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Mez Breeze, *Human Readable Messages (Mezangelle 2003-2011)*
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> I think in the artistic field the immanent infinity is finally something like the infinity of the form itself. And what is infinity of the form itself? It's the possibility that the new form—the new possibility of the form—is in relation, in direct relation with the chaotic sensibility. And a new form is always a new access, a new manner, a new entry, a new access in the chaotic of sensibility. And so we can say that in the artistic field the creation of forms is really the movement of immanent infinity, is really an access of the infinity of the world as such.
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> Alain Badiou, *The Subject of Art,* 2005

Poetry Must Return to the Infinite!

In "Uncreativity as a Creative Practice," Kenneth Goldsmith writes, "if John Cage theoretically claimed that any sound can be music, then we logically must conclude that, properly framed, any language can be poetry."[1] Foreseeing the eminent destruction of writing itself, the *logical end* of the work of Cage (begun in poetry by Jackson Mac Low), is to turn everything into possible language material for poetry, "properly framed" (what is "proper" anyway?) One aspect of procedural and conceptual poetry is their tendency to subsume other available forms. We could call a conceptual poem which is a lead block or a video piece a poem, as long as it was considered language properly framed. Poetry named as such will continue to be called poetry, just like the economy in capitalism — with its infinite adaptability — will remain the economy. For instance, when the "fiscal cliff" as it became known loomed over the American people in late 2012, good economists knew, of course, that everything would be ok, that if anything the resilient growth-economy would not only withstand but perhaps even benefit from the post-cliff "tweaks" in taxation law and program cuts.

As it is with general capitalism (depressing as this may sound) so it is with poetry: even when it seems it can't go on, it keeps going on, and on. It is not enough to accept that poetry cannot die or to attempt that impossible task of trying to destroy it. Readers and writers of poetry must make it more than alive and remake it anew. Charles Bernstein, in "Attack of the Difficult Poems" (2011), argues that difficulty is no excuse. In January 2009, the US federal National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) reported startling finds: while more and more adult humans are reading, *less and less are reading poetry.* Why is this the case, especially now when more poets are writing poetry than at any time in history? Perhaps poetry is *not* so eternal. Perhaps poetry, like religion, is a transitional aspect of humanity that is to be slowly phased out as it acquires language. This would be my spontaneous, three-pronged counterattack: 1) poetry has lost its passion for the Real, 2) poetry is not committed to creating eternity in time, and 3) it is no longer committed to the infinite. In an age where it seems like there are almost as many poems as there are people, poetry must be forcibly remade from within itself in ways that profoundly unsettle us, and in ways that do not limit poetry to sophistical language-games.

For experiment's sake, let's rally around this affirmative cry: poetry must return to the infinite! In new and interesting ways, m[ez]ang.elle, Australian poet Mez (Mary-Anne) Breeze's code language, thinks through new ways of working with the infinite of language to make poetry, and to change the ontological ground of poetry itself (as Brian McHale might say). Even if the title claims otherwise, *Human Readable Messages* may not yet be appreciated by all human readers. In any case, many listeners did not consider many great ruptures in the history of music music.[2] For these *precise* reasons, work like this requires our attention. Its potential participation in the making of new artistic truths may (or may not) anticipate a future in which such work will be read by all. We may read signs sent back from the future of poetry.

> processes > conditions > potentials

"Content curation isn't art", Mez Breeze writes.[3] *HRM* is composed in Breeze's own created language m[ez]ang.elle (or "Mezangelle"). Published by Traumawein, an online publisher of "Digital Conceptualism/Poetry. Hybridbooks," it is minimally curated.

Written and organized chronologically, from June 2003 to May 2011, the duration of *HRM,* certainly a "long poem," spans eight years, a good part of the last decade. We can count labour time, even artistic labour, by the working day (the day being a basic temporal unit distended in modernist novels like Joyce's *Ulysses*, for instance). Long poems can partake in even longer rhythms, and compress and distend time accordingly. Very long long poems like Goldsmith's *Day* (Great Barrington, MA: The Figures, 2003) seem to confirm that difficulty is alive and well (and you thought modernist poetry was difficult!). If Rachel Blau DuPlessis's *Drafts* showcases (post-Pound) the *evidence* of curation (elisions, strikethroughs etc.), *HRM* either hides it or does not partake in curation at all.

Readable as the logical end of proceduralism, Mezangelle is codewurk, and codewurk, as scholar Rita Raley puts it, "makes exterior the inner workings of the computer."[4] It brings into appearance the language which lies underneath language. This is not the Real as such, since code does not resist signification, but you could say it sits closer to the edge of the Real. If "Content curation isn't art," content-presentation or content remixing *is.*[5] Un-curated, pure, we might even say the language of code is something like the undoing of form and content to bring forth change in the laws of appearance. Put in the language of Badiou, the creation of Mezangelle is something like an access of the infinity of the world, the immanent infinity of the world in the creation of new forms and a new superstructure of language through those forms. Codewurk is at once new, contradictory, pure, and dialectical:

> The impact of her unique codewurks [constructed via her pioneering net.language "mezangelle"] has been equated with the work of Shakespeare, James Joyce, Emily Dickinson, and Larry Wall.
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> >
> ■Thus, when I
> ■think about 'digital writing' I have to do with a doubled or better: a
> ■self-referential notion.
> >
> > self rif.f[lings+ego=arrowings]>construction ripplings
> >
> ■Aesthetically, digital writing - for me - is
> ■concerned with the processes, conditions and potential of writing in its

■pure sense.
>
>
>processes
>conditions
>potentionals

Processes, conditions and potentials form the crucial procedural triplet for an aesthetics of digital writing in its "pure sense." It is pretty much a postructuralist aesthetics. Processes are immanent and potentionals "ex-timate," you might say. All three defer the authority of the text itself to some other force potentially inside or perpetually outside of it. The triad works not to puncture time and create eternity but to work with time as it is. It exposes media to the point of its own finitude. Rosalind Krauss argues that post-medium work still strives for purity but without the support of media *per se*[6]*.* According to some "post" theories of media (post-convergence and the post-medium condition) new media subsumes other media, and thus the whole concept of "medium" and "media" itself has to be called into question. Code causes the effects of hybridity: pictures, animation or videos, almost anything digitally speaking, can be reduced (or expanded) to enormous strings of code, transferred from one device to another, downloaded onto your Smartphone, or made to appear again in failed transfers. The postmedium poem results in all media and all forms collapsing into the poem, via code*.* Yet this hybrid network of lenses, frames, distanciations and deferrals cannot elide the ontological poem, or force the infinity of the poem (which may even be captured in a single word). As Sally Evans has convincingly noted in an article published in *Cordite Poetry Review,* Mezangelle is almost holophrastic, both adjective, noun, and verb all at once, committing a kind of phrastic seizure, a freezing of the chain of signification itself, a collapse of code and message.[7] An instance of this can be found in the play on *Das Kapital* and majuscule/masculinity:

Date: Mon, 09 Feb 2004 08:01:22 +1100
To: arc.hive
From: "][mez]["

Subject: the poorest tiny MAPS [+MAN] [+meat]

the poorest tiny MAN [rd]

i am pauper MAN.

occular.king + door.feeding.queens
Das Kapitalisation.via.good.lexi[Def]cons

sickness MAPS rotten me[-ld]at.

Teledildonics

If Breeze is engaged in a resistance against the very idea of the poem by engineering the collapse of code and message, she is also openly and vehemently resistant to any kind of artistic categorization:

> In an effort to keep this manageable [lump me into one of your keeerazzzy glitch/net.art/web-point-infinity/relational & new aesthetically-defined "artistic" categories if you will] here's some [non-random + IMO relevant but not necessarily cohesive] points

There is a sense then that this "resistance" to categorization is equated with novelty and contradiction:

> 40. WHAT INSPIRES YOU? uber-newness. gaps and swells in conversations. contradictions [especially in ppl]. dedication. oddness. talent. passion. focus. fragments.

The "you" is an avatar. The avatarization of the poet is a return to the actuality of the virtual and the immanence of the virtual in the actual itself. The virtual is actual and ontologically (in)existent in the reality whose world it is supposed to represent, but the world it is supposed to represent ceases to exist at the sight of the virtual, and is eclipsed by the virtual itself. The virtual is *not* virtual by virtue of it *not* being actual: the virtual is where the *heterocosm,* the poem's worlds *are,* where they dwell. At this eclipsing of "virtual reality" there arises a kind of "Real-virtuality." The poet's avatarization parallels, interestingly, a return to the body in the guise of more advanced neurological technology. If you can use Teledildonics (dildos controlled by your sexy digital other), it may be possible to recreate the entire sex act through virtual domains. The Real-virtual will conduct the affairs even of things like bodies, but not necessarily emerge from them. Have

poets always been avatars? The logical end of the procedural and conceptual project is that avatars and their screen names are just as likely to write poems as living human breathing poets are, and why shouldn't we welcome this?

Mez Breeze's *HRM* presents some epistemological ruptures for the poet and thus opens itself up to all kinds of new ways of reading, knowledge and assessment, perhaps even beyond classically "literary" readings such as these. It enters the infinite of language, not to find eternity in time, but to rupture the laws of appearance. It is preoccupied with its headlong adventure into what lies beneath: the world of the powerfully in-human language of the computer.[8] The immanent infinities of this other world of code could pose a challenge today to thinkers and literary critics in how they might understand, process or, if need be, *intervene* in the condition of poetry, the language art. Even if we cannot see clearly ahead into the murky windshear of a coming storm, let's blow our ram's horns and storm the palisades! Let's all read electronic postmedium long poems in the twenty-first century!

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[1] Kenneth Goldsmith, "Uncreativity as a Creative Practice". World Wide Web, http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith/uncreativity.html (accessed 14 January 2013)

[2] Have a flick through Nicolas Slonimsky's *Dictionary of Musical Invective: Critical Assaults on Composers Since Beethoven's Time* (W.W. Norton and Company, 2000)

[3] See the url: *http://netwurker.livejournal.com/138975.html*.

[4] See Rita Raley, "Interferences: [Net.Writing] and the Practice of Codework" (2002)
http://www.electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/net.writing

[5] For a good technical understanding of Mez Breeze's procedures, see Rob Myer's review on furtherfield.org (4/6/2012).

[6] See Rosalind Krauss *Perpetual Inventory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2010)

[7] Sally Evans, "The Anti-Logos Weapon": Excesses of Meaning and Subjectivity in Mezangelle Poetry" *Cordite Poetry Review,* (1 Dec, 2011)

[8] Significantly, the first thing programmers learn how to write is "Hello World." I thank Amelia Dale for this piece of knowledge.