FCJ-071 Dada Redux: Elements of Dadaist Practice in Contemporary Electronic Literature

Scott Rettberg, The University of Bergen.

Introduction

2 Too often the discourse surrounding contemporary digital art and electronic literature treats these artifacts as if the most compelling aspects about them are their novelty, their very newness. One need look no further than the theme of the 2007 Digital Arts and Culture Conference, 'The Future of Digital Media Culture', to see this. Because our orientation is always forward towards the future, we are inclined toward a kind of myopia, and reluctance to look at the new through the lens of the past. With this orientation, there is furthermore a danger of placing too high a value on novelty at the expense of other aesthetic and ideological criteria. We see this in new media art discourse again and again. Turf wars regularly take place over 'firstness' – which designer was the first to use this technique, who was the first to integrate this type of programming into a new media artwork, etc. We are clearly in the midst of a global communication revolution that has changed the practice of daily life in far-reaching ways, and it is important to recognize, identify, and contemplate those aspects of our culture that are changing so rapidly. In the field of electronic literature, it is important to identify and analyze the media-specific aspects of individual works, to think about what in their formal nature as digital objects produced on and for the computer and/or network distinguishes them from literary objects produced in the past. In our rush towards these new horizons however we need also to look at electronic literature in the contexts not only of the history of computing and digital culture, but also in the context of the art and literary movements from which they emerge and with which they are in conversation. In this essay and in future work, I will argue that electronic literature can be best understood as a polyglot literary and artistic avant-garde movement that owes a great deal technically, aesthetically, and ideologically to various avant-garde movements of the twentieth century, beginning with Dada.

3 The Dada movement was a multimedia avant-garde art practice that began in Zurich during World War I and flourished in Berlin, Paris, and New York from 1916 until, roughly, 1920. Beginning as a disgusted response to the war and the blithely nationalistic bourgeois attitudes the Dadaists felt were at the root of the conflict, the Dadaists developed and refined the notion of 'anti-art' as an expression of dissatisfaction with the dominant contemporary ideology. Although the period in which Dada was an active organized cultural movement was quite short, its legacy is widespread and profound. Individual Dada artists including Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Max Ernst, Francis Picabia, Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, and others went on to influence many of the twentieth century's most important art movements, such as surrealism, modernism, and conceptual art. Some important elements of Dada art include the rejection of the dominant modes of distribution and valorization of cultural artifacts, the elevation of the importance of audience response to and interaction with the art object or event, interdisciplinarity and anti-disciplinarity, the abstract use of language and sound as material, an embrace of randomness as an aspect of artistic practice, the use of diverse 'at-hand' media and found objects, and the representation of the human body as man/machine hybrid or grotesque deformity rather than as idealized beauty.

4 This essay examines new manifestations of these elements of Dadaist practice in works of electronic literature produced in recent years. Ninety years after the original Dada movement, writers and artists use elements of Dadaist practice in the production of contemporary works of electronic literature. By comparing the art and activities of early Dada artists to the work of contemporary digital writers, the essay advocates a critical approach to new media writing that both accounts for the specific properties of literature produced for networked computer environments and examine these artifacts within the contextualizing historical framework of the avant-garde.

Decentered Movements

5 To consider electronic literature as an art, literary, or cultural 'movement' may simply be a heuristic or rhetorical strategy. We see a staggering variety of approaches to creating electronic literature in a multitude of forms and genres, produced by geographically dispersed individuals and groups, who rarely meet in person, and swear no allegiance to each other or any common ideology. Electronic literature is both interdisciplinary and in effect anti-disciplinary. If we begin to

think of electronic literature as 'a movement', we need to consider that it is a different type of movement than any we've seen before, unbound by common locality, art form, or adherence to any singular manifesto, a kind of Noah's Arc of literary forms filled with strange animals freely miscegenating and mutating at an extremely rapid rate.

6 Dada, the early twentieth century movement from which many of the other important twentieth century avant-garde movements emerged, was similarly diverse. Dada had not one manifesto, but dozens of them. While Dada had its origins in a specific locality during a specific point in time–1916 Zurich at the Cabaret Voltaire – it spread very quickly from that originary moment to other widespread localities including Berlin, Hanover, Cologne, New York, and Paris. To be a Dadaist it wasn't necessary to join a particular club or live in a particular city, but rather to identify oneself with an attitude towards the practice of art, or rather more specifically, anti-art. Dadaists ostensibly advocated the destruction of art practices and cultures that preceded their own. At the same time, the Dadaists were consummate ironists, who both recognized and declaimed with great vigor their own hypocrisy. To be Dadaist was to negate, to endorse an extreme vision of duality. In his first 'Dada Manifesto' published in 1918, Tristan Tzara writes,

7 > In documenting art on the basis of the supreme simplicity: novelty, we are human and true for the sake of amusement, impulsive, vibrant to crucify boredom … I write a manifesto and I want nothing, yet I say certain things, and in principle I am against manifestos, as I am also against principles … I write this manifesto to show that people can perform contrary actions together while taking one gulp of fresh air; I am against action, for continuous contradiction, and for affirmation too, I am neither for or against because I hate common sense. (Tzara, 2006; 1918: 3-6).

8 While out of context it may be difficult to 'make sense' of Tzara's hatred of 'common sense', it is important to realize what common sense implied at this point in history. Europe was just emerging from the fog of the World War I and the horrors of trench warfare. Much of a generation had been lost and as the war wound down, the streets of Europe's capitals were filled with the amputated and deformed victims of those atrocities. The casual embrace of nationalism and bourgeois 'common sense' were precisely what had led Europe to its abyss. Rationality, it seemed, had led to a world gone mad.

9 Tzara and the other Dadaists often and loudly declared 'DADA MEANS NOTHING'. In his first manifesto, Tzara runs through a laundry list of meanings for the word in different languages, none of which have a claim to signification greater than any of the others, 'the Kru Negroes call the tail of a holy cow Dada. The cube and the mother in a certain district of Italy are called: Dada. A hobby horse, a nurse both in Russian and Rumanian: Dada'. The word meant nothing and many things simultaneously. Tzara points out that it ultimately makes no difference what the word Dada means: 'Sensibility is not constructed from a word' (2006; 1918: 37). Emerging from Zurich, one of the few neutral centers during World War I, Dada was intended to be as non-aligned as possible. In contrast to the various flavors of national romanticism that had characterized much of the art world in the years preceding the war, the Dada were self-consciously anti-national and individualistic. Tzara writes: 'Dada was born of a need for independence, of distrust towards unity. Those who are with us preserve their freedom. We recognize no theory' (37). Dadaists are fundamentally anti-monist.

10 Tzara's manifesto argues that the one thing binding Dadaists together was a rejection of the values of European civilization of the day. The artistic production of the Dadaist demands to be understood as an act of destruction as much as an act of creation: 'there is a great negative work of destruction to be accomplished. We must sweep and clean. Affirm the cleanliness of the individual after the state of madness, aggressive complete madness of a world abandoned to the hands of bandits, who rend one another and destroy the centuries' (41). Given the general tenor of negativity in Tzara's manifesto towards groups generally and towards art as it was previously understood, it may be surprising that the Dadaists produced anything at all. Wouldn't the ultimate act of negativity have been to simply stop producing art, or perhaps even to set about destroying the art popular among the bourgeois by setting upon the galleries and museums with scissors and torches? Yet ultimately the Dada were not terrorists, they were artists, and if they were going to set about an act of destruction, they would do so through their art, which was conceived as anti-art. And while their impulse was towards radical individuality, by virtue of working within a shared community of practice, in which their works were presented in the context of and produced in

conversation with one another, certain similarities and trends in the artifacts they produced nonetheless emerged. The Zurich Dada were among the first movements to embrace abstract art, for instance, and their works present abstraction in forms ranging from Hans Arp's constructions, drawings and wood reliefs, to Marcel Janco's cardboard masks, to Tristan Tzara's simultaneous poem and Hugo Ball's sound poetry.

11 In comparison to a movement such as impressionism, the differences between the forms and techniques of the Dada were great. Writers, dancers, painters, costume-designers, satirists, and writers of manifestos were all presenting their work together. Hugo Ball, the organizer of the Cabaret Voltaire, was interested in realizing Wagner's idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk, 'the total work of art that would integrate various media into a multisensory whole' ([9] p23) but in Dadaist practice this whole would necessarily be a noisy and contradictory one, a whole in opposition to the idea of unities. Hans Arp describes a painting, Cabaret Voltaire (1916) by Marcel Janco, which captures the spirit of the gatherings:

12 > The people around us are shouting, laughing, gesticulating. Our replies are sighs of love, volleys of hiccups, moos and the miaowing of medieval Brutists. Tzara is wiggling his behind like the belly of an Oriental dancer. Janco is playing an invisible violin and bowing and scraping. Madame Hennings with a Madonna face, is doing the splits. Huelsenbeck is banging away nonstop on the great drum, with Ball accompanying him on the piano, pale as a chalky ghost (cited in Dickerman, 2006: 25).

13 Amidst such cacophony, new works of visual and written art were being presented to audiences. The charged atmosphere of the Cabaret Voltaire was in some sense an antidote to the staid, respectful atmosphere of art museums and galleries. High art, dance, burlesque, satire were all thrown together into one performance in an attempt to shatter the boundaries established by bourgeois culture. From the Dada perspective, interesting art was just as likely to take place on the street as it was inside the refined setting of a gallery, and art no more belonged to the bourgeois than it did to the prostitute or drunkard in the gutter. No one could claim that any particular context was the right one for art, and no one form of art could claim predominance over any other.

14 While it would be a folly to attempt to generalize the contexts in which electronic literature is produced and appreciated, we can note some similarities between the milieu in which electronic literature and Dada art are addressing their respective cultures. Most electronic writers and digital artists do make strong claims about their work as a way of making art, but they do so outside of conventional channels of cultural production. While mainstream literary institutions are largely ignorant of literary experiences made for the electronic media, authors and digital artists distribute their work independently on websites, small journals of their own creation, and internet mailing lists. While works of electronic literature are finding some audiences within the academic world, the literary mainstream largely regards electronic literature with either apathy or animosity. Electronic literature is distributed virally. Individual works move from screen to screen via links and mailing lists and performances. It shows no respect for the rituals and institutions of publishing houses, and needs no publishers. Formal boundaries between poetry and fiction, art and literature, documentary and satire, and genres of all kind break down. While carefully established niches such as classifications in the Dewey decimal system bound traditional literature, electronic literature defies simple categorization. Where books are discrete objects made for the single purpose of reading in quiet contemplation, works of electronic literature are unruly objects, presented in the cacophonous flow of networked communication, read alongside business correspondence, email messages, stock quotes, newspapers, weblogs, instant messages, Flash cartoons, and MySpace profiles, just another element in an unbroken stream of networked communications. Electronic literature has no home base or center. Electronic literature, like Dada, presents itself as an antidote to established literary and artistic conventions. It is both of literature and other than literature, art and anti-art.

15 Many authors of electronic literature would laugh at me if I told them they were part of a movement. They have made no pledges to one another, and often have radically different and opposed ideas of the nature of what they create and its purpose in the world. They are a diverse motley crew, who live in different parts of the world and adhere to different values. Yet they are a form of community. They respond to each other's work, they gather occasionally to fervently debate esoteric matters of art, and they correspond with each other. They borrow from

established traditions and disciplines yet work outside of them. Like Dada, electronic literature is a movement of fierce independents, who create their work outside the established constraints of literary cultures and economies.

Redefining Audience And Reception

16 Although Marcel Duchamp was only loosely affiliated with the Dada movement, his submission of 'Fountain', a urinal, under the name 'R. Mutt', to the Independents Exhibition in 1917 is considered one of the archetypal Dadaist acts. While in some respects the submission of the work, its rejection, and the publications of The Blind Man and RongWrong were merely an elaborate hoax, Duchamp's act was also fundamental in establishing the basic idea of conceptual art. The focus of the readymade was not the object itself, but its context and the reaction of others to it.

17 Duchamp was one of the directors of the Independent Artists Exhibition before he resigned in protest of the Mutt decision in 1917. The first issue of The Blind Man, the journal he set up with Henri-Pierre Roché and Beatrice Wood, was largely a celebration of that exhibition, albeit one that can also be read as the set-up of Duchamp's elaborate joke. Much of the rhetoric of The Blind Man, no. 1 is familiar from contemporary discourse surrounding digital culture. The discussion of both the exhibition and the role its publishers conceived for The Blind Man itself encourage a new form of distribution and critical commentary for art:

> 18 'What is the use of an 'Exhibition of Independents,' said some. 'Under present conditions, new talent can easily gain recognition through the picture galleries. They are many and their managers are open-minded'.

19 Let us quote from the programme:

> 20 On the one hand we have the frank statement of the established art societies that they cannot exhibit all the deserving art because of a lack of space. On the other hand such exhibitions as take place at private galleries must, by their nature, be formed from the ranks of artists who are already more or less known; moreover, no one exhibition at present gives an idea of contemporary American art in its ensemble, or permits comparison of the various directions it is taking, but shows only the work of one man or a homogenous group of men. The great need, then, is for an exhibition, to be held at a given period every year, where artists of all schools can exhibit together– certain that whatever they send will be hung and that all will have an equal opportunity (Roché, 2006: 148).

21 The Blind Man no.1 praised the Exhibition of Independents for its 'no jury' system, which would make it possible to remove the official layers of mediation between the works, the artists, and their audiences. The Blind Man itself was conceived of as a communication link 'between the pictures and the public–and even between the painters themselves … He will give to those who want to understand the explanations of those who think they understand' (Roché, 2006:150). The Exhibition of Independents was framed by The Blind Man as an opportunity to facilitate unmediated expression and unmediated communication between artists and their audiences. Art criticism was understood not to be the sole province of professional art critics, but open the response of anyone who cared to express an opinion.

22 This conception of the Exhibition of Independents has a great deal in common with the way that works of electronic literature and digital are presented and received in contemporary digital culture. Although there are examples of curated or juried exhibitions of electronic literature, the majority of new works are first published on the web and presented to their audiences before any such selection occurs. And while critics and reviewers will occasionally sound off on these works, the first and most direct response comes from the audience itself. It is not unusual for electronic literature to be first presented on weblogs with open comments, or to be the subject of chat discussions and bulletin board conversations, well before it is reviewed in any conventional print publication. Most contemporary artists working the web sign their work not discreetly in the corner of a painting, but with an email address, which encourages the reader to respond to the work, and to respond to its author. While both the print publishing industry and the contemporary art industry have built walls around the author and the artist, presenting them untouchable geniuses, as if they lived in an entirely different universe from their audience, authors of electronic literature know no such boundaries, and mix freely with their audiences. While the author is living, why should it be otherwise?

Reuse, Reinterpret, Remix

23 In addition to presenting survey questions that the audience of the Independents Exhibition could respond to, The Blind Man had 'Suggestions' for less conventional ways that the audience could respond to individual artworks:

> Write about the Indeps, or about any special work in the Exhibition.
>
> A dramatic story of less than one hundred words.
>
> A comic story of less than one hundred words.
>
> A dream story of less than one hundred words.
>
> A quatrain, or a limerick.
>
> 24 A song (words and music) (Roché, 2006: 150)

25 The Blind Man suggested that rather than constructing a dry academic treatise, one legitimate mode of responding to a work of art is by creating a new work of art. This idea is in keeping with the artistic practices of many of the Dada. The Dada were among the first to embrace collage as an art form, and regularly used artworks in one medium as a basis for a new artwork in another medium.

26 In many ways, the work of the Dada presaged our current era of 'remix culture', in which it is common practice to sample from, reference, and build upon previous works in the creation of a new one. This practice is indeed virtually built into the practice of programmed network art of various kinds on a material level. Programmers regularly share and reuse portions of their code with each other. In the world of kinetic poetry and other kinds of animated texts, we often see artists borrowing not only texts and images from other artists, but also snippets of code used to achieve a particular effect. One example of the ways that electronic literature authors borrow from and remix different types of materials is Megan Sapnar's Pushkin Translation (Sapnar, 2000), published on Poems that Go. The work presents a poem by Aleksandr Pushkin in Russian, translated by Dimitry Brill. As the reader moves the cursor over the poem, the text is revealed in English and read aloud in Russian. In the background, a Russian folk song recorded by the Ospipov State Russian Folk Orchestra plays. The work includes a long titles sequence that gives credit not only to the author, the translator, and the musical performers, but also FreaKaZoid, a Flash programmer from whom Sapnar got some help on the actionscript implementation. The designer Sapnar responded to Pushkin's work by remixing the author's text with the work of several other authors and performers, both remediating the original poem and creating a new work in the process, providing a new way of reading the original.

27 A direct example of an audience responding to a work of net art by creating other works of net art is Olia Lialina's My Boyfriend Came Back From the War (Lialina, 1996). Other artists have remixed Olia Lialina's original work, a short hypertext presented in HTML frames that describes a reunion and confrontation between two lovers, in a variety of forms. The audience finds links on Olia Lialina's site to the original and to twenty different remixes produced in the decade subsequent to its first publication including, a VRML version, a text-only version, an animated gif, an action alert version, a Castle Wolfenstein version, video, RealAudio, paper and gauche, a comic version, t-shirts, a Don Quixote version, and others. The audience of Lialina's project responded to the original by remediating and reusing it as a framework for other works of art.

28 Remixing was also the guiding principle of the Mystery House Taken Over project (Montfort et al, 2004). Mystery House is an early and rudimentary graphic interactive fiction by Ken and Robert Williams made for the Apple II and published in 1980 by On-Line Systems, which later became Sierra. In 1987, Mystery House was released in the public domain, leaving others free to use and modify it as they wished. With a 2004 Turbulence commission, Nick Montfort, Dan Shiovitz, and Emily Short reverse-engineered Mystery House and re-implemented it in INFORM, a free language for interactive fiction development, and released it in a kit that made it simple for others to modify and re-implement the game. Eight authors were then commissioned to produce eight new works from the kit. The resulting works are all radically different, yet each retains many aspects of the original game. The kit remains available on the site for anyone who wants to try his or her hand at remixing Mystery House.

From Response to Interaction

29 The second issue of The Blind Man largely served to foment the controversy surrounding the rejection of R. Mutt's 'Fountain'. While Duchamp and Roché were clearly playing an elaborate joke on the art world writ large, in their defense of 'Fountain,' they also provide a clear explanation of the idea of 'non-visual' art that would guide Duchamp's work for the rest of his career and establish the idea of conceptual art. In defending 'Fountain', The Blind Man argues that,

30 Whether or not Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has not importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view–created a new thought for that object (Duchamp et al, 2006: 154).

31 The 'Fountain' event made it clear that the work of art could not be understood as an artifact in isolation from the audience that receives it. The artist should be understood not as a creator of well-made objects, but rather a creator of contexts in which to see things differently. The art of the 'Fountain' lay not in the appropriated object itself but in the thought to place it in art gallery. Furthermore, The Blind Man itself can be understood to be part of the artwork, as can the subsequent controversy. What makes Duchamp's readymades compelling and strange is that they are radically re-contextualized in the gallery, and made available for us to see them anew. The audience of 'The Fountain' is as much or more a part of the art as the object itself. It is a performance in which the viewer is one of the players. This integration of the audience into not only reception, but also effectively the production of the experience of the artwork is a common aspect of much electronic literature and other networked art forms. Similarly, the reader of a work of electronic literature is not a passive consumer, but an interacting participant in the work.

Language As Abstract Art

32 Hugo Ball, one of the principle organizers of the Cabaret Voltaire, is today remembered as the originator of Lautgedichte, or sound poetry, which he announced in his diary on June 23, 1916 (Dickerman, 2006: 27). Ball performed three sound poems 'Seepferdchen und Flugfische', 'Karawane', and 'Gadji beri bimba', onstage that evening while dressed in absurd cardboard Cubist costume. Ball's Lautgedichte is distinguished from other forms of poetry in that he constructed the poems not of words, but of abstract phonemes. By removing the question of denotation from the poems, Ball's sound poems focus on the musicality of the human voice. From Ball's perspective, these poems represented a way to reject the way that language was used in contemporary culture, and to create authentic form of expression. Ball described his reasoning in program notes he read before he performed he performed the poems:

> 33 In these phonetic poems, we renounce the language that journalism has abused and corrupted. We must return to the innermost alchemy of the word, we even give up the word, to keep for poetry its last and holiest refuge. We must give up writing secondhand: that is, accepting words (to say nothing of sentences) that are not newly invented for our own uses (cited in Dickerman, 2006: 28).

34 Ball's argument here anticipates the argument of feminist philosophers such as Cixous who argue that Western languages themselves are so phallocentric as to contribute to oppression of women. In Ball's case, he was rejecting the languages that had been used to bring about the conditions that led to World War I. Ball encouraged us to 'Spit out the words: the dreary, lame, empty language of men in society. Simulate gray modesty or madness. But inwardly be in a state of tension. Reach an incomprehensible, unconquerable sphere' (cited in Dickerman, 2006: 29). Ball's theorization of sound poetry is consistent with the Dadaist impulse towards radical individuality. It also anticipates the larger twentieth century movement of sound poetry, and a new way of treating language as an abstract material that can signify purely through sounds, phonemes, or shapes, in addition to or instead of signifying through denotation. Another related experiment conducted at the Cabaret Voltaire was Tristan Tzara's simultaneous poem 'L'amiral cherche une maison à louer', a poem in French, German, and English. While the poem has comprehensible meaning in printed form, telling a parable about a soldier searching for a place on the home front, when it was read by Tzara with Marcel Janco and Richard Huelsenbeck at the Cabaret Voltaire, the three simultaneous voices clashed, overloading the listener with multilingual input.

35 A number of works of recent electronic literature similarly reject the idea that language should primarily be considered a device for the transmission of semantic meaning. Rather, like Ball, they

treat language as debased, as an abstract material ripe for reinvention. Talan Memmott's recent work The Hugo Ball (Memmott, 2006a) is a direct appropriation and interpretation of Ball's 'Gadji beri bimba', made in Flash and published in the online journal Drunken Boat. Memmott's work literarily presents the online reader with an 'incomprehensible, unconquerable sphere'. In this work, a murky face appears within a circular frame. When the reader mouses over the face, the Hugo Ball recites the words of Ball's poem in a randomized order while eerie generated music plays in the background. The face actually makes the correct movements for each sound as it says them, and the words also appear in type on the screen. Memmott complicates the presentation of 'Gadji beri bimba', providing several layers of linguistic signification for Ball's nonsense poem.

36 Jim Andrews' work Nio (2006a)> presents the reader with a complex aesthetic experience that makes use of phonemes and letters but not of words. Andrews's piece is a cross between a sound poem, kinetic visual art, and an interactive musical instrument. In two verses, Andrews provides the reader with two different ways of mixing clusters of letters, each of which have a musical voice track attached to them. In the first verse, those clusters of letters then do a kind of animated dance in the center of a circle as the voice loop they signify is sung. The loops are layered on top of each other, allowing the interactor to compose a shifting doo-wop melody/animation. In an accompanying essay, 'Nio and the Art of Interactive Audio for the Web' (Andrews, 2006b)>, Andrews explains that he's 'trying to synthesize and transform image, sound, and text, not simply juxtapose them. I seek some sort of critical mass to fuse them'. He describes the work as a 'synthesis of literacies'. In Nio and in much of his other work, including his visual poetry, Andrews attempts to rethink the relationship between poetry and language, creating interactive poetic experiences that utilize texts of various kinds that don't rely on words to provoke a response from the reader. Letters in motion and the human voice alone, devoid of explicit denotation, can impart a great of emotional and semantic content. Nio is proof of the idea that poems needn't be composed of words in order to be poetic and evocative.

37 Maria Mencia's Birds Singing Other Birds' Songs (Mencia, 2006) >is a Flash work that presents its interactor with twelve play and stop buttons, each of which activates an animation of a bird presented as an animation composed of typography, spelling out the sounds that each bird makes. The bird songs are not themselves sung by birds, but rather by human singers. Just as in Nio, the interactor can select different combinations of the birds. Like Hugo Ball's 'Karawane', which was intended to remind its listener of the sound of elephants in motion, Birds Singing Other Birds' Songs is a work that uses the human voice to invoke nature. All three of the new media works I've mentioned here exemplify a trend common to many works of electronic literature. Just as in the sound poetry of the Dada, these artists are continuing to explore the abstract use of spoken and written language to create aesthetic experiences that signify in unconventional ways.

Random Acts of Creativity

38 Tristan Tzara famously described the recipe for a Dadaist poem in the July/August 1920 issue of Littérature as follows:

> **TO MAKE A DADAIST POEM:**
>
> Take a newspaper.
>
> Take a pair of scissors.
>
> Choose an article in the newspaper of the length you wish to give your poem.
>
> Cut out the article.
>
> Then cut out carefully all the words that make up the article and put them in a bag.
>
> Shake gently.
>
> Then remove each cutting one after the other in the order in which they emerge from the bag.
>
> Copy conscientiously.
>
> The poem will be like you.
>
> 39 You will now become 'an infinitely original writer with a charming sensitivity, although still misunderstood by the common people (Tzara, 2006b).

40 I don't think that Tzara wrote 'the poem will be like you', entirely in jest. Rather, this cut-up poem was likely to result in a reflection of the same sort of 'you' that was Time magazine's person of the year in 2006, the you formed from the popular consciousness, rearranged at random. The cut-up

technique is here clearly posited as an antidote to the romantic (bourgeois) notion of the author as inspired, 'infinitely original' genius. Tzara offered the method as a way for absolutely anyone to become a poet. The cut-up method has been embraced and refined by various movements and individual writers since. To the surrealists, it represented a mystical method of accessing the subconscious, and to William S. Burroughs a way of 'producing accidents' that could lead to fruitful discoveries (Burroughs, 2003: 91).

41 In his Dada: Art and Anti-Art, Hans Richter describes chance as one of the essential elements of the Dada movement. He describes chance as 'a magical procedure by which one could transcend the barriers of causality and conscious volition, and by which the inner eye and ear become more acute, so that new sequences of thoughts and experiences made their appearances' (Richter, 1985: 57). Richter attributes to this attitude of embracing chance the wide variety of innovative new forms created by the Dadaists.

42 One of the distinguishing aspects of art objects made for the new media is that they are often what Lev Manovich describes as variable media. Manovich writes 'a new media object is not something fixed once and for all, but something that can exist in different, potentially infinite versions' (2001: 36). A powerful way to take advantage of the variable nature of new media objects is to introduce an element of indeterminability into the operations of a given work. In Cybertext, Espen Aarseth distinguishes between determinate and indeterminate texts: 'A text is determinate if the adjacent scriptons of every scripton are always the same; if not, the text is indeterminate' (1997: 63). Because computers provide a variety of ways to easily select at random and quickly arrange material within a random or preconceived structure, and because the global network offers artists such a wide variety of data sources to choose from, authors of electronic literature have embraced and refined the cut-up technique and used randomization in a wide variety of ways.

43 Noah Wardrip-Fruin, David Durand, Brion Moss, and Elaine Froehlich's Regime Change (2006) is described by its authors as a textual instrument. The work initially opens up with an April 2003 news story about the bombardment of Iraq in which George W. Bush says that Saddam Hussein may be dead or severely injured. The reader can then select certain highlighted phrases, which are linked to an n-gram search for similar phrases in the Warren Commission report on the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The reader can then cut and paste phrases back and forth between the two documents. Because the n-gram search offers a certain level of logical correspondence between the phrases from the news article and the Warren Commission report, the result of the reader's cutting and pasting is a new document that mixes the two disparate documents together in a nearly coherent fashion. This is a cut-up that uses a statistical algorithm to offer a degree of control over what otherwise might be a completely random process of generating a new text. While the interface of this work is far from intuitive, Regime Change nonetheless offers a compelling experience of the cut-up technique, and is a strong demonstration of the power of mixing the cut-up technique with a less-random rhetorical intent. In this case the work demonstrates the inconsistency of President George W. Bush's casual desire to assassinate the leader of another sovereign nation with the revulsion with which the USA responded to the assassination of one of its leaders.

44 In comparison to Regime Change, Nanette Wylde's Storyland (2006) uses a far simpler mode of random text generation, though the short stories the program generates are often quite accessible and amusing. To operate the work, the reader presses a 'new story' button. Using a simple 'mad-lib' style technique of selecting stock characters, situations and phrases from a database and delivering them into a structured six-paragraph template, Storyland delivers its readers a new combinatorial story every time the button is pushed.

45 Jason Nelson's This is How you Will Die (2006) >is a Dada slot machine par excellence. The morbid wordtoy, winner of the 2006 Drunken Boat Panliterary Award for Web Wrt, presents its reader with a slot machine interface. The player has demise credits which he or she may use for a 'death SPIN'. Rather than cherries and oranges, the spinning reels reveal five segments of unfortunate destiny, such as 'Driving a Kansas highway, watching hail storms whiten knee high wheat fields/ A long dormant virus attacks your brain, and within twelve hours you forget breathing/ and die sing pop songs you hate, because the lyrics make you giggle/ Before your body is cremated, necrophiliacs sex your body with a two-card canasta/ Your death is reported by tenure seeking academics as

being suspiciously modernist' (Nelson, 2006). Certain combinations of the reels result in bonus messages, which reward the player with extras, such as a fatal blood disease. Nelson's work utilizes randomness to reflect absurdly on the arbitrary nature of human mortality.

Use of Found Materials And Collage

46 Closely related to the Dadaists' embrace of chance and randomness was their impulse to integrate a wide variety of everyday objects and materials, found objects, bits of newspapers, photos from magazines, and so on into their art in the form of constructions, photomontage, and collage. The artists of the Berlin Dada, including George Grosz, Raul Hausman, Johannes Baader, and Hannahh Hoch, regularly integrated printed matter into collages to both absurdist and politically motivated effects. Hannah Hoch's works, such as 'Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch in Germany' (1919-1920) and 'Heads of State' (1918-1919), often recontextualized photographs of Weimar Republic leaders and other contemporary politicians from magazines in order to parody them. Kurt Schwitter's various Merz assemblages often mixed a wide variety of media, often integrating cast materials he found on around the house and on the street. Schwitter's Merzbau projects, which he worked on from the 1920s until 1937 (Dietrich, 2006: 173), were collages in the form of three-dimensional sculptures that he constructed in his studios. Odd angular constructions built with a wide variety of materials, the Merzbau sculptures were also autobiographies in sculptural form. Dorothea Dietrich describes Schwitters' Merz Column (circa. 1923), an installation including paper, cardboard, metal, plater, wood, crocheted cloth, cow horn, laurel branch, and wall sconce on wood as,

47 > … clearly autobiographical. The top documented Schwitter's family life with the poignant death mask of his infant son; it is surrounded by toys and a selection of organic materials, including a twig and dried flowers, and a small picture frame that leans against the sculpture, as well as objects with either smooth or irregular edges that are more three-dimensional and organic looking than the materials below on the base. There Schwitters pasted down and affixed flyers, announcements and papers printed with large numbers or letters–all memorabilia produced by that printing press that document his life as a member of the international avant-garde (2006: 174).

48 Schwitter's Merzbau installations were not stable entities that could ever be understood as completed. The artist kept adding to, building upon, pasting over, and modifying each of the three works until he was forced by circumstances to move to another location, where he then started a new Merzbau. Like many Dada works, the Merzbau sculptures worked against the idea that the practice of art should result in a fixed, marketable commodity. Rather, the ever-changing sculptures had their own lives and deaths, which corresponded to changes in the life of the artist.

49 In their always-incompletedness, the Merzbau sculptures have a great deal in common with digital textual forms, such as weblogs, which never reach a completed state but which are always in a fluid process of transformation. The process also calls to mind the construction of network hypertext projects such as Mark Amerika's Grammatron (1998), Robert Arellano's Sunshine '69 (1996), and William Gillespie, Scott Rettberg, and Dirk Stratton's The Unknown (1998), all of which were distributed as ongoing hypertext narratives that changed over a period of years as their authors modified them, while they were being read by their audience. The lack of fixity and the embrace of fluidity is one of the distinguishing characteristics of many network narratives.

50 The collage technique was used for different reasons in the hands of different Dada artists. While Hoch's works were explicitly political, in Schwitter's work, the use of multimedia collage more often results in a sense of art emerging from the materials of everyday life. Max Ernst's collages and photomontages were often cryptic or metaphoric, featuring for instance human body parts merged with those of birds, or human arms springing from the body of a biplane.

51 Many works of contemporary electronic literature and digital use collage techniques of various kinds. Collage coheres very well with the fragmented nature of discourse on the network. Many writers such as those involved in the Flarflist collective are trying for instance to harness Google and other search engines in the production of texts, integrating search results with constraints of various kinds to produce poetry, stories, and plays that are written not by any single individual but are rather harvested from the many streams of discourse flowing on the network. There is a sense that the seemingly infinite pool of texts on the network, when combined with search technologies, enables artists with a way to access and piece together dispatches from the zeitgeist. The 3by3by3 poetry blog (Newman, 2006-2007) is a collective project driven by a simple constraint and by

Google News. Authors contributing to the project select three stories from the current day's stories on the front page of Google News, and using only words which appear in the first few paragraphs of each story, build a poem of three stanzas, with three lines in each stanza. The project marries the random and arbitrary nature of a given day's events with the agency of the individual poet. The poems that result are both timely and absurd. Born Magazine's You and We, a Collective Experiment (Chevrel et al, 2002) is a project that pairs images contributed by users with text contributed by users, synched to soundtrack. While the image/text combinations are completely arbitrary, it is perhaps a symptom of the human impulse towards closure that there often seems to be a logic and intentionality to the pairings.

52 One powerful effect of the collage technique is that by splicing together different types of discourse and re-contextualizing them, we are able to see patterns we might otherwise not have noticed. Talan Memmott's Self Portrait(s) [as Other(s)] (Memmott, 2006c) is a recombinant Flash work that is based on the self-portraits and biographies of a variety of famous artists. In one pane of the work, a mashed-up portrait appears, borrowing elements from the faces of several different artists. On the right, a short biography appears, also splicing together different details from the biographies of several different artists, providing us with often-absurd anecdotal life histories of the resulting artist(s). What's remarkable about the work is how these mashed-together biographies read as nearly sensible. The work also gives us quotes about art from each of the artist's mouths that when we mouse over them. While the quotes are attributable to individual artists, when reading the texts it seems as if any artist would have been as likely as any other to have made the same observation, be it 'Vincent Cezanne' or 'Paul Monet'. In reading these textual collages of artist biographies, we begin to understand that the making of 'the artist' is not so much a matter of individual genius as it is a process of constructing a formulaic discourse around the life of a given painter.

Bodies, Machines, and the Grotesque

53 The group of artists that assembled under the Dada banner in Berlin did so in the city that most visibly bore the scars of World War I, the capital of the defeated Germany. The Berlin Dada, founded in 1917 by Richard Huelsenbeck, who had returned from Berlin from Zurich, where he had been among the crowd of the Cabaret Voltaire, was the wing of Dada that responded most directly to the consequences of war and to the political disorder of postwar Germany. The products of their movement are strikingly cynical, ironic, and grotesque. In his 'First Dada Speech', Huelsenbeck took a characteristically contradictory position against pacifism, 'We were for the war, and we were still for the war. Things have to collide: the situation so far is nowhere nearly gruesome enough' (cited in Doherty, 2006: 87). This statement, like any Dadaist proclamation, can't be taken entirely at face value. The war had exposed the consequences of nationalism, in the form of death and deprivation. The results of the war were clearly grotesque. The artworks of the German Dada were intended not to continue the war itself, but to continue to make visible the grotesque.

54 The artist George Grosz wrote in 1924, retrospectively,

55 > What did the Dadaists do? They said what does it matter what art is produced ... a sonnet from Petrach ... or Rilke? What does it matter if you spend your time gold-plating the heels of boots or carving Madonnas? People are being shot. There is mass profiteering. And hunger. People are being lied to. What is the point of art? Was it not the height of deception that they were pulling wool over our eyes with these 'sacred' works? Was it not utterly ridiculous that they were taking themselves seriously? (Grosz, 2006: 310)

56 The Berlin Dadaists were at war on bourgeois complacency. The art of the Berlin Dada is among the most shocking and purposefully disturbing the movement produced. Their art was not intended to mollify, but to offend, to serve as a kind of anti-kitsch.

57 Many of the Dada artists dramatized the fragmentation or destruction of the human body, and in particular the relationship between human bodies and machines. The paintings of Otto Dix offer us nightmares of deformity. In 'Skat Players' or 'Card Playing War Cripples', (1920), three deformed amputees play card around the table, one wearing a military uniform and medals, another wearing a businessman's suit, all three of them missing various limbs and parts of their faces. All three of them also seem half man/half machine, with peg legs, mechanical arms, missing or glass eyes,

bolts and hinges sticking out of their half-shaved heads, a hinged jaw, and an absurd ear phone on a cord in place of a missing ear. Several of Raul Hausmann's works also focus on the theme of man-machine hybrid. His 'Mechanical Head (The Spirit of Our Age)' (1919) features a head from a hairdresser's dummy with attachments including a crocodile wallet, a ruler, a pocket watch mechanism, camera parts, a typewriter cylinder, a segment of measuring tape, a collapsible cup, the number 22, nails, and a bolt. The assemblage suggests a post-industrial form of humanity, which can't be separated from the measurements, machines, and devices, to which it is constantly attached.

58 The paintings and collages of Max Ernst also often feature bodies that have been dissected, segmented, or modified in a variety of ways. His photomontage 'The Anatomy as Bride' (1921), for instance, features a woman's a head and shoulders; her body laid over and connected to a machine of some kind. Her face is half metal, her throat an open anatomy drawing. One of her arms is amputated and connected to the machine with a pipe. The other is a prosthetic device. Several of Ernst's other works include beautiful venus-like women whose heads have been removed. Man Ray's photograph 'Dadaphoto' (1920) later titled 'Portmanteau' presents us with a nude woman wearing a black sock that nearly merges into the background, referencing amputation. In front of her is a paper cutout on a stand of a woman's shoulders, arms, and head. The face on the cutout is a kind of simple Munch-like scream.

59 In almost every instance, when we encounter a representation of the human body in Dada works, it is a fragmented body, a body that has in some way been deformed, merged with a machine, or sliced up. In his essay, 'The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture' (Biro, 1994) Matthew Biro theorizes that Hausmann and the other Berlin Dadaists anticipated the concept of the cyborg, although they never used the term in writing. The fragmentation and deformation of the human body in the work of the Dada was both a direct response to the horrors of modern warfare and the legions of amputees who came home from the battlefield, and in keeping with the larger project of contesting the bourgeois notion that works of art should necessarily be aesthetically pleasing. The Dada contested the notion that when the human body is represented, it should be a beautiful body. The Dada were producing art immediately after a war in which human bodies had not been treated delicately, but had been objectified, de-humanized, and torn apart. Dada bodies represent consequences.

60 The fragmentation and deformation of the human body is likewise a prominent theme in many works of electronic literature. The Dada presented us with the post World War I automaton tottering off the battlefield and into everyday bourgeois life. In the current period when representing the human form as fragmented of deformed, electronic literature writers are responding both to what Talan Memmott, in Lexia to Perplexia (2006b) has termed the 'cyborganization' of human identity within the network apparatus, and, like the Dada, to the dehumanization involved in the practice our current wars. The representation of the human body and the corresponding fragmentation of identity in contemporary electronic literature is a topic that deserves a more thorough treatment in another forum. For the purpose of comparing the representation of bodies in the Dada to the same in contemporary electronic literature, I'll only briefly discuss some of the work of Alan Sondheim here, though the body is thematized compellingly by other digital writers, notably in the work of Shelley Jackson.

61 It is difficult to summarize Alan Sondheim's project. An archive of Sondheim's Internet Text (1994-February 2, 2006) was recently published in the Electronic Literature Collection, Volume One, but it is virtually impossible to read his work as a whole. His work is not in fact a work in the conventional sense of the word; it is not a body of writing that has discrete and inviolate parts, but a mammoth shifting corpus of writings, programs, videos, and communications of various kinds. Sondheim performs his texts on the internet via a variety of means, via a weblog, a directory and most notably on email lists. The nature of Sondheim's textual output ranges from straightforward observations and philosophical musings to highly processed texts that have been subject a variety of modifications. Sondheim is constantly digging back into the body of texts he has already created to harvest new recombined texts from it. In a 2001 article published on TEXT, Sondheim described his process,

62 > I'll very rarely let anything alone–I don't really care how the text is produced–so I'll go back into it and rearrange things, making the text say things or lead the reader in new and different directions.

> In other words, the commands are catalysts for text production–not designed to deliver the final text, but to deliver a textual body I can then work on, operate upon (Sondheim, 2001).

63 Sondheim's body of work is the textual equivalent of one of Schwitter's Merzbau sculptures. Sondheim's work is never complete, but always a process. It's interesting that he describes his work method in terms of working on, operating on, a body. In practice, he both destroys and reconstructs his own texts. His practice itself sometimes comes across as a form a violence, for instance when a staid progressive mailing list, for instance, finds its civilized political discourse interrupted by an email from 'Jennifer Disgust' with the subject line: KILL ME. In the same sense as Dada art could be understood as anti-art, Sondheim's works are a kind of anti-spam. Rather than encouraging us to buy Viagra or invest in Nigeria, more often they will remind of us of the condition of corpses in Kosovo, Iraq, and Auschwitz. Many of his textual and video works thematize the body as subject to violence of various kinds. Sondheim often writes from the perspective of a variety of stock characters, such as Nikuko, Jennifer, and Doctor Leopold Konniger. These characters are often subject to and subjecting each other to degrading forms of violence. Like the Dada, Sondheim is attempting to make visible the real violence that is often made to seem virtual and obscured by contemporary media culture. In a recent interview with Simon Mills, Sondheim describes his project as being one of revealing the structure of the virtual:

64 > I'm trying to diagram the virtual as a tool eliminating the other–the absence of corpses for example, of Iraqi–even our own dead and wounded. So the situation might be written (self-virtual)–we ourselves are becoming-virtual as a result of this absence. It's like a tag that has no place to 'sit.' The instability that occurs through this can be politically manipulated–i.e. the war is not a war, the war is safe, the war is clean, everyone loves US. I think this is one of the reasons that the so-called 'insurgency' (which it isn't of course) emphasizes brutality–that gets through, can't be ignored or controlled by the military (Mills, 2006).

65 One recent strand of Sondheim's video work uses poser and other modeling programs and video effects to contort bodies into a variety of twisted, abnormal configurations. Much of his video work mixes the virtual with the actual, moving bodies back and forth between virtual and real realms. For instance, in Sondheim's short video 'Avatar Duet' (2006a) the dancers Maud Liardon and Foofwa d'Imobilite perform a dance based on poser avatars moved by motion capture, in this case transferring the twitching, angular movements of virtual avatars back to human bodies. In other videos, such as 'Kali Dance Avatar', (Sondheim, 2006b) Sondheim subjects the avatars to 'unperformable' contortions, such as having heads swap places with arms, legs shifting to necks. In the video WolfTC (World Trade Center) (2007) Sondheim layers a video of an animated wolf avatar, whose body is literally coming apart from the inside out, hide peeling off of twisting bones, over an eerie video of the World Trade Center site, as a frenetic soundtrack plays. Sondheim's video work underscores his theme that what we so often think of in only abstract terms, targets underneath our smart bomb sites, virtual enemies in faraway places, have actual bodies and actual form. The wolf is at our door. Sondheim links the tormented forms of the virtual to the actual sufferings of real human bodies.

Experimentation and Nothingness

66 In this essay I have treated only a handful of the ways in which the work of contemporary electronic writers reflects themes and techniques either influenced by or directly derived from the work of the Dada. Some of the connections I've drawn here are clear, others less explicit. While it's entirely possible that authors working in new media would have arrived at similar techniques, themes, and attitudes without the precedent of the Dada, I argue that developing a better understanding of the avant-garde movements of the past can only serve to enhance the experience of those who will push the boundaries of new media work in the future.

67 I believe it's also useful to remember that for all of the impact that Dada had on the art of the twentieth century, in actuality, Dada lasted only for a very short period as a semi-coherent movement before the Dada split into a variety of other art movements and practices, most notably in Paris to the establishment of the surrealist movement. And while we continue to see the techniques of the Dada at work in both conventional and new media art forms, during the time it was a recognized movement, there were never more than a few dozen artists who were active in the movement. I mention this because as we think about the future of electronic literature through the lens of Dada's past, it's quite encouraging to realize that it doesn't take a particularly

large group of people, or a particularly long span of time, for an interesting approach to creating new forms of art to have a great deal of positive impact. While some of the Dada were well-known artists during their day, and many of them became famous in subsequent decades, at the time most of their activities were regarded by the conventional art world as ridiculous at best, if not dangerous.

68 While the practice of electronic literature is still not widespread, a growing group of artists have been seriously engaged in the creation of literary experiments for the computer and network for close to two decades now, and while some have already declared 'the golden age' of literary hypermedia past, the community of writers producing literary experiences has only grown stronger in recent years. Electronic literature now has a variety of established publication venues, works of new media literature regularly appear in university syllabi, and perhaps most importantly, informal communication networks have developed between writers and artists around the world. If much of the world still doesn't know that literary art specific to the computer even exists, the writers themselves do, and are aware of and responding to each other's work. Like the Dada, the electronic literature movement is fundamentally different from, and in many ways in opposition to, the established conventions of print-oriented literary culture. No hypertext novel has every appeared on a best-seller list, indeed most works of electronic literature are not sold at all, but rather given away in a gift economy.

69 For a long stretch of time after the movement dissolved, the Dada was largely not taken seriously within the 'official' art world. How could this chaotic brand of 'anti-art' find a place in museums and collections and so on, when its proponents declared themselves in every way opposed to that culture? Yet today, of course, the art world credits Dada with many of the most important techniques and ideas of twentieth century art. Digital writers who consider themselves to be on a fool's errand, toiling in obscurity, might do well to take note of this.

70 The Blind Man's issue on the Exhibition of Independents included one important thought that I'd like to conclude with. The Blind Man asked,

71 > If a painter shows you a picture, you can make nothing out of, and calls you a fool, you may resent it. But if a painter works passionately, patiently, and says, 'I am making many experiments which may, perhaps, bring nothing for many years,' what can we have against him? (Roché, 2006: 151)

72 Beyond the creation of any single technique, the most important thing that the digital artists and authors of the future might learn from the Dada is their very willingness to experiment, to create objects and experiences that may bring nothing for years, or alternatively, may inspire other artists a century hence.

Author's Biography

Scott Rettberg is an associate professor of Humanistic Informatics in the Department of Linguistic, Literary, and Aesthetic Studies at the University of Bergen. He is a co-founder and served as the first executive director of the Electronic Literature Organization, and currently serves on its board of directors. A writer and practitioner as well as critic and scholar of new media, Scott is the co-author of the award-winning hypertext novel The Unknown, the email novel Kind of Blue, and the sticker novel Implementation. He is a regular contributor to the new media research weblog Grand Text Auto, and has published a variety of critical and theoretical articles on electronic literature. Along with N. Katherine Hayles, Nick Montfort, and Stephanie Strickland, he recently co-edited the Electronic Literature Collection Volume One, a CD-ROM and web anthology of electronic literature. Most of his writing is available on his website: https://retts.net

References

Aarseth, E. Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997).

Amerika, M. Grammatron (1998) https://www.grammatron.com

Andrews, J. Nio (2006a; 2001), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/andrews__nio.html

Andrews, J. 'Nio and the Art of Interactive Audio for the Web' (2006b; 2001), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/andrews__nio/The_Art_of_Interactive_Audio.htm

Arellano, R. 'Sunshine 69′ (1996), https://www.sunshine69.com

Biro, M. ‘The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture’, New German Critique 62 (1994): 71-110.

Burroughs, W.S. ‘The Cut-Up Method of Brion Gysin’ in N. Wardrip-Fruin and N. Montfort (eds.) The New Media Reader (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

Chevrel, S.C.a.R., G.C.a.R. Kean and M.M. Linde. You and We, a Collective Experiment (2002).

Dickerman, L. ‘Zurich’, in L. Dickerman (ed.) Dada (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 2006), 16-44.

Dietrich, D. ‘Hanover’ in L. Dickerman (ed.) Dada (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 2006), 157-178.

Doherty, B. ‘Berlin’ in L. Dickerman (ed.) Dada (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with Distributed Art Publishers, 2006).

Duchamp, M., H.P. Roché and B. Wood. ‘The Blind Man, no. 2′ in D. Ades (ed.) The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Gillespie, W., S. Rettberg, D. Stratton and F. Marquardt. The Unknown (1998), https://unknownhypertext.com

Grosz, G. ‘G’ in D. Ades (ed.) The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Lialina, O. ‘My Boyfriend Came Back from the War’ (1996), https://myboyfriendcamebackfromth.ewar.ru/

Manovich, L. The Language of New Media (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

Memmott, T. ‘The Hugo Ball’ (2006a), https://www.drunkenboat.com/db8/index.html

Memmott, T. Lexia to Perplexia (2006b; 2000), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/memmott__lexia_to_perplexia.html

Memmott, T. Self Portrait(s) [as Other(s)] (2006c; 2003), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/memmott__self_portraits_as_others.html

Mencia, M. Birds Singing Other Birds’ Songs (2006; 2001), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/mencia__birds_singing_other_birds_songs.html

Mills, S. ‘Alan Sondheim Interview’ (2006), https://www.framejournal.net/interview/3/alan-sondheim

Montfort, N., D. Shiovitz and E. Short. Mystery House Taken Over (2004), https://www.turbulence.org/Works/mystery/

Nelson, J. ‘This is How you Will Die’ (2006), https://www.drunkenboat.com/db8/index.html

Newman, L.E. 3by3by3 (2006-2007), https://3by3by3.blogspot.com/

Richter, H. Dada, Art and Anti-Art (New York: Thames and Husdon, 1985).

Roché, H.-P. ‘The Blind Man no. 1′ in D. Ades (ed.) The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 148-151.

Sapnar, M.D. and D.T. Brill. ‘Pushkin Translation’ (2000), https://www.poemsthatgo.com/gallery/fall2000/pushkin/

Sondheim, A. ‘Writing Online’, Text 5.2 (2001), https://www.griffith.edu.au/school/art/text/oct01/sondheim.htm

Sondheim, A. ‘Internet Text’ (1994-2006), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/sondheim__internet_text.html

Sondheim, A. ‘Avatar Duet’ (video) (2006a), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qQ0K-phiFY

Sondheim, A. ‘Kali Avatar’ (video) (2006b), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPriS145nyI

Sondheim, A. ‘Wolf TC (World Trade Center)’ (2007), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2Z7o1K3utg

Tzara, T. ‘Dada Manifesto 1918′ in D. Ades (ed.) The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006a), 36-42.

Tzara, T. ‘Littérature No. 15, July/August 1920, Chronicle’ in D. Ades (ed.) The Dada Reader: A Critical Anthology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006b), 199-200.

Wardrip-Fruin, N., D. Durand, B. Moss and E. Froelich. ‘Regime Change’ (2006; 2004), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/wardrip-fruin_durand_moss_froehlich__regime_change.html

Wylde, N. ‘Storyland’ (2006; 2002), https://collection.eliterature.org/1/works/wylde_storyland.html

The Fibreculture Journal (ISSN 1449-1443) — Issue 11, 2008-11-07. This article is published under CC BY-NC-ND. The author retains copyright.

This PDF is an archival offprint generated from the journal’s text archive on 2026-11-15. It is not the publisher’s version of record; the published article is at https://eleven.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-071-dada-redux-elements-of-dadaist-practice-in-contemporary-electronic-literature/. Page numbers here are not the published pagination. Where paragraph numbers appear in the margin they are the journal’s own and are the citable unit.