75

The Point is Poetry: Interrogating Categorizations of Christian Bök's *Eunoia* Ten Years Later

by Jean-Philippe Marcoux

How does one *read* Canadian poet Christian Bök's *Eunoia*? Or maybe the question should be, "how *should* one read *Eunoia*?" Silently, out loud, both? Anyone who first comes upon Bök's "univocal lipogram" is intially stunned by the appearance of the book: the square-shaped paragraphs, the complex syntax, the unfamiliar vocabulary. The reader is also usually intrigued with how this perplexing book, written under constraint, comes together thematically. While it is clear to everyone that there is thematic continuity in the work—after all, Bök's *Eunoia* was meant to be read as some sort of indefinable novel(la)—the question remains: how should we approach this work? To that question is generally affixed a second one: to what "kind" of writing or category of literature does *Eunoia* belong? One thing is for sure though: the work is (a) complex.

The Greeks have a word for "complex," the noun: *synthetos*. Interestingly, the Greek etymology of the word can also mean "composite," thereby approximating its orthographical derivative in English, "synthesis." When considering the root of *Eunoia* in Oulipo (Ouvroir de la littérature potentielle, or "Workshop for potential literature"), a group of French artists writing using a variety of constraints and approaching language from an abstract and imaginative perspective, it is somewhat intriguing to envision what Bök was trying to accomplish with *Eunoia*, itself a complex or composite of many writing techniques. *Eunoia* is, in fact, a *synthetos* of many poetics that cross-fertilize and that exist beyond the obvious Oulipo influence. This article will analyze how Bök's *Eunoia* is a work that exists at the intersection of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, sound poetry, and concrete or visual poetry, which can all be subsumed under performance poetry. In *Eunoia*, Bök borrows from, but is not limited by, the poetics of all these poetries to create his poetic *synthetos* about the art of writing, the art of composition. In so doing, he extends the scope of the poetic enterprise begun with the "lucid writing" of *Crystallography.*

Eunoia was written as a "universal lipogram," that is "each chapter restricts itself to the use of a single vowel" ("The New Ennui," *Eunoia,* 111). To this centripetal rule, Bök adds the following constraints:

> All sentences must accent internal rhyme through the use of syntactical parallelism. The text must exhaust the lexicon for each vowel, citing at least 98% of the available repertoire…The text must minimize repetition of substantive vocabulary (so that, ideally, no word appears more than once). (112)

All these rules might be seen to restrict thematic development, or even be perceived to hamper narrative voice. Yet, in *Eunoia*, there is a prevalent desire to probe the lexicon in order to extract not only its connotative potentialities, but also to "exhaust" its creative correlations. Writing under constraint for Bök should not lead to obscure work; it should, on the contrary, test the permeability of fixed language, the "dead" language of established poetic conventions. This explains why Bök draws from various poetics in order to form a new poetics of limitlessness—and here I mean to echo Brian Kim Stefans's review of *Eunoia*—constantly seeking new meanings.[1] For Stefans, "Bök views language as a field of infinite possibility, of numberless configurations that can create their own meanings (as syntactic shapes or societal echoes) *regardless* of their standard usage in spontaneous expressions (such as 'speech')" (web article –emphasis mine).[2] What Stefans underlines in his discussion of Bök's "aesthetic model" evokes some of the tenets of both 'pataphysics and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E (or Language) poetry.

While it is true that the composition of Bök's work appears complex, it nevertheless reveals a profound engagement with language in what amounts to a written performance that attempts to express "an uncanny, if not sublime, thought" (111) using a 'pataphysical framework. Bök wrote a book-length study on 'pataphysics, entitled, *'Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science*, in which he defines thoroughly the many application of the pseudo-science developed by Alfred Jarry. However, for a more succinct definition, I suggest his interview with Stephen Voyce. In it, Bök defines 'pataphysic as

> "a science of exceptions" imagined by Alred Jarry…'Pataphysics proposes a set of "imaginary solutions" for proposed problems, proposing absurd axioms, for example, then arguing with vigor and logic from these fundamentals…In contrast with metaphysics, which has striven to apprehend the essence of reality itself and is thus a kind of philosophy of the "as is," 'pata-

> physics is more a philosophy of the "as if," giving science itself the permission to dream—to fantasize."

In his poetry, Bök implements this "philosophy" in terms of how he applies his constraints as performances textually represented.

For instance, in *Crystallography* Bök reverts to "lucid writing." In the aforementioned interview with Voyce, Bök explains that lucid writing "does not concern itself with the transparent transmission of a message…instead, lucid writing concerns itself with the reflexive operation of its own process (in a manner reminiscent of lucid dreaming)." In the same manner as other Canadian 'pataphysicians (or Jarryites) such as Steve McCaffrey and bpNichol, Bök constantly conceptualizes 'pataphysical approaches for assessing the process of writing. In "The New Ennui," Bök mentions that all the chapters of *Eunoia* "must allude to the art of writing." Internalizing Jarry's "philosophy," Bök wants to adapt his form of "constraint writing" in order to produce renewed linguistic paradigms that will allow the poet to navigate his or her own creative spaces. In that alone, Bök echoes, already, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poet Lyn Hejinian's contention that, "the art of writing is a process of improvisation within a framework (form) of intention" (2). That "framework of intention" in *Eunoia* is found in the Oulipo-insipred constraints (Oulipo being informed by 'pataphysics). Bök's thorough "exhaustion" of the lexicon provides him with a sufficiently vast array of words—and word combinations—that, like L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets or jazz musicians, will in turn create the new "grammar" of sound and sense.

L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry developed in the 1970s in the U.S. as an attack on the conventional – and often that meant, lyrical—conventions in American poetry. Its poetic platform was to reassert the centrality of language in poetic composition, thereby highlighting the process via which language constructs the poem as opposed to studying the poem from a thematic perspective. More specifically, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, by emphasizing process over finality, prefers to analyze *how* language prescribes the poem's meaning. In this context, the poem requires carefully attention from the reader, whose own understanding of process—and, by extension, of the reality the poem is supposed to represent—can produce meaning. That the reader's subjectivity is invoked to create meaning is nothing new in poetry and in critical responses to poems. What the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets sought to do according to Neil Roberts, was "to redefine the function of language and its relation to representation [of reality], thus challenging "the traditional notion of the unitary, expressive, poetic 'I'" (97). By questioning "the representational function of language

and thereby the nature of reality itself" (97), L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets re-conceive language as a way to reconstruct reality "perceived" (Perloff qtd, in Roberts 97). Without authoritative meaning, the multiplicity of meaning emanates from readers working as active participants in the construction of meaning—and self-legitimized "reality."

What essentially disqualifies *Eunoia* as a L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poem is that Bök, as mentioned before, never hides the fact that his lipogram attempts to achieve narrative continuity. Bök is well aware that, despite some aesthetic resemblances between *Eunoia* and a typical L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poem, his poem wishes to produce "meaningful paragraphs" (Voyce). Bök tells Voyce that, "[a] L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poet, like [Ron] Silliman,[3] for example, might find [*Eunoia*] a bit disappointing for its inability to depart from the norms of grammatical, referential speech." Bök's barely-veiled attempt to conceal his writing anxieties here clearly demonstrate that L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry influenced him perhaps not aesthetically, but definitely politically. Not necessarily wanting Silliman's seal of approval, Bök nevertheless recognizes the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poet as a key innovator of avant-garde poetics.

According to George Hartley's oft-cited analysis of Silliman's complex concept of the "New Sentence," the latter wishes to achieve the "dematerialization of writing":[4] that is, Silliman wants to dissociate language from its capitalist, bourgeois tendencies. Stylistically and linguistically then, the "new sentence" is divorced from syllogisms and conventionally expected meaning. By deconstructing conventions of structure and reverting to parataxis, and by systematically creating ambiguity, the "new sentence" modifies and, ultimately, forever alters the "Bourgeois realism" (Hartley) of referential language.[5] I aver that the "new sentence" is a departure from social and linguistic strictures, which again, Silliman perceived as side-effects of unsanctioned commodification of art in a capitalist society.

Like Hartley, writer Bob Perelman sees in Silliman's theory of the "new sentence" a political commentary on the ravaging effects of capitalism perpetrated by blind acceptation of referential—and rhetorical—language.[6] The materialist culture, brought on by capitalism, eradicates the "power" and "intensity" of language, replacing it by forgettable ads that employ words to promote consumerist impulses. Interestingly, while Bök may not follow Silliman's aesthetics, thematically, his "Chapter A" echoes some of the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poet's politics. Elsewhere, this author has argued that, in "Chapter A," Bök

> posits a fictional Hassan, whose economic dominance and social disinterest evoke the values and ideologies that have been historically ascribed to Gos-

> pel of Wealth hegemonies. Hassan's actualization of "rubber-baronism" is destructive not only for himself, but also for those whose lives depend upon the money Hassan generates and regulates. Bök's underlying metaphor is that economic dominance and social disinterest inevitably lead to conflict and war.[7]

Bök's political engagement is certainly present in the depiction of Hassan's engulfment in consumerism and materialism. His procedural poem therefore supports a thinly-veiled "social agenda" (Voyce) that is reverberated in his choices of dedication for each subsequent chapter.

For instance, Bök dedicates "Chapter I" to Fluxus founder, Dick Higgins. Fluxus emerged in the wake of artistic movements—or perhaps "attitude" would be a better term—like Dada (note the evocative continuity with "Chapter A" being dedicated to Hans Arp). Its famous manifesto,[8] penned by George Maciunas in 1970, intersects in many ways with the anti-bourgeois politics of Dada, and later, L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry: "Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, "intellectual," professional & commercialized culture." As a corrective for commercial art, Fluxus "PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE IN ART, Promote living art, anti-art, promote NON ART REALITY to be ~~fully~~ grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals." In the opening paragraph of "Chapter I," dedicated to Higgins, Bök evokes these "anti-art" politics:

> I fit childish insights within rigid limits,
> Writing shtick which might instill priggish misgivings in critics blind with hindsight. I dismiss nit-picking criticism which flirts with philistinism. I bitch; I kibitz – griping whilst criticizing dimwits, sniping whilst indicting nitwits, dismissing simplistic thinking, in which philippic wit is still illicit.
> (50)

Anyone who has seen Bök perform this section live or on Youtube can hear in the sarcastic voice he adopts or, even, in his bodily contortions, a witty persona who attacks literary critics for their elitist criteria for art. Like Fluxus artists, Bök's persona in "Chapter I" wants art forms separated from a "*Kultur*" that would "spur[n]" someone like conceptual artists Zhu Yu – to whom "Chapter U" is dedicated and who adopts the guise of "Ubu." Preferring to "pull stunts" than to submit to the demands of commercial art,

Ubu, like Higgins, or Arp, or Crevel, infuses his art with political statements.

By uniting these evocative artists in his poem, Bök, perhaps unconsciously, answers the political demands of the Fluxus manifesto, in that he "FUSE[S] the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into united front & action," which he translates in his writing politics. Social "constraints" perpetrated by hegemonies comprised of "bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual,' professional & commercialized culture"—Fluxus artists want to "PURGE THE WORLD OF "EUROPANISM!"—inform the constraints Bök employs in *Eunoia*. As such, "the irony in Bök's use of Oulipian constraint lies in the fact that it not only becomes a formal constraint, but also a constraint that tends to silence any socio-political concerns opposing hegemonies" (Author) in culture and society. In the tradition of concrete poetry,[9] "the squared structures of Bök's paragraphs tend to evoke such political constrictions…Bök is able to evoke the theme of constraint through formal organization of his paragraphs" (Author). To this end, Bök actively engages with the reader, who must pay attention to both visual and textual aspects of the work, therefore invoking the writer-reader relationship inherent in L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry.

Moreover, Bök employs a writing constraint, a procedure, to voice his political concerns; both he and Silliman understand the potential of writing politics as they tend to perform what Voyce calls a "viable political function." Bök even admits that he "can easily imagine using a constraint to expose some of the ideological foundations of discourse itself" (Voyce). Unlike Silliman however, Bök re-inscribes the constraint of the lipogram in terms of how it assesses the "politics of representation" (Voyce). But these "politics of representation" exist at both thematic and linguistic levels in *Eunoia*. The short units of meaning in each paragraph of "Chapter A" strives for "intensity" *and* "power" very much in tune with what Silliman demands of the "new sentence." Bök's desire in this chapter is to make us experience, through cleverly organized linguistic gymnastics, the rise and fall of modern-day Captains of Industry. In that sense, the depiction of Hassan's rise and inevitable fall cannot be separated from the way the poet organizes language: the writing and reading experiences inform the persona's experience. This process of creating narrative meaning out of procedural writing is not all that different from L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, which proposes an aesthetic platform based on language as "a medium for experiencing experience" (Hejinian 2).

In one of the key manifestos of L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry, *The Language of Inquiry*, Lyn Hejinian affirms that,

> [L]anguage is nothing but meanings, and meanings are nothing but a flow of contexts. Such contexts rarely coalesce into images, rarely come to form. They are transitions, transmutations…That is not to say that poetry is about transitions, but that "aboutness" (in poetry, but, I would argue, also in life) is transitional, transitory; indeed, poetry (and perhaps life) calls conventional notions of "aboutness" into question. (1-2)

Hejinian's notion that poetry questions "aboutness" is interesting when transposed onto the terrain of Bök's *Eunoia*. Like the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, Bök "crippl[es]…language," suggesting that it is the "Sisyphean spectacle of [*Eunoia*'s] labour" ("New Ennui," 111) and thus the process of writing the poem that proffers its meaning, not its end result or its "aboutness." To this end, Bök subverts the apparent pointlessness in the myth of the Sisyphean task by interrogating, instead, the possibility of finding meaning in endless repetition, in the "ennui" of repetition.[10] As such, the Sisyphean "labor" becomes synonymous with procedural poetry.

In "Chapter E" of *Eunoia*, Bök, conjuring up the spirit of French surrealist turned Dadaist René Crevel, provides a potent definition of his own form of procedural poetry:

> Enfettered, these sentences repress free speech. The
> text deletes selected letters. We see the revered exegete
> reject metred verse: the sestet, the tercet – even *les*
> *scenes élevées en grec*. He rebels. He sets new precedents.
> He lets cleverness exceed decent levels. He eschews the
> esteemed genres, the expected themes –even *les belles*
> *letters en vers…* He engen-
> ders perfect newness wherever we need fresh terms.
>
> (31)

What Bök outlines in this passage is that in order to "set new precedents" and "engende[r] perfect newness," the poet must break up the referents of language by imposing on it procedures like constraints and restrictions. Only then can poetic language "exceed" its "aboutness."

Furthermore, the Crevel invocation suggests another form of "crippling" of the language like that performed by Dadaists. The renewed potentiality of language advocated by L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets likewise extends the sphere of influence of Dada, especially in terms of the deconstruction of conventional syntax. Again, the preoccupation with replenishing language and creating new forms of meaning finds its echo in Bök. Accordingly, in "Chapter A:"

> A Dada bard
> as daft as Tzara damns stagnant art and scrawls an
> alpha (a slapdash arc and a backward zag) that mars
> all stanzas and jams all ballads (what a scandal).
> (12)

Like Crevel, Dada's Tristan Tzara, and L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, Bök, as procedural poet, sees himself as "the rebel" who "peddles these theses, even when the vexed peers deem the new precepts 'mere dreck'" ("Chapter E," 32). Against the "plebes" who "resent newer verse" (32), Bök posits his rebel, a composite of artists who, like him, undertook the Sisyphean task of reformulating the function of language: "the rebel perseveres, never deterred, never dejected, heedless, even when hecklers heckle the vehement speeches" (32). What this poet-rebel does ultimately is to overhaul poetic language in a way that suggests his engagement with the performative aspect of the poem. This engagement with the performance—and performative potential—of language is linked to how Bök wishes them to "sound" when grouped together in performance, textual *and* oral. As such, it is possible to locate one of Bök's influences for *Eunoia* in sound poetry.

While it is difficult—or for Canadian writer Steve McCaffrey "a doomed activity"[11]—to chart the history of sound poetry or even to provide a cursory definition of its poetics, suffice it to say that sound poetry is a type of poetry concerned with phonics and the phonological dimension of performing poems. Not only confined to how voice performs words, sound poets also probe the potential of the human voice to create sounds—some would say, noises—that augment, complement, and supplant words. Such practice evokes the work of Henri Chopin in the 1950s. Chopin achieved liberation of the human voice from its physiological constraints by re-conceptualizing the potential of the tape recorder to manipulate the way voice transmits "language." It is undeniable that Chopin's *poésie sonore* informed Bök's poetics in *Eunoia.* Interlinking various movements like Russian and Italian Futurism, Dada, Lettrisme, to Canadian groups like Montreal Automatistes (e.g Claude Gauvreau), Vehicule or The Four Horseman (e.g. McCaffrey and Nichol) across different eras, sound poetry can be traced back to the earliest attempts at oral poetry, which used tonal inflections to convey intention and meaning.[12] Also, it is important to mention that sound poets often used their art to convey a political message, one that sought to oppose the language of hegemonies and defy threats of censorship.

In an interview with James Brown, Bök quotes Lewis Caroll's Humpty Dumpty saying, "take care of the sounds, and the sense will take care of itself." Riffing on Caroll's chararcter's seminal words, Bök adds, "I think that meaning is always the happy side-effect of other processes within the poem itself."[13] As mentioned earlier, anyone familiar with Bök's performance skills knows that his sound poems reveal the poet's profound engagement with the phonic—or is it sonic?—potential of words. Stefans notes that in the U.S. Bök is "best known as a sound poet,"[14] citing as examples "his speed-metal version of [Kurt] Schwitter's normally forty-two minute 'Ursonate' [which] clocks in at just under twenty."[15] Likewise, Bök's *The Cyborg Opera* features vocal performances that imitate, again suggesting the influence of Henri Chopin, the sound of razors and atomic bombs. According to Bök then,

> *The Cyborg Opera* is supposed to be a kind of "spoken techno" that emulates the robotic pulses heard everywhere in our daily lives…[T]he poem still responds to the modern milieu of global terror by recombining a large array of silly words from popular culture, doing so purely for phonic effect in order to suggest that, under the threat of atomic terror, life seems all the more cartoonish.[16]

Firmly anchored in sound poetry, *The Cyborg Opera* uses sonic and phonic effects to convey a message, to make a political statement. This process of politicizing sound *and* voice is also present in *Eunoia*.

The musicality of *Eunoia* is undeniable: this year's Open House Festival featured, as part of their Torn from the Pages program, a musical rendition of *Eunoia* by David Bidini.[17] While this event reveals the musical potential of the work, it is through Bök's own vocal performance of *Eunoia* that the poem acquires another, complementary, meaning. For McCaffrey, sound poetry is "above all, a practice of freedom."[18] Linguistically, Bök's poem follows this general poetics, even if it is written using rules in the form of constraints. Bök finds these writing constraints liberating once their potential is fully realized and enmeshed in the writing process, he tells Voyce, "[t]o fathom such rules…emancipates us from them, since we gain mastery over their unseen potential, whereas to ignore such rules quarantines us in them, since we fall servile to their covert intention." Similarly, by freeing his voice from constraints of authorship, Bök can adopt the guise of the many personas he dedicates his chapters to, thereby creating a polyphonic performance that affirms and claims creative freedom.

Bök's performances of *Eunoia* are notorious for their intensity as well as for the poet's ability to breathe life—sometimes digital—into his vow-

els. For instance, the repetition of U sound intimates at the computerized sounds of media transmission, and therefore recalls Bök's robot aesthetics.[19] Thematically, the robotic sounds of this chapter contrast with the provocative sexual imagery, further enhancing the notion of media invasion of the household and the bedroom, reminiscent of Don Delillo's *White Noise*. Similarly, the presence of "internal rhyme through the use of syntactical parallelism," especially in the repetitive "*ak*" sound suggests a gagging effect that follows, phonically and thematically, Hassan's "last gap" ("Chapter A," 30). As mentioned earlier, the high-pitched "I" sound of "Chapter I" allows Bök to use the accent of an aristocrat and to subvert the tradition he embodies. As Marjorie Perloff states, "**I** poetics…presents itself as light and tripping, the language of wit and **impish hijinks**" (37, emphasis author's). This elitism and its subversion have been prefigured in "Chapter E," in which gentility opposed the abrasiveness of avant-gardism, the "E" vowel providing a more refined sound:

> We feel perplexed whenever we see these excerpted sentences. We sneer when we detect the clever scheme –the emergent repetend: the letter E. We jeer; we jest. We express resentment. We detest these depthless pretenses –these present-tense verbs, expressed pell-mell. We prefer genteel speech, where sense redeems senselessness. (32)[20]

Again, this is a case of the sound supporting the sense, and it is clear that Bök intended for the written performance to be enhanced and, fundamentally, complemented by the oral performance.

Ultimately, because of the poet's interest in intermedia performances – which links him with L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, sound poets, and conceptual artists, who are all summoned up in the dedications—Bök's *Eunoia* might belong to the broader category of performance poetry, which, in many ways, encompasses all the types of poetry discussed in this article. According to Marc Kelly Smith, "[t]he goal of performance poetry is to couple the best possible text to the best possible performance—to compose superior poems and perform them with exquisite precision" (7). Even though this definition might seem simplistic, it nevertheless underscores Bök's design for *Eunoia*: the "precise language," the complexity of the exercise, the performative potential created by internal rhymes and syntactical parallelism. Moreover, Bök's poem tells *a* story comprised of many narrative chapters. In *Eunoia*, Bök maps these intertwined diageses as well

as the geographies of linguistic freedom and of the liberation of language from authoritative hegemonies.

At the beginning of every slam he organized, poet Allan Wolf would always say: "the point is poetry." Whether it is in textual performances or as a phonic performance, *Eunoia* exemplifies Wolf's contention. In the end, it is the poem that counts, and that includes its process—in the case of *Eunoia*, its constraints—and its ability to interrogate "the art of writing" in the hopes of accessing its unlimited potentials. And the end of the performative experiment is nowhere near: Christian Bök prepares to encode his new poetic project into the DNA of a bacterium—for posterity! Wolf is right, the point *is* poetry for Bök.

Notes

1 Stefans's review, originally published in The *Boston Review*, can be retrieved at: http://www.bostonreview.net/BR27.3/stefans.html.
2 See Stefans.
3 For a good survey of Silliman's career, see his biographical entry at www.poetryfoundation.com.
4 Originally published in Temblor 7 (1988), the review of Silliman's *The New Sentence* (1987) can be found at: http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/hartley/pubs/sentence.html.
5 More precisely, Hartley contends that "what Silliman looks for in a poem, and why the new sentence fulfills his demands" as "1) intensity; 2) power; 3) a charged use of linguistic units; 4) recurrence; 5) parallel structures; 6) a common image bank; 7) secondary syllogistic movement; 8) the systematic blocking of primary syllogistic movement; 9) varied tenses; 10) ambiguity; 11) importance; 12) tension; 13) an exploration and articulation of the hidden capacities of the blank space (parataxis)." While it is not the purpose of this article to discuss the thirteen "rules" in details, I list them here to show the breadth of Silliman's concept.
6 In "Parataxis and Narrative: The New Sentence in Theory and Practice," 24-48. I also suggest Eric Rosenfield's response to the essay, "Essay with Long Title," retrieved at: http://ericrosenfield.com/longtitle.html.
7 "Theoretical Constraint, Linguistic Copiousness: Reconsidering Section "A" in Christian Bök's *Eunoia*." *Canadian Poetry* 66 (Sping/Summer 2010), 90.
8 Retrieved at: http://www.artnoart.com/fluxus/maciunas-manifesto.html.
9 Concrete poetry or visual poetry is a type of poetry that focuses on the typographical organization of words on the page so that it correlates thematic development.
10 Briefly, the Sisyphean myth is a metaphor for the futility of daily tasks. Sisyphus, as symbol of such futility, was sentenced by Zeus to perform endless labor. Punished for opposing Zeus, Sisyphus was forced to roll a rock up a hill, only to see it roll down that same hill every time he approaches the top.
11 In "Sound Poetry–A Survey" published in *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue*. Steve McCaffrey, bpNichol, eds. Toronto: Underwhich Editions, 1978. Retrieved at: http://www.ubu.com/papers/mccaffrey.html.
12 For this "list" of movements, I rely on McCaffrey's essay, which details the evolution of sound poetry and the contributions of each movement or group to the poetics of the

sound poem.
13 James Brown, "An Interview with Christian Bök." Retrieved at http://lumiere.net.nz/reader/nucleus.
14 See n.1
15 Kurt Schwitters's "The Ursonate" can be seen as an attempt at sound poetry. It is written between 1922 and 1932.
16 In the interview with Voyce.
17 See the article in The *Globe and Mail*, April 28, 2010.
18 See n.9.
19 Stefans defines Bök's robot aesthetics as "an imagining of how an artificial intelligence program might complete a poem in accordance with a complex algorithm."
20 For more on the thematic function of each vowel in *Eunoia*, see also Perloff, 36-37.

Works Cited

Bök, Christian. *Eunoia*. Toronto: Coach House, 2009.

——. "The New Ennui." *Eunoia*. Toronto: Coach House, 2009. 111-15.

Brown, James. "An Interview with Christian Bök." http://lumiere.net.nz/readeBökr/nucleus.

Hartley, George. "Review of Ron Stillman's *The New Sentence*." http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/hartley/pubs/sentence.html

Hejinian, Lyn. *The Language of Inquiry*. U of California P, 2000.

Maciunas, George. "Fluxus Manifesto." http://www.artnoart.com/fluxus/maciunas-manifesto.html.

Marcoux, Jean-Philippe. "Theoretical Constraint, Linguistic Copiousness: Reconsidering Section "A" in Christian Bök's *Eunoia*." *Canadian Poetry* 66 (Spring/Summer), 2010.

McCaffrey, Steve. "Sound Poetry –A Survey." In *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue*. Eds, Steve McCaffrey, bpNichol. Toronto: Underwhich Editions, 1978. http://www.ubu.com/papers/mccaffrey.html

Perelman, Bob. "Parataxis and Narrative: The New Sentence in Theory and Practice." In *Artifice and Indeterminacy: An Anthology of New Poetics*." Ed. Christopher Beach. U of Alabama P, 2007. 24-48.

Perloff, Marjorie. "The Oulipo Factor: The Procedural Poetics of Christian Bök and Caroline Bergvall." *Textual Practice* 18.1 (2004): 23-45.

Roberts, Neil. *A Companion to Twentieth-Century Poetry*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001.

Rosenfield, Eric. "Essay with Long Title." http://ericrosenfield.com/longtitle.html.

Smith, Marc Kelly, and Jay Kraynak. *Take the Mic: The Art of Performance Poetry, Slam, and the Spoken Word*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks Mediafusion, 2009.

Stefans, Brian Kim. Review "Christian Bök: *Eunoia*." *Boston Review* 27. 3-4 (Summer 2002). http://www.bostonreview.net/BR27.3/stefans.html.

Voyce, Stephen. "The Xenotext Experiment: An Interview with Christian Bök." *PMC* 17.2 (2007).