identifiable "by the same act that formed them" (Waldrop 2003, 106) in order to satisfy the "compulsion to connect the dots into story, meaning, and insomnia" (Waldrop 2003, 106):

> The body says "I" all by itself, and history's a mishap in the statistics. (Waldrop 2003, 106)

Putting the speaker's "I" in quotation marks, Waldrop's writing shows affinities with what Jean-Michel Maulpoix has called the "fourth person singular," a mode of writing which necessarily and always already interrogates the personal and individual nature of the lyric poem. "Poetry," Maulpoix writes, "cannot produce anything other than *an effect of subject*, by articulating different voices with language," the lyric subject being "the voice of the other speaking to me, the voice of others speaking within me" (Maulpoix 1996, 157). The lyric "I," for want of a better word, is not absent from Waldrop's "Cornell Boxes"—or from the rest of her poetic oeuvre for that matter. Still, like many other para- and post-Language writers—instead of opting for an aesthetic of expression and lyrical "fullness"—she prefers to utilize "methods that make language think" (Retallack and Waldrop 1999, 335) and whose "exact discriminations separate real from world, foreign from body, pleasure from principle" (Waldrop 1998, 78).

On Miniatures

Waldrop's and Simic's respective readings of Cornell's boxes call for a reassessment of the dialectics of memory and the "historical imagination," especially as regards expatriate writers writing about their conflictual relationships with and revisitations of American history and culture. In Waldrop's sequence "Hölderlin Hybrids," the opening section of *Blindsight*, the miniature proves once again a favored vehicle for the expression of what Susan Stewart has defined as the longing for a separation from "lived historical time" (Stewart 1993, 61). Waldrop's view of the doll and, by extension, the dollhouse considered as a house

within a house articulates not only "the house's articulation of the tension between inner and outer spheres" but also "the tension between two modes of interiority . . . occupying a space within an enclosed space." The dollhouse's "aptest analogy" would then seem to be "the locket or the secret recesses of the heart": a "center within center," a "within within within" which bears the promise of "an infinitely profound interiority" (Stewart 1993, 61) temporarily sustained by the "crutches" of memory:

> And remember childhood among strings and puppets. Crutches. Knees under the chin tucked. And toy warriors with lance and shield and red badge to ensure courage. (Waldrop 2003, 78)

Waldrop's rewritings of Cornell's miniatures bring a compressed mode of objectified narration which lends itself to reverie while creating "unaccountable lapses" (30) in memory. Such lapses are liable to present a library of icons which has the capacity to absorb and alleviate the child's experience of even the most extreme historical or personal traumas, "fading between the pages of Grimm's *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen*" (Waldrop 2003, 34):

> I was six or seven dwarfs, the snow was white, the prince at war. Hitler on the radio, followed by Léhar. Senses impinged on. Blackouts, sirens, mattress on the floor, furtive visitor or ghost. (Waldrop 2003, 58)

For Stewart, "unlike the metonymic world of realism, which attempts to erase the break between the time of everyday life and the time of narrative by mapping one perfectly over the other, the metaphoric world of the miniature makes everyday life absolutely anterior and exterior to itself": "the reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday lifeworld, and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its 'use value' transformed into the infinite time of reverie" (Stewart 1993, 65). The semi-detachable character of the miniature from its cultural and historical context frees it from the constraints of ideological narratives and the shaping forces of history. It also allows the miniature to emphasize its resistance to time at the same time as it points to its potential to resist its subsequent conversion into picturesque or sentimental content, which is part of the "social disease of nostalgia" (Stewart 1993, 23). Such a process largely depends on the miniature's fixed form, which remains "manipulated by individual fantasy rather than physical circumstance" (Stewart 1993, 66) and proves resistant to the threat of the "erasure of materiality" (Stewart 1993, 68). In her chapter on dollhouses, Stewart insists on the double-sidedness of the

miniature world and writes of Cornell's glass bells in which the protecting glass "eliminates the possibility of contagion, indeed of lived experience, at the same time that it maximizes the possibilities of transcendent vision" (Stewart 1993, 68). The miniature thus creates "a tension or dialectic between inside and outside, between private and public property, between the space of the subject and the space of the social" (Stewart 1993, 68). Whether this poetics of the miniature manifests itself in Simic's detached vision of the residual traces of bygone Americana or in Waldrop's revisitation of wartime Germany, this perspective opens avenues of discovery as to how poetry can expand the potentialities and interrogate the contradictions of transnational cultural memory.

Works Cited

Baudelaire, Charles. 1972. *Les paradis artificiels*. Paris, FR: Le Livre de Poche.

Benjamin, Walter. 1999. *The Arcades Project.* Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Blair, Lindsay. 1998. *Joseph Cornell's Vision of Spiritual Order*. London, UK: Reaktion Books.

Dezeuze, Anna. 2004. "Unpacking Cornell: Consumption and Play in the Work of Rauschenberg, Warhol and George Brecht." 1-24. http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal2/acrobat_files/dezeuze_article.pdf (accessed June 15, 2015).

Foer, Jonathan Safran, ed. 2001. *A Convergence of Birds: Original Fiction and Poetry Inspired by the Work of Joseph Cornell.* New York, NY: DAP.

Hauptman, Jodi. 1999. *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Hough, Graham. 1978. *Selected Essays.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Jenkins, Louis. 1995. *Nice Fish: New and Selected Prose Poems.* Duluth, MN: Holy Cow! Press.

Krauss, Rosalind E. 1985. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

de Lautréamont, Comte. 2004. *Maldoror and the Complete Works of the Comte de Lautréamont.* Cambridge, MA: Exact Change.

Lehman, David, ed. 1996. *Ecstatic Occasions, Expedient Forms: 85 Leading Contemporary Poets Select and Comment on Their Poems.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Levy, Ellen. 2011. *Criminal Ingenuity: Moore, Cornell, Ashbery, and the Struggle Between the Arts.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Maulpoix, Jean-Michel. 1996. "La quatrième personne du singulier." In *Figures du sujet lyrique*, ed. Dominique Rabaté, 147-160. Paris, FR: PUF.

O'Doherty, Brian. 1973. *American Masters: The Voice and the Myth.* New York, NY: Random House.

Retallack, Joan, and Rosmarie Waldrop. 1999. "A Conversation with Rosmarie Waldrop." *Contemporary Literature* 40, no. 3:329-77.

Simic, Charles. 1992. *Dime-Store Alchemy: The Art of Joseph Cornell.* Hopewell, NJ: Ecco Press.

Solomon, Deoborah. 1998. *Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell.* New York, NY: Noonday Press.

Stein, Gertrude. 1967. *Look at Me Now and Here I Am: Writings and Lectures 1909-45.* London, UK: Penguin.

Stewart, Susan. 1993. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Waldrop, Rosmarie. 1981. *Nothing Has Changed.* Windsor, VT: Awede. unpag.

—. 1993. *Lawn of Excluded Middle.* Providence, RI: Tender Buttons.

—. 1998. *Split Infinites.* Philadelphia, PA: Singing Horse Press.

—. 1999. *Reluctant Gravities.* New York, NY: New Directions.

—. 2003. *Blindsight.* New York, NY: New Directions.

—. 2005. *Dissonances (if you are interested).* Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mandy Bloomfield is a Lecturer in English at Plymouth University, where she teaches modern and contemporary literature. She has articles on poetry and poetics in journals such as *Textual Practice*, *Contemporary Literature* and *Green Letters*. Her book *Archaeopoetics: Text, Image, History* will be published with Alabama University Press in 2016.

Daniela Daniele teaches American literature at the University of Udine. She wrote *Città senza mappa: paesaggi urbani e racconto postmoderno in America* (Dell'Orso, 1994); *The Woman of the Crowd: Urban Displacement and Failed Encounters in Surrealist and Postmodern Writing* (Rodopi, 2000); *Scrittori e finzioni d'America* (Bollati Boringhieri, 2000). She also edited *Undici settembre* (Einaudi, 2003) and a Don DeLillo issue of *Nuova corrente* (Tilgher, 2005).

Michel Delville teaches English and American literatures, as well as comparative literature, at the University of Liège, where he directs the Interdisciplinary Center for Applied Poetics. His recent publications include *The American Prose Poem* (1998), J.G. Ballard (1998), Hamlet & Co (2001; with Pierre Michel), *Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart, and the Secret History of Maximalism* (2005; with Andrew Norris), *Food, Poetry, and the Aesthetics of Consumption: Eating the Avant-Garde* (2009), and *Crossroads Poetics: Text, Image, Music, Film & Beyond* (2013).

Kornelia Freitag is the Chair of American Studies at Ruhr-University Bochum. She has published *Cultural Criticism in Women's Experimental Writing: The Poetry of Rosmarie Waldrop, Lyn Hejinian and Susan Howe* (2006) and has coedited *Another Language: Poetic Experiments in Britain and North America* (2008) and *Modern American Poetry: Points of Access* (2013). Her major areas of research are American poetry and cultural and literary theory.

Christine Gerhardt is Professor of American Studies at Bamberg University. She is the author of *A Place for Humility: Whitman, Dickinson, and the Natural World* (2014) and of a monograph on the Reconstruction period in American novels (*Rituale des Scheiterns: Die Reconstruction-*

Periode im amerikanischen Roman, 2002), and has coedited *Religion in the United States* (2011). Her research interests include Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, contemporary American poetry, ecocriticism, and mobility studies.

Michael Golston is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, where he teaches twentieth and twenty-first century poetry and poetics. He is the author of *Rhythm and Race in Modernist Poetry and Science* (Columbia University Press, 2008), winner of the 2008 Louis Martz Prize, and *Poetic Machinations: Allegory, Surrealism, and Postmodern Poetic Form* (forthcoming, Columbia University Press, 2015).

Jens Martin Gurr is the Chair of British and Anglophone Literature and Culture at the University of Duisburg-Essen. His major research areas are sixteenth- to twenty-first-century British literature, twentieth- and twenty-first-century American literature and culture as well as contemporary Anglophone fiction. More specifically, he focuses on urban literary and cultural studies. He has recently co-edited *Romantic Cityscapes* (2013) and *Understanding Complex Urban Systems: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Modeling* (2014).

Heinz Ickstadt, Professor of American Literature at the Kennedy Institute of North American Studies, Free University Berlin, emeritus since 2003. Published on late nineteenth-century American literature and culture, on the fiction and poetry of American modernism and postmodernism; also on the history and theory of American Studies. He edited and co-edited several books on American literature and culture, among them a bi-lingual anthology of American poetry and the first English/German edition of Pound's *The Cantos* (2012).

Evangelia Kindinger is Assistant Professor for American Studies at Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Germany. She has published *Homebound: Diaspora Spaces and Selves in Greek American Return Narratives* and co-edited *After the Storm: The Cultural Politics of Hurricane Katrina* (both 2015). Her areas of research and interests include American popular culture, Critical Whiteness Studies, and Cultural Studies.

Christian Klöckner is Assistant Professor of North American Literature and Culture at the University of Bonn. He received his PhD with a dissertation on terrorism and literature and has co-edited *Beyond 9/11: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Twenty-First U.S. American Culture* (2013), *American Studies/Shifting Gears* (2010), and *Orient and Orientalisms in US-American Poetry and Poetics* (2009). His current research interests include the cultures of debt and finance, nostalgia, and (post-) modernist poetry.

Simone Knewitz is Assistant Professor of American Studies at the University of Bonn. She is the author of *Modernist Authenticities: The Material Body and the Poetics of Amy Lowell and William Carlos Williams* (2014) and has co-edited, with Sabine Sielke and Christian Klöckner, the volume *Beyond 9/11: Transdisciplinary Perspectives on Twenty-First Century U.S. American Culture* (2013). Her current research project investigates property discourses in American culture from the 1840s to the present.

Rüdiger Kunow is Professor at the American Studies program at Potsdam University. He is a founding member of ENAS, the European Network in Aging Studies. He also served as speaker of various international research projects and was director of the interdisciplinary research project "Cultures in/of Mobility" at the School of Humanities Potsdam University. His major research interests and publications focus on cultural constructions of illness and aging, transnational American Studies and the South Asian diaspora in the U.S.

Diederik Oostdijk is Professor of English and American Literature at VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands and specializes in postwar American poetry. He is the author of *Among the Nightmare Fighters: American Poets of World War II* (2011) and co-edited *Tales of the Great American Victory: World War II in Politics and Poetics* (2006). Currently he is working on a book about the Cold War history of the Netherlands Carillon, a monument which the Dutch gave to the United States in the 1950s and which is situated in Arlington, Virginia.

Martina Pfeiler teaches American literature and culture at Ruhr-University Bochum. She has published *Sounds of Poetry: Contemporary American Performance Poets (2003)* and *Poetry Goes Intermedia: U.S.-amerikanische Lyrik des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts (2010).* She is currently working on her habilitation thesis *Ahab in Love: The Creative Reception of Moby-Dick in Popular Culture.*

Susanne Rohr is the Chair of American Studies at Hamburg University and the speaker of the graduate school "Realizations - Representations of the Shoah in Comparative Perspective." She is the author of *Comedy—Avant-Garde—Scandal: Remembering the Holocaust after the End of History* (together with Andrew S. Gross, 2010). Her major areas of research are semiotics and American pragmatism, and she has published on a broad range of topics in American literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

MaryAnn Snyder-Körber is currently Guest Professor for North American Literature at the John F. Kennedy Institute of the Freie Universität Berlin. She is the author of *Das weiblich Erhabene: Sappho bis Baudelaire* (2007) and has co-edited *The Pathos of Authenticity: American Passions of the Real* (2010), *Machine: Bodies, Genders, Technologies* (2012), and a special issue of the journal *Amerikastudien/American Studies* on "Trauma's Continuum: September 11th Reconsidered" (2011).

Brian Reed is Professor and Chair of English at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is the author of three books, most recently *Nobody's Business: Twenty-First Century Avant-Garde Poetics* (2013), and the co-editor of two essay collections, including *Modern American Poetry: Points of Access* (2013). A new book, *A Mine of Intersections: Writing the History of Contemporary American Poetry*, is forthcoming in 2016.

Sabine Sielke is Chair of North American Literature and Culture and Director of the North American Studies Program at the University of Bonn. Her publications include *Fashioning the Female Subject* (1997), *Reading Rape* (2002), the series *Transcription*, more than a dozen (co-)editions and essays on poetry and poetics, literary and cultural theory, gender and African American studies, popular culture, and the interfaces of cultural studies and the sciences.

Clemens Spahr is Assistant Professor of American Studies at Johann Gutenberg-University Mainz. He has been a visiting scholar at Princeton University and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of *Radical Beauty: American Transcendentalism and the Aesthetic Critique of Modernity* (2011). His second book *A Poetics of Global Solidarity: Modern American Poetry and Social Movements* is forthcoming from Palgrave Macmillan.