Issue 1 Release Announcement
Sat, 4 Oct 2008 00:13:58 +0200

Subject: Issue 1 Release Announcement
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 00:13:58 +0200
Announcing the release of Issue 1, edited by Stephen McLaughlin and Jim
Carpenter. Now available
here<http://arsonism.org/issue1/Issue-1_Fall-2008.pdf> as
a 3,785-page PDF. Again, that url is <
http://arsonism.org/issue1/Issue-1_Fall-2008.pdf>.

This issue features new poems by Nada Gordon, Evelyn Reilly, Julianna Mundim, Emmy
Catedral, Enid Bagnold, Richard Siken, Stephen Ratcliffe, Michael Gottlieb, Jodie
Childers, Norman J. Olson, Brent Hendricks, Sean Kilpatrick, Tom McCarthy, Stacy
Doris, Michael Rerick, Corrinne Clegg Hales, Mark Decarteret, Hadewijch of Antwerp,
Darren Wershler-Henry, Letitia Trent, Debra Di Blasi, Laura Elrick, Bruna Mori,
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Henry Thoreau, John Palattella, Abby Trenaman, Kristen Taylor, Vassily Kamensky,
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Moriarty, Mark McMorris, Cruickshank-Hagenbuckle, Jeffrey Cyphers Wright, William
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Matthue Roth, Douglas J. Belcher, After Bitahatini, Neil Schmitz, Liz Henry, Tom
Hansen, Craig Saper, Pris Campbell, Afua-Kafi Akua, Amish Trivedi, Chris Hutchinson,
Cath Vidler, Sarah Weinman, A.E. Stallings, Robin Blaser, Roland Prevost, Mac
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Hamilton, Kara Dorris, Maureen Thorson, Irv Muchnick, Frank O'Hara, Robin
Magowan, C. Allen Rearick, A. J. Patrick Liszkiewicz, Tony Leuzzi, Bhanu Kapil, Sage
U..ilani Takehiro, Shellie Zacharia, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Camille Martin, Eliot
Weinberger, David Nemeth, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Iris Smyles, Bertolt Brecht, David
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Kane X. Faucher, David Abel, Ray Succre, Gabriel Gudding, Antonin Artaud, Mark

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Christopher Salerno, Christophe Casamassima, Emily Critchley, Dorothea Lasky, Chris Glomski, Matt Shears, Damian Weber, Justin Marks, Brooke Kaye, Frank Etienne, Judith Jordan, Sam Dillon, Bill Knott, Mara Leigh, Anselem Berrigan, Jeff Bacon, Clifford Odets, JeffreyJoe Nelson, Della Watson, Christiana Langenberg, Robert Peake, cris cheek, Morris Cox, Richard Kostelanetz, Wanda Phipps, Hugo Ball, Kristin Prevallet, Norman Weinstein, Lacey Hunter, Gerald Hausman, Rachel Oliver, Ray McNiece, Bill Dorn, Catullus, Monique Trottier, Joshua Ware, e.e. cummings, Garrett Hongo, Bill Lavender, John Cleary, Sharon Harris, Divya Victor, Jack Spicer, Kate Armstrong, Karl Young, Chad Sweeney, David Solway, Wanda O'Connor, Mahmoud Darwish, Joanne Tracy, Sheila, Amanda Cook, Hugh Nissensen, Sean M. Dalpiaz, Edna St. Vincent, Caroline Bergvall, Lawrence Giffin, Rob Halpern, Dana Gioia, Daniel Bradley, David Kaufmann, Robert Lowell, kari edwards, Rosanna Lee, Allen Fisher, Stacy Szymaszek, Matt Theado, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Billy Mills, Andy Gricevich, The Philly Sound, Ruel S. De Vera, Trudi West, Daniel C. Remein, Hillary Gravendyk, Mary Burger, Insani Kamil, Guillermo Parra, Ryan Daley, Jessica Schneider, Carol Novack : Playpoem MP3, Jesse Ferguson, Mark Bernstein, KB Jones, Laura Marks, Kent Freeman, Sara Blakeman, Rodrigo Toscano, Sabyasachi Nag, Budd Parr, Peggy Willis Lyles, Keston Sutherland, Simon DeDeo, Marcus Slease, Emily Crocker, Donald Illich, John Sakkis, Andrew Sage, Joseph Harrington, Adrienne Rich, Tad Richards, Mick Rock, Sabina Murray, Michael Friedman, J.V. Foix, Michael McClintock, Dennis Nurkse, Andrew Shields, Susan Bee, Jacques Gaffarel, Paul Rigolle, William Keckler, Evan J. Peterson, Geoffrey Demarquet, Ariana Reines, Richard Wilbur, Kim Chinquee, Jerome Rothenberg, Laura Carter, Mark Strand, Nicholas Manning, Jukka-Pekka Kervinen, Donna Stonecipher, Girish Shambu, Gerald Schwartz, Catherine Taylor, Rachel Levitsky, Michelle Tupko, Chris Corrigan, Jim McKay, Joel Craig, Jacqueline Risset, Marcus Civin, Melvin Tolson, Lance Anderson, Sampson Starkweather, Peter Carey, Chris Murray, Dorianne Laux, Fiona Templeton, Kimberly Lyons, Claudia Carlson, Aaron Belz, Bill Zavatsky, Adam Strauss, Curtis Gale Weeks, Jeremiah Bowen, Bill Piety, Jane Hirshfield, mark s kuhar, Brendan Kreitler, Kim Bernstein, Frances Kruk, Margaret Ronda, Chris Piuma, Gina Franco, Anne Boyer, Claire McMahon, Jason Zuzga, Sharon Lynn Osmond, Pirooz Kalayeh, Robert Calero, Laura Jaramillo, Bryan Newbury, Steve Schroeder, St. Catherine of Siena, Anna Akhmatova, Edith Sitwell, Eduardo C. Corral, Megan Burns, Dan Hoy, Walt Whitman, Nic Sebastian, Elizabeth Treadwell, John Phillips, Michael Haeflinger, Karen, C Mehrl Bennett, Michael Hays Sanchez, Henry Edwards, Jeremy James Thompson, Jeffrey Ethan, Lisa Lorenz, Sukhdev Sandhu, Norma Cole, Courtney Rydel, Nina Svenne, Robert Zaller, Kirby Olson, Frank Wilson, Changming Yuan, Justin Audia, Janet Holmes, Federico Garcia Lorca, Jon Christensen, C.J. Martin, Matt Rasmussen, Norman Fischer, Bill Day, Mervyn Peake, Yvonne Jacquette, Nathan Logan, Urdu Poetry, Tony Towle, Leslie Kaplan, Philip Nikolayev, Sarah Gridley, Naomi Shihab Nye, Stephen Paul Miller, Mark Van Doren, Bonnie Jean Michalski, T.R. Wang, Eric Rosenfield, Mark Woods, R. Nemo Hill, Cynthia Lawson, Harry Rutherford, Deborah Patillo, Mark Bibbins, Novica Tadic, Hank O'Neal, Denise Low, Caroline Whitbeck, Hugh Behm-Steinberg, Serena Jost, Elizabeth Marie Young, Reg E. Gaines, Cole Swenson, Kevin Kilroy, Kaia Sand, Harryette Mullen, Charles Deemer, Alan Tucker, Eileen Myles, Meg Foulkes, Martha Ronk, Gil Fagian, Nick Piombino, Betsy Fagin, Anne Germanacos, Alex Cumberbatch, Kenneth Goldsmith, Debby Florence, Bin Ramke, Kariann Burleson, Amy

Berkowitz, Liz Waldner, T.A. Noonan, Steven Karl, Francis Ponge, Angela Genusa, F.A. Nettelbeck, Becca Klaver, Andrew Koszewski, Chelsea Hotel, J.P. Rangaswami, Guile Canencia, Carol Snow, Alysha Wood, Jen Hofer, Greg Mulcahy, Lynne Dreyer, Andrew Feindt, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Susanna Kittredge, Jason Fraley, Nicholas Messenger, Raymond Filip, Mitch Highfill, Ian Tyson, Lisa Fishman, Gloria Frym, St. John Perse, Robin Purves, Peter Davis, Alison Knowles, Russell Edson, Collin Kelley, Nashi, Jim Dine, Marie Ponsot, Joseph Ceravolo, Jorie Graham, Barbara Guest, Onishi Yasuyo, Matthew Henriksen, Kent Johnson, Eric Bogosian, Craig Shaffer, Hoa Nguyen, Zolt√°n Hom√°lyos, Marcella Durand, Afaa Michael Weaver, CAConrad, Eddie Watkins, Jeanne Marie Beaumont, Beth Joselow, David A. Kirschenbaum, Brandon Shimoda, Richard Taylor, H.T. Harrison, Wolfi Landstreicher, Robert Wilson, Andrew Topel, Juliana Spahr, John Levy, Stuart Ross, William Jay Smith, Jane Holland, Martin Edmond, Aldon Lynn Nielsen, Nikolai Gumilov, Billy Jno Hope, David Patton, Brian VanRemmen, Didi Menendez, Nico Alvarado-Greenwood, Danielle Pafunda, Pam Brown, Alexander Pope, Loss Pequeno Glazier, Jordan Scott, Will Edmiston, Robert Allen, Carly Sachs, Rick Burkhardt, Tisa Bryant, Alison Shaffer, Peter Norman, Roger Dean, Justin Evans, Jan Manzwotz, Don Wentworth, Tim Carmody, Guenter Grass, Ricardo Bracho, Erica Hunt, Robert Service, Katherine Hastings, James Finnegan, Elaine Equi, Clancy Ratliff, Mark Tardi, ee miller, Kara Hearn, Dax Bayard-Murray, Chris Kraus, Marita Dachsel, Redell Olsen, MaryAnn McCarra-Fitzpatrick, Tom Leonard, Wendy Wisner, Jean Roelke, Laura Sells, Donna Kuhn, Wen Yiduo, Erika Mikkalo, Tristan Tzara, Evie Shockley, Sarah Louise Parry, John Dos Passos, Doc Reese, Bob Dylan, Jennifer Montgomery, Lisa Samuels, Nin Andrews, Susan Gevirtz, Karen Mac Cormack, Roger Pao, Wang Ping, Samuel R. Delany, Andy Clausen, Barry Schawbsky, Mary Oliver, Deborah Meadows, Eve Rifkah, Reed Altemus, Alexei Remizov, Christopher Warrington, Bennett/Baron, Bill White, Franco Beltrametti, Joseph Massey, Stephen Mitchelmore, Jason Gray, Rod Smith, Tommi Avicolli Mecca, Richard Bank, Lorenzo Thomas, Matt¬†Hart, Eric Weiskott, Benito Vergara, J.D. Mitchell-Lumsden, Gerard Sarnat, January O'Neill, Miles Budimir, Christopher Kelen, Julie Carter, Tim Peterson, Rusty Morrison, Jay Rosevear, Jeremy Bushnell, Tomas S. Butkus, Katoh Ikuya, Lin Kelsey, Joan Larkin, Wystan Curnow, Alessandro Porco, Brian Seabolt, Summi Kaipa, Elizabeth Zechel, Thomas Lowe Taylor, Derek Walcott, Carla Milo, Nelly Sachs, Pattie Cowell, Mark Young, Sam Witt, Jed Rasula, Elizabeth Willis, Pamela Lawton, Sandra Seekins, Dave Lovely, Christopher Sindt, Jennifer Rogers, Ben Lerner, Richard Johnny John, Denton Welch, Andre Breton, Peli Grietzer, Erik Sapin, Jonathan Doherty, Michaela Cooper, Cathy Park Hong, Jake Berry, Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino, Julie Choffel, Alan de Niro, Katie Cappello, F.J. Bergmann, Robert Doto, Zackary Sholem Berger, Nina Alvarez, Katie Haegele, Elizabeth Block, Theo van Doesburg, Jon Frankel, Andrew Lundwall, Lily Brown, Ken Belford, Lisa Robertson, Chris Pusateri, Patrick Chapman, David Daniels, Maurice Blanchot, Georg Trakl, Frank Simone, Tony Barnstone, Thomas A. Clark, John Tranter, Dale Smith, James Tate, Joel Lewis, James Schiller, Dylan Kinnett, Richard Gilbert, George Economou, Tony Trehy, Tammy Ho Lai-Ming, Ophelia Mourne, Harlan Erskine, Melissa Benham, Kahlil Gibran, Jen Tynes, Hannah Craig, A.M. Correa, Katie Acheson, Nazim Hikmet, Brian Lucas, Louis Cabri, Maggie Dubris, Richard Bank, Alan Loney, Stephanie Countiss Emens, Erin Pringle, Anthony Metivier, Marie Buck, Zachary Chartkoff, Jan Oskar Hansen, Michael

Jarrett, James Cook, Philip Metres, Jon Paul Fiorentino, Vachel Lindsay, Michael Scharf, o. hunt, Ann M. Fine, Alfred Jarry, John Wood, Robert Desnos, Michael Gause, Danielle Dutton, Jonathan Jones, Eric Mottram, Mary Jo Bang, John Deming, D. Antwan Stewart, Hugh MacDiarmid, Rob, Eleanor Wilner, Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Scott Hartwich, Four Horsemen, Gregory Betts, Bill Berkson, Laurel Ransom, George Schneeman, Kristy Odelius, Lisa Cohen, Sina Queyras, Eric Baus, Angela Vasquez-Giroux, David Miller, MaryAnn McCarra Fitzpatrick, D.A. Powell, Julia Story, Andrea Lawlor, Jane Falk, Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, Ellen Baxt, Gisele Prassinos, Ruth Taylor, Laura Harper, artie gold, Jeni Olin, Sergei Gandlevsky, Lila Zemborain, Tony Tost, Juan Jose Flores, Brian Mihok, Tan Lin, Sarojini Sahoo, Paul Siegell, Nicole Mauro, Caroline Conway, Merrill Gillfillan, Geoffrey, Philip Rowland, Jonathan Evison, Ira Joel Haber, Melissa Pakalinsky, Susan Kaiser Greenland, Daniel Bailey, Jenny Boully, Djuna Barnes, David Wolach, Nick Twemlow, Rodney Koeneke, Cheryl Snell, Jennifer K. Dick, Reggie Harris, Peter Ganickz, Sheila Murphy, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Greg Rappleye, Alasdair Gray, Len Shneyder, Zack Linmark, John Seed, Paul Ford, Rachel Mallino, Jan Bindas-Tenney, Tim Botta, The Pines, Ecce Mulier, Kenneth Goldsmith, Daniel Pritchard, R. Zamora Linmark, Karen Wagner, Camille Roy, Steven Gould Axelrod, Vassilis Zambaras, James Bow, Steve Roberts, Ron Padgett, Jason Labbe, Donora Hillard, Larry Kearney, Kristen Orser, Ed Ruscha, Louise Waller, Sherri Wood, Miriam Jones, Steven Moore, Robert Hershon, Patry Francis, Dave Cook, Sara Veglahn, Alfred Leslie, Henri Michaux, C.K. Williams, Doc Searls, Lars Amund Vaage, Rae Armantrout, Rodrigo Flores, Allen Bramhall, Rigoberto Gonzales and Katha Pollitt, Anatol Stern, Sina Fazelpour, Sarith Peou, Harold Jaffe, L.L. De Mars, Peggy Kelley, Sara Marcus, David Applegate, Lisa Janssen, Jim Moore, Edmond Jabes, Ruth, Wei Ying-Wu, India Radfar, Matthew Cooperman, David Dowker, Laird Hunt, Mina Loy, Erin Bertram, Will Alexander, J. F. Quackenbush, John Gallaher, Robert Ashley, Benjamin Paloff, Andrew Neuendorf, Kusano Shimpei, Dion Farquhar, Lisa, Emily Gordon, Karen Plata, Dinah Roma, Doug Lang, Claire Becker, Caryl Pagel, Walter Mosley, Stephanie Stickland, Frank Sherlock, Justin Dodd, Katina Papson, Daniel Zimmerman, Keith Waldrop, Douglas Manson, Charles Olson, Bill Peschel, Franklin Bruno, Nathan Hauke, Paul Hoover, William Moor, C. Harris Stevens, Walter Abish, Amy Lemmon, Claude Royet-Journoud, John Keene, Aaron Armstrong Skomra, Jordan Sanderson, Reg Johanson, Peter Yovu, Daniel Pendergrass, John Beer, Justin Lacour, Jennifer Moxley, Nathan Lang, Hazel Smith, Iamnasra Oman, pr primeau, Sheryl Luna, Jonathan Ball, Terry Southern, Christian Peet, Pierre Joris, Oana Avasilichioaei, Arunta, Deanna Ferguson, Tom Phillips, Susan Schultz, Jason Camlot, David Kirschenbaum, Gail Mazur, Jack Hughes, Zack Finch, J.H.Prynne, Rebecca Loudon, Scott Inguito, Esmail Yazdanpour, Naftali Bacharach, Jennifer Osborne, Sylvia Plath, Richard Lopez, Sandy Baldwin, Kirsten Lavers, Andrew Christ, Ann Lauterbach, Shelly Taylor, Nicole Peyrafitte, Jessica Savitz, Sam Golden Rule Jones, K. Silem Mohammad, Lionel Kearns, Lili Bita, Aime Cesaire, R W Sturgess, James Moran, Mike Topp, Dan Featherston, Chris Daniels, Gregory Botts, Nicole Oquendo, Thomas Devaney, Randall, Keith Shein, William Harris, Rik Roots, Patricia Carragon and Andy Comess, Alejandro Tarrab, Matthew Shindell, Eric Gamalinda, Amy Bernier, Spencer Selby, Simone Muench, Piombino, Michelle Buchanan, David Lehman, Jonathan Skinner, Sandra Beasley, Patricia Spears Jones, Hal Saulson, Laura Riding, Taylor Mali, Nam June Paik, W.B. Yeats, Peter Reading, Graham

Foust, Brenda Coultas, Emily Lloyd, Ed Skoog, D.G. Jones, Vicente Huidobro, Jared Schickling, Peter Sacks, Kate Pringle, Rita Wong, Laila Lalami, Nancy Friedman, Franz Kafka, Robert Hellam, Brian Campbell, Danny Fields, Mario Cafiero, Peter Ciccariello, Cat Tyc, Nate Pritts, Andrea Brady, Andy Frazee, Felino Soriano, Clair Becker, Soumana Dasgupta, Jill Riga, David Raphael Israel, Stacey Levine, Mike Magee, Tim Yu, Cesar Vallejo, Isidore Ducasse, Amanda Earl, Romina Freschi, Alan Halsey, Daniel f. Bradley, Charles Rossiter, Noelle Kocot, Jayne Pupek, Aldous Huxley, Deborah Fries, Alani Apio, Jessica Smith, Christopher Barnes, Rick Snyder, Sarah Lang, Emily Dickinson, Cecilia Ann, bpNichol, Susanna Fry, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Charles Borkhuis, Herman Beavers, Stephanie Skura, Jessica Bennett, Steve Carey, Madeline Gins, Thom Donovan, Chuck Perrin, Luci Tapahonso, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Ira Cohen, Marko J. Niemi, Ray Davis, Nancy Gandhi, Dee Rimbaud, Mary O'Malley, Evie Ivie, Pamela Mack, Lawrence Lessig, Allyssa Wolf, and Snezana Zabic.

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--
Stephen McLaughlin
Schilperoortstraat 84 A2
3082SX Rotterdam, NL

Subject: Re: Issue 1 Release Announcement
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 20:25:27 -0400
This is totally brilliant & probably the best new media poetry or net
poetry whatever however defined I've seen. quantity translates into mass &
sense maybe missed mess - godot might as well be what I was waiting for w/
what seemed a v. long download. I wonder if Kenny G. had something to do
with this since I think he's one of the most amazing wryters around and
his use of mass/tifying aesthetics produce both some of the greatest
readable & nonreadable books I've seen edging simultaneously on
conceptualism || to Acconci back then on one hand & the only conceivable
wryting _in a sense_ given protocol code machine eu-gene list & LISP -
in a sense some of the sum of the wrythers & .echo more - Alan

Subject: Re: Issue 1 Release Announcement
From: Maria Damon <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 21:39:14 -0500
hey i'll try adding "my" poem to my CV at "merit review" time to see if
i can actually cash in on it for a better raise...that would be really
great payback for having lent my name, however unwittingly, to this
enterprise. i was sorta flattered, like, now i'm a "real" poet if
someone's trying to fake me...

fake anthology
Sat, 4 Oct 2008 01:32:31 -0700

Subject: fake anthology
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 01:32:31 -0700
Does anyone have any backstory on this?:
 http://poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/10/3785_page_pirated_poetry_antho.html

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: amy king <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 08:45:59 -0700
Ultimately, whose poems are these? Were they authored by these guys?
If so, look how they've gotten published poets to read their work.

Being unknown allows one not to worry about who gets pissed off at a
person. And now we're thinking and talking about their poems. Fairly
clever -- times three thousand.

Amy

_____

Recent work
http://www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/King.html

Amy's Alias
http://amyking.org/

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Mathias Svalina <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 11:34:16 -0500
This is one of the first good jokes in contemporary poetry. I can't
stop laughing at this; its hilarious in so many ways.

I wonder if part of the prank was to see how many hits they'd get
immediately from self-googlers.

I'm pretty pleased with my poem in it. I think i'll put it in my next book.

Subject: Re: fake anthology

From: Daniel Zimmerman <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 12:50:04 -0400
----- Original Message -----
From: Daniel Zimmerman
To: [log in to unmask]
Cc: Daniel Zimmerman ; Daniel Zimmerman
Sent: Saturday, October 04, 2008 12:46 PM
Subject: arsonism

Hi, Stephen.

I came across the odd surprise today of finding a poem by me (?) in arsonism's issue #1:

Witchcraft

Misses and has

            Daniel Zimmerman

(p. 3593).

Nice. I wish I had written it (or perhaps I did--via witchcraft!). I don't know the Daniel
Zimmerman who did write this poem (though I'd like to), but if you plan an issue #2, you
might want to choose from
http://www.fieralingue.it/modules.php?name=Content&pa=list_pages_categories&cid=4
4

or
http://beardofbees.com/zimmerman.html

or
http://www.origamicondom.org/IssuesPDFs/OC.03.pdf (pp. 30-31)

--poems by (the real, as far as I know) Daniel Zimmeman.

(Too bad you didn't include biographies.)

I guess you've pissed a lot of poets off by publishing their stuff without permission.
Well, you didn't publish mine without permission (since I didn't write that one),
but you have permission to pick one from the sites above.

Your magazine (!) raises interesting questions about copyright. Since it appears you've
used only one piece by each writer, one might regard it as "inspired use" or a kind of
ad campaign for poets that might interest browsers in finding out more about particular
writers. I wouldn't mind, but I know some of the poets you've published, and they know
me; I wouldn't want them to think that I wrote that poem (though I do like it) if I didn't,

nor would I want the other Daniel Zimmerman to hear of me getting credit for it and thus thinking that I had plagiarized his work. (If everyone had the same name, this would not present a problem.) Anyhow, good luck with your project.

Best,
Daniel Zimmerman (this one)
also at: http://www.middlesexcc.edu/departments/english/control.cfm

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Amish Trivedi <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 10:28:28 -0700
I suppose this is the proper response:

I'M ONE OF THE TOP 3164 POETS IN AMERICA!!!!!

WOOT!

:)

I'm now curious to find who's NOT on the list....

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ruth Lepson <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 13:35:08 -0400
guess I can take a day of inspiration off since they wrote a poem for me.
the book is mesmerizing till you realize the poems aren't by the poets! (I
THOUGHT Rukeyser, Wms & Leonard Cohen sounded awfully contemporary!) then
you see what they have in common--similes. of course it's thrilling to be
included with rimbaud & yoko.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Adam Tobin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 14:27:52 -0400
The editors of this anthology excluded (the names of) several of my favorite
poets, and I must say -- rather sincerely! -- that I am offended on their
behalf.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 11:38:03 -0700
My poem in there is awesome, and has just two similes.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 12:25:11 -0700
I am very curious as to the precise algorithms or other methods used in the
gathering of these names and the creation of these poems.Twilight appears in
the title and body of "my" poem, which is a keyword for me and is in the
title of the online journal I run, but the line breaks are weak.

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.net

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Robin Hamilton <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 20:40:53 +0100
From: "Ruth Lepson" <[log in to unmask]>
<<
the book is mesmerizing till you realize the poems aren't by the poets!
>>

... and either less or more so if you recognise that the "poems" were produced by a text
generation engine, and (presumably arbitraily) assigned to names trawled from the Web.

If anyone has a right to complain here, it's Text Generation Machine Mark 119, whose
essential contribution to the anthology isn't acknowledged.

It's difficult to imagine who will be reading any of the 3000+ pages of randomly-
generated twaddle, other than the "authors" to whom any particular stretch of words is
arbitrarily assigned.

(Add to a child whom not even its mother could love, an anthology that not even the
compilers bothered to read.)

Did the "editors" even read the list of names compiled by their 'bot, or simply feed them
directly into the cover of the work?

	Enquiring minds want to know ...

Well, not really, but it would be *slightly interesting to know which text generation
machine was used, and what instructions were given to the 'bots in their search for names.

Given the ommissions, I'd guess that the 'bots were scoring below random chance in any
search assocaited with the terms "poet" or "poetry".

Robin Hamilton

Subject: Re: Fake anthology
From: steve russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 14:20:13 -0700
& it seems they'll let almost anyone in cuz it's Godot, post history. Damn, I missed out on all of the fun. bitterbitterME.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Nic Sebastian <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 18:09:29 -0400
I didn't write the lines attributed to me in it, but I agree it is amusing in many ways. Assume we will get to hear from the author(s) in due time re: their motivation. If nothing else, this represents a *vast* amount of time and effort on someone's part -- hope they feel it is worth it. Nic Sebastianhttp://verylikeawhale.wordpress.com

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: "[log in to unmask]" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 06:32:29 +0800
Hmm, look a little closely and you'll see that it's not just a collation of USAmerican names, nor even just poets.

'Jill Jones' is quite happy with her/my poem - and she/I hope/s any other 'Jill Jones' may be as well.

The parrots are laughing at me outside my window this chilly spring morning. I'm laughing at myself after having had a stupid dream about anthologies last night - true and, hey, spoo-oo-ky.

"What are we to
make of this corn ..."

indeed!

Cheers,
Jill

_____

Jill Jones
www.jilljones.com.au

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Geraldine Monk <[log in to unmask]>

Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 23:42:00 +0100
I don't get this. Why should anyone spend so much time and effort 'p...ing off the poetry community'? What kind of utterly shallow aspiration is that? If the intention had been to amuse the poetic community I might have given it some credence but I object to its intention and I couldn't give a fig if I'm mentioned or not - I'm certainly not ploughing through that list to find out. I'd lose my will to live and I don't need silly endorsements of this kind.

I also find it strange that 'whoever' seems to think the 'poetic community' is of one mind. I think the posting to this list have shown that poets are very diverse in their reactions. My reaction? I find it rather depressing that in these troubled times (aren't times always troubled) there are far more deserving people to p.off. I think 'whoever' did it should be updated on the world situation and then maybe they could consider getting a life.

Geraldine

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 22:18:09 +0300
Some of those poets aren't american at all - Gunnar Ekelöf, Leevi Lehto, Kari Kokko, and others. That makes you one of the top 3164 poets in the world!

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Amish Trivedi <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 16:29:17 -0700
Dear Geraldine,

You're just jealous no one googled your name. Or maybe they did and I didn't see it because I only looked up my name, read the poem I wrote and then closed it.

What's the point in being made of fun as being shallow if I can't be shallow once in a while!

amish

Subject Re: fake anthology
From: Amish Trivedi <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 16:52:20 -0700
Certainly solves problems related to THE CANON

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Robin Hamilton <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 00:54:49 +0100

That's the odd thing -- whatever method of selection was used, it doesn't seem to have been a very useful or effective one, and it looks as if the names weren't taken directly from google -- it's almost easier to note the omitted names you'd expect from a straight trawl of high or even low profile sites or whatever than to work out why anyone *is there.

Perhaps the problem is that not *enough work was put into it, beyond linking a text generation program to a search mechanism, and pouring the results straight into a preformatted pdf file.

A couple of evenings work for a relatively competent programmer, finally.

Irritation on the cheap.

Robin Hamilton

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: John Cleary <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 19:48:59 -0400
I'm glad I'm not the only one who is pleased to be included in *any *anthology, even a fake one with a poem I didn't write.

John

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Larissa Shmailo <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 20:04:51 EDT
Anthology aside, what a search engine optimization technique this is for a blog. For Godot and its editors have gone viral overnight.

The whole thing is wonderful fun, exactly what poetry needs once in a while, some playful ribbing. I'm even getting used to "my" poem (a little).

Larissa Shmailo (http://myspace.com/larissaworld)
"The poet, like the lover, is a menace on the assembly line."
-Rollo May
Listen to Exorcism on iTunes or at:
http://cdbaby.com/cd/shmailo2 (http://cdbaby.com/cd/shmailo2)
http://www.myspace.com/larissashmailoexorcism
(http://www.myspace.com/larissashmailoexorcism)

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Adam Tobin <[log in to unmask]>

Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 20:49:13 -0400
Isn't that the aspiration of EVERY poetry anthology? Usually people just get pissed off
about what's excluded; this is far more interesting.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Halvard Johnson <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 21:21:50 -0500
ache anthology
bake anthology
cake anthology
dyke anthology
eyck anthology
flake anthology
hake anthology
ike anthology
joke anthology
kkk anthology
like anthology
mike anthology
nike anthology
oink anthology
pink anthology
quick anthology
rico anthology
sick anthology
tacky anthology
ugh anthology
voip anthology
wipe anthology
xenon anthology
yikes anthology
zip anthology

Hal

McCain / Palin -- Just say thanks but no thanks.
They're a bridge to nowhere.

Halvard Johnson

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Maria Damon <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 21:53:15 -0500

geez, i'm such an idiot; instead of "for Godot," i read "forgo DOT," as in [log in to unmask] like fargo, but doing without.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Mark DuCharme <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 22:21:56 -0600
My initial response to being "included" in this was to ask to be removed.   I've changed my mind.

I've only read a dozen or so poems in this, in addition to the one attributed to me. I have to say that I like these poems. Okay, what I've read (so far) is only a nanofraction; still, I'm surprised that I don't find more fault in them, even given that minuscule percentage.

I have two thoughts on this. First, this has to be the work of a single author— by which I mean a single individual or like-minded team, working with the aid of technology (or perhaps one of Jack Spicer's Martians, who gets no sleep). My second thought is that I agree with whoever said that the most likely culprit is Kenneth Goldsmith.

Kudos then, somewhat grudgingly, to the perpetrator or perpetrators.

Mark DuCharme

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 11:26:32 +0200
I am with Amy King, this is a mere Dadaist game, wonderful and playful. I would have loved to have had a similar idea, Hopefully I will soon have One!
Cheers to all !

Anny

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: "J.P. Craig" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 09:18:46 -0400
Just to make it clear: Robin Hamilton doesn't appear on the list of "contributor" poets.

Perhaps if the process had been more competent, whatever it was, Robin would be there too.

That's an easy dig, but I want to make it because this sort of irritation is exactly the reason I think this was a worthwhile project by whoever did it. I think it's also worthwhile that it made Geraldine M. say that there are more important people to irritate. Maybe

there are, but then again, this is saying something about self-worth, the value of poetry and so on. As previously noted, Geraldine doesn't appear in it either.

I think it's even more interesting and more revealing that the crowd over on harry-et tends more toward anger. That seems to me to jibe with poetry-as-a-career, poetry-as-expression, and to fit less well with the more open and odd and procedural poetics found on this list, which has been more open to the humor in it.

Sure, the project may not be the bestest and smarterest thing ever done, but it's provocative in ways that get people thinking about poetic economies and the role of poets in society, and so on. It reminds me a little of the Zurich Dada smartassery.

And yes, maybe I should recuse myself, because I did make whatever cut the cyborg made.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 11:34:47 -0400
It's because they hate our freedom.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Robin Hamilton <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 17:34:54 +0100
From: "J.P. Craig" <[log in to unmask]>

> Just to make it clear: Robin Hamilton doesn't appear on the list of
> "contributor" poets.

I'd hardly expect to -- I have neither blog nor homepage, and publish relatively little online.

What caught my eye when this surfaced some weeks ago was the name of Dominic Fox.

I was surprised, not because Dom isn't a good poet (I'm hoping to publish his work eventually in Phantom Rooster Press) but because he isn't exactly high profile.

I checked a number of names included against participants in the poetryetc list, and there seemed to be three from there -- Halvard Johnson (though Hal would qualify in various catagories), Andrew Burke and, Dom. Possibly others, but I didn't notice, but quite a few high profile names missing, such as Alison Croggan, editor of _Masthead_.

(I used poetryetc as a test case simply because I know the list well enough to judge, merit aside, the nature of the profile of the members of the list.

Anny Ballardini is also included in the compilation, but she tends not to post poems to poetryetc. The same relatively odd [arbitrary] selection of names from New Poetry appeared. The logic of the selection still intrigues me. Or the actual instructions given to the 'bot, and what it was sicked on.)

So we aren't looking at a simple google trawl.

One suggestion that's come up is that the names were taken from blogger.com.

I don't think it matters much (other than the presence or absence of names among the Favoured 3000 seems to correlate with neither merit nor web-presence) except to suggest that the selection of names was done on the cheap.

What disturbs me more is the apparently unironic approval of so many people for the poems attached to their names that were produced by a text generation engine.

This suggests that the response to what we have here is less to a dadaist or Situationist manifestation than a return to the old Eliza program of the sixties, when people were reluctant to admit that they were talking to a singularly dumb computer program.

Mind you, as someone pointed out, given that the whole thing has gone viral, it worked on that level.

> Perhaps if the process had been more competent, whatever it was,
> Robin would be there too.

I doubt it (see above). I score higher on googlebooks (we all have our little comfort blankets) than I do on plain vanila google.

> That's an easy dig,

Well, depends on what you mean by easy. I did put a little work and thought into it. <g>

For anyone who's interested, from what I've seen, the discussion on New Poetry tends to be the most technical in analysing the mechanism of how it was done.

Nuff said.

Robin Hamilton

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 00:53:31 +0800
I love it. I'm in it 3 times. Anybody beat that?

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 01:16:21 +0800
I had a similar reaction. the pieces attributed to me do have ELEMENTS that look like they might be related to me in some way. A couple of the word choices do look a bit like something I might have written.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: CA Conrad <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 13:58:43 -0400
Santa Claus is a pedophile and if I had kids he would be SHOT coming down the chimney!

This is not a hoax, but neither is the anthology?

In Pennsylvania where I live we have the LEAST amount of paper trail for election votes per voting machine per voter. This is not a hoax, but so is the anthology.

Crying and praying is the same release Joni Mitchess once sang, or something about laughing.

CAConrad
http://PhillySound.blogspot.com <http://phillysound.blogspot.com/>

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jim Andrews <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 14:08:41 -0700
> Does anyone have any backstory on this?:
>
http://poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/10/3785_page_pirated_poetry_antho.html

i see jim carpenter is one of the 'editors'.

jim was at epoetry 2007 in paris. he showed us a program he is/was writing that writes poetry. what distinguished his approach was that he was primarily interested in trying to get the program to write 'original', interesting poetry of the poemy poem variety. the poems were 'based' on other texts (used them as 'seed' material), but the algorithms produced work that could include as much or apparently as little of the originals as one liked. so that the result could be made to 'stylistically' resemble the 'original' but otherwise not be particularly recognizable.

the poem in the anthology by 'me' doesn't have obvious relation to anything i've written.

if i recall correctly from epoetry 2007, his program was such that you could feed it
several poems and then it would synthesize a new one 'based on' what you fed it.

the programming is obviously relatively sophisticated; jim is a professional programmer.
and is quite deeply immersed in these sorts of projects.

sort of a poetry synthesizer/sequencer.

i expect jim is the brains behind this project.

ja
http://vispo.com

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Dillon Westbrook <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 15:15:05 -0700
I'm sure I'm not the first to think of this, but it's pretty obvious to me that the editors (or
maybe their software) wrote the intro (i.e. the 3,785 'poems') and we're all currently
writing the actual anthology, on this list and on Harriet. The e-mail/blog-comment
chapter has no problems of dubious authorship, unless any of us besides Steve
McLaughlin have been hacked in the recent past.

signed,
Dillon Westbrook
(not-yet-hacked-but-a-hack-nonetheless)

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Layne Russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 16:38:22 -0700
thanks, Ron. :)

the best part about this for me is that I am next to George Oppen in the list of
contributors.

"my poem" actually sounds like poetry, though not mine. what a piece of programming.

Layne Russell

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Layne Russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 16:38:35 -0700
interesting idea, Dillon.

well, forgodot.com has certainly upped its readership, at least for this window of time.

thanks to Jim for the background on Jim Carpenter.

Layne Russell

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: colin herd <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 00:55:10 +0100
The list of names HAS in part to be from silliman's blog roll since i am on that, i am in
Issue 1, but have never had any other poetry published. (which is a little funny i guess but
pointless)... which means it's a lazy way of doing it. why should i be in it?...

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 14:13:51 +0800
there are several friends of mine who are lit bloggers that aren't poets and aren't on
silliman's blog roll who are also in the anthology.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 05:26:38 -0700
 Damn! I like this Jim guy. Could you link me up with him. He must be the craziest
literary techno I've ever heard of.

--Obododimma.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Glenn Bach <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 14:09:04 -0500
I don't think I can beat a "three-peat," but I appear twice, each with a different spelling of
my name: Glenn Bach and Glen Bach. At this point I'm thinking about using those two
poems as the seeds for a new project.

Huzzah.
G.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 12:48:23 -0700

I am definitely incorporating "my" anthology poem into my work. This whole thing has been a great stimulus.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 13:22:43 -0700
 I envy you. I didn't appear, even once! Could you lend me one of your fictional selves, one of your invented selves, in that anthology?

--Obododimma.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 14:02:45 -0700
You can have my fictional self. My life is strange enough limited to reality (I think).

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.net

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 05:08:38 +0800
My friend Eric Rosenfield is in it and is not a poet, so I bet he wouldn't mind if you swipe the minimalist ditty of his.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 22:36:25 -0400
I am caught between loving this anthology and dismissing the idea of it.

I love it because it's more comprehensive than any poetry anthology around...compared with Norton, this anthology is grandisimo!

I initially dismissed it; I find generated poetry only as interesting as our expectations. The Sarah Palin of poetry....generated poetry is cool because our expectations of it are low. This poetry is better than we think it could be. Hell, sometimes it's better than our own poetry is, but that's not really good enough, for me, at least. I like the errors, the "mistakes" in human poetry. Irony and bathos in generated poetry don't seem as funny.

With generated work, "wonder effect" never lasts long.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ann Bogle <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 00:33:01 EDT
Here is the poem that "I" (vis-a-vis Ann Margaret Bogle) did not write for the anthology,
Issue 1:

Like a delight

Will he be black?
He will scream,
"I will long for
to will glide
angrily"
This stream may stride and glare, but
it is angrily meagre
A sort of wall
A kind of invasion
A sort of delight
A kind of eye
Lustre is so motionless
it will quiver you
As if he will be steady, turning,
laying, like a use.
He will be shiny, his terrible
droop

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Tracey Gagne <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 00:38:43 -0400
You are there twice. It must be the fabulous last name!

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 21:37:43 +0800
3 times, actually. I think it's because JF J.F. and J F looked like
different names to the cleaning algorithm. still i'll take the top
representation. i think i'm the only 3peat in there.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: susan maurer <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 09:32:27 -0400
somehow i missed the beginning of al this and dont hae ths site for this much discussed
fake antholgy. could someone flash up its name? also should say there was a real program

on fri ant nyc's lillian vernon on the new u.iowa book women poets and mentorship, very interesting. susan maurer

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: angela vasquez-giroux <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 09:53:14 -0400
I am just not amused. I understand the avant-garde-ness of it, thew questions of authorship I was so entranced by in college, etc.

But mostly, I am pissed because I work very hard not to produce suck ass poems. Most certainly, I keep my suck-ass poems locked away in a vault on my hard drive which will hopefully never see the light of day.

So Silliman has the email address of the "compiler": [log in to unmask]

I'm sending an email noting my desire not to be associated with bad poetry. I have no real issue with the "idea", aside from the fact that no one gets to say, "Yes, count me in".

Anyhow.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: John Cleary <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 10:04:10 -0400
I don't like "my" poem at all. Maybe I should auction it off to the highest bidder?

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Sarah Sarai <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:22:02 -0400
What's the url to the specific poem, i.e. a poem "by" uh er Sarah Sarai? I'm so thrilled to be part of anything, especially a joke, a parody. No wringer for my panties. (At least not yet.) Beatrix Potter and Bukowski in the same anthology? Peter Rabbit is slugging back a
few stiff ones.

...Sarah
http://www.myspace.com/sarahsarai

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 08:24:41 -0700
 Visit: http://www.forgodot.com/?ext-ref=comm-sub-email

and s

 Visit: http://www.forgodot.com/?ext-ref=comm-sub-email

and scroll down to read "Issue 1", a pdf document of about 4000 pages.
Best.
--- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Will Larsen <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:06:58 -0500
@Ryan,
I have this strange feeling a computer program would make just as many compositional
"mistakes" as a human poet. Perhaps we could devise some sort of poetical Turing test to
tell the difference. Which raises the issue of what to call it--a Homer Test? A RACTER
test? A W(h)it-mus test—like measuring acid, but cleverer, with a beard?

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:57:42 -0500
John,
Our poems' suckiness can fight...like with swords. Only fake generated ones.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:58:39 -0500
Will,

True. We (read, those who can, unlike me) should devise a way to anthologize
mistakes...

wait...Isn't that Poetry.com?

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Christophe Casamassima <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 01:25:04 +0800
Ha! I appear twice: once as "Christopher" and once as "Christophe". Talk about duality
and modernism!

Subject: Re: fake anthology

From: Thomas savage <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 12:05:32 -0700
I just looked up the original entry for this anthology and found my name listed in the table of contents but when I tried to access "my" poem in this online production by alphabetical order of my name, I found my name missing. Thus I have no idea what is or isn't in this anthology under my name although I am listed in a long list of poets supposedly included in this book. If anybody would be kind enough to let me know what, if anything, is included in this book attributed to me , I would appreciate it. Regards, Tom Savage

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jim Andrews <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 13:54:40 -0700
> If these poems are made one-size-fits-all rather than custom made
> based on an analysis and resynthesis per poet (and thus having
> individual poetic style) then it becomes a lot less interesting to me.

There's info about that at
http://poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/10/anthology_spoiler.html

If I understand correctly, there is 0% correlation between the poets and 'their poems'. Although several poets wrote in to the Poetics list noting some perceived correlation between their own work and what appeared under their name in the 'anthology'. I think they were mistaken, actually.

> Frankly I'm somewhat surprised that this kind of postmodern move can
> still generate anger. Appropriation, problematizing notions of
> authorship, creating art about art, art as critique destabilizing art-
> world social conventions and power structures...isn't this standard
> practice? Haven't poet's immune systems built up resistance to this
> kind of thing yet? I guess not.

That's an informed response, Philip. About pomo art. But the poets on the Poetics list are quite varied in their sophistication concerning such things. From absolutely clueless to very knowlegeable indeed. Because contemporary poetry scenes and approaches run the gamut from cluelessness about technology and contemporary art (apart from print poetry) to local dominance to ... to ... international media art synthesis of arts, media, and technology.

Also, Jim Carpenter's project deals with the poemy poem. Not visual poetry or sound poetry or obviously algorithmic poetry and so on. So Jim's project deals with a type of poetry that most poets and readers of poetry understand to be poetry.

I expect that, whether one is talking about poetry or visual art or music yadayada, what will get a wide audience will not so much be how the project deals with the sort of issues

we raise concerning generative art--fascinating and genuinely important as those issues are, I believe--but issues that are more widely understood. And, of course, the appeal to vanity in this project is also, well, amusing.

99.9999% of the folks out there will only get into the issues of generative art when they are led there via a string of considerations that don't start there.

ja
http://vispo.com

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 23:37:39 +0200
This is precisely like reading your horoscope and saying "Oh my gosh, this is totally relevant to my life right at this instant!" Every poem was randomly assigned.

I do, however, acknowledge the existence of the possibility that I may have altered this or that poem or assigned poems based on word matches from book titles harvested from SPD. And I further acknowledge that I can provide no objective proof of my actions in this regard. Even further -- now that these ideas have been generated by list discussion, I may well use such ethically questionable practices in future projects. I'll have to sleep on it. In any case, they were all randomly assigned. In fact, this is the first time I've seen your name.

-steve

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Will Larsen <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 17:34:15 -0500
Ryan,
Or, in a less serious vein, http://verybadpoetry.com/

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Nicky Melville <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 18:06:18 +0000
hey,

aside from th fact that, for whatever reason, i was pleased t hav made th cut (and yes, i am younger,
th age of Christ in fact)...here's my tuppence worth:

th poem i'm credited with is very interesting in that 5 lines closely resemble lines from one of my actual poems, but curiously, one that has not appeared on th internet, nor even been widely distributed outside Edinburgh.

some of th lines in question:

Of rest

Of promptitude

Of clothes

this is similar to a poem i wrote about David Hume using the chapter titles from A Direct Treatise of Human Nature, all of which start with Of...

i don't think anyone has so far said that their 'poem' is anything like their 'normal' work. is this just a coincidence or is it an incredibly well read algorithm?

all th best,
nick-e

p.s. any opinion on this Steve?

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 15:46:59 -0700
Jim, just a quibble: I would say that any perceived similarities between our work and our "work" were likely to be coincidences rather than mistakes (but hey, who knows, I could make those I saw portals of discovery).

Full disclosure: I wholeheartedly believe in the pursuit of significant coincidences and the search for synchronicity.

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.net

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 07:40:00 +0800
I found, reading "my" poems that I had a tendency to read for signs of my signature on the poem. I had entertained the possibility that there were word choices in the machinery linked to specific poems culled from online journals, but then, several of my friends who are not poets were also included so that seemed unlikely. in any case, the exercise of

reading in to these poems i think is part of the layer of making this interesting rather than just an experiment with 10000 monkeys banging on 10000 typewriters.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 21:51:26 -0400
Will,
I actually like the poem on that site. Oh well.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 00:08:07 -0700
 Thanks, Jason, for being the middleman in the transaction!
-- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: George Bowering <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 18:20:14 -0700
Mine had similies in it. (Yes, that is a proper spelling).
That proves that the computer is a bad poet.

gb

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Jim Andrews <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 22:02:32 -0700
Yes, I agree. Sorry.

ja
http://vispo.com

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Thomas savage <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 08:34:24 -0700
I have finally been able to read the poem attached to my name in this anthology and it definitely is nothing I ever wrote. One of the posts about this production I read said the lines and phrases come from Emily Dickinson and Joseph Conrad. My guess is that the short "poem" attributed to me may be a line from one of Dickinson's poems although I have no idea which one. It is distressing and sad that the Poetry Foundation has sponsored this strange Blog of unreal poems attributed to real poets. Has anyone protested this curious example of identity theft (I don't know what else to call it) to its

source or enabler, the Foundation itself? Would a group effort help to get them to take it down? Regards, Tom Savage

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: "steve d. dalachinsky" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 17:27:16 -0400
shit i'm not even real enough to be part of this fake anthology really
hurt

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: mIEKAL aND <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 20:31:40 -0500
Why only 3000+ entries? Perec at least chose a noble accomplishment (Hundred
Thousand Billion Poems). Are at least one poem for each person on the planet living &
dead.

~mIEKAL

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Sarah Sarai <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 08:51:25 -0400
You're in it, Dalachinsky! You've been faked. Page 258.

Now you too have the privilege of over intellectualizing a tug at the poet's need for fame.
We do have it--a fame knee-jerk.

Maybe fame is one of the poet's baser instincts, like the urge to kill someone whose tinny
music trilling from earphone impedes on airspace is a baser instinct.

i.e.,

maybe we need to fight any craving for fame because like all cravings it leads no where,
not to get Buddhist on your ass, but really, it just leads nowhere. There are careerists,
among us, even, and God bless them.

The average acceptance rate runs 3-7%. Which means you got to have a hell of a lot of
desire to see the work out there.   I had to laugh at how happy I was to also be faked, to
be in the anthology. Partly that's a desire to be included. I just want to hang out with
you guys. But also the incredible importance people derive from being a poet or talking
about what they consider to be intellectual issues. I mean, jeeze.

That's what Palin and McCain draw their energy from...when they make fun of
intellectuals there is an element of truth in what they say.

They are dangerous people misusing a minor insight.

The fake anthology is making fun of words. Words are funny. We (me too) assign so much importance to their importance.

Gotta go
...Sarah
pg. 2382
http://www.myspace.com/sarahsarai

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 07:33:36 -0700
That was Raymond Queneau, not Perec.
The artist Allan McCollum devised a system for producing one drawing for every individual on earth.

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: Thomas savage <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 08:05:47 -0700
Steve, your name appears in it at least once, I think, twice. Regards, Tom Savage

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: George Bowering <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 11:46:42 -0700
Actually, it wasn't Perec. It was Queneau.
gb

Subject: Re: fake anthology
From: "steve d. dalachinsky" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 19:02:47 -0400
wow just found out i am in the fake antho
and i actually wrote that poem (in my sleep i think)
and this fame thing well
right now i gave up a good gig on election nite here in ny
with lots of famous musician folk and $$$$$
to go to france for a while i'm still torn vey sad / flushed distressed
think maybe my gig here woulda brought me over night success
any one out there concur or think i should go on the trip work on the
new book there
like i'm supposed to and keep writin them poems in my sleep

since i'm stupid i think my antho pome's quite great
since i'm insecure and always need inclusion i'm relieved to find me in
there
if only once

Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
Sat, 4 Oct 2008 08:37:32 -0700

Subject: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: amy king <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 08:37:32 -0700
From the Harriet Blog this a.m.

Featuring the work of 3, 164 poets. Completely unpermissioned and
unauthorized, pissing off the entire poetry community. Either you're in or
you're not. Full roster below the fold.

From http://www.forgodot.com/2008/10/issue-1-release-announcement.html:

For what's it worth, kudos to these three young guys. I imagine
they're students, twiddling their thumbs, trying to imagine how to stir
up the poetry world, steeped in some sort of theory (situationist?
dada-ist? surrealism? etc), facing the menacing world of "getting
published" and making something of themselves as poets, ahem. They've
decided to take on the death of the lyrical I, the death of the author,
the death of paper, the celebration of the internet sea, etc. They've
done something, though just what isn't clear, but yes, kudos to their
efforts to make a mess of the pool of internet muck -- it may be only a
ripple in the end, but maybe some of the worthwhile work and sites and
ideas will get a chance to rise (not necessarily from the anthology) after their
pebble has sunk to disappearance.

My response to them appears here:
http://amyking.wordpress.com/2008/10/04/the-author-resurrected/

Be well,
Amy

———

Recent work
http://www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/King.html

Amy's Alias
http://amyking.org/

Subject: Re: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: Patrick Lovelace <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 03:01:35 -0400
Amy, I wonder if your "sunk into disappearance" is more than a bit strong,
similar to Ron Silliman's nearly threatening a lawsuit in his recent blog
entry.

I had thought about commenting on Ron's blog, then thought better of it, but
as I am again awash by the sea of (frequently silly, constantly
entertaining) commentary this item has created, I find myself again wanting
to respond, lest the mob gather itself too swiftly. I wonder which 'author'
response has spooked Mr McLaughlin the most, which threat made him nearly
take down the project, tail between his foolish legs? (Need I reference
Gatza's HCE anthology here?)

From mild amusement, to unintentionally evocative disdain, to supreme
financial retribution, to I DIDN'T WRITE THIS FUCKING GARBAGE! (the new I
HATE SPEECH?!), please, by all means, continue.

Subject: Re: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: amy king <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 09:00:14 -0700
Patrick,

I also wonder if you are willfully extracting a few of my words that clearly imply this
entire conversation will simply "disappear", as it surely will in a week or so, and
conflating my words with "threatening a lawsuit" out of some displaced need to defend
the creators of this anthology ...? My entire statement is one of encouraging sentiment
about the anthology, as is my original blog post
(http://amyking.wordpress.com/2008/10/04/the-author-resurrected/) , and to read
otherwise smells of ulterior motive.

I have read many of the nasty comments as well in the various online venues -- can't
imagine how anyone can miss them -- but am a bit amiss that you chose to read my own
positive ones, using three extracted words, as negative. It is quite clear that you do not
need to defend Stephen McLaughlin from me. The man himself has left a comment on
my blog; he does not write as a threatened soul.

As for defending him in general and the note that he might take the thing down, I can't
believe that anyone would attach poems with 3,000 poets who did not write them and
imagine only a hunky-dorey response. Of course there's going to be fall out, even if that

"fall out" is a bunch of pissed off poets--but one hopes for more in the way of discussion/debate. That anyone would hope for otherwise is to live in on another planet.

And that's just the point of the anthology, I speculate. Ownership and egos would react first and generate conversation -- unless this is meant to be some huge and romantic kind of ode to all of the poets included (several who aren't poets), this anthology is all about challenging lots of ideas about publishing, authorship, ownership, authority, anthologies, etc. Many here have already noted, just by discussing this anthology's existence, what those issues are -- and beyond. To boil it down to me "threatening" the creators somehow is just downright disingenuous, detracts from the issues raised, and does the creators no justice at all.

Be well,
Amy

_____

Recent work
http://www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/King.html

Amy's Alias
http://amyking.org/

Subject: Re: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 17:47:44 +0200
For the record, I'm not spooked -- even by Uncle Ron.
--
Stephen McLaughlin

Subject: Re: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 18:06:04 +0200
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Just fyi, that wasn't me who commented on your blog.
Sock puppets enter the saga!
--
Steve McLaughlin

Subject: Re: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: amy king <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 09:17:11 -0700
Stephen,

Okay, someone signed as you, gave this blog address:
http://vladdyzykovden.blogspot.com/, but their IP address is in Brooklyn. Go figure.

But the point remains, Steve McLaughlin doesn't strike me as someone getting scared
enough to pull his anthology down due to angry responses, and mine isn't one of them
anyone, so cheers!

Thanks,
Amy

Subject: Re: Check Out HOW They're Getting Readers...
From: Patrick Lovelace <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 14:08:58 -0400
Amy,

Thanks for your response. I had not read your blog entry, obviously, &
apologize for the stretching. I think my comment was much more colored
by Mr Silliman's, which upon reading again seems even stranger.

At the same time, all the net detective stuff seems overkill, from
your minor IP work to Ron's posting of Mr McLaughlin's address. Maybe
we could get his SS number too, & trash his credit rating as he has
trashed ours. Kidding, obviously.

Thank you for your response. As far as a 'displaced need', I take it
as a compliment.

Cheers,
Patrick

fakeish anthology
Sat, 4 Oct 2008 13:43:10 -0400

Subject: fakeish anthology
From: ALDON L NIELSEN <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 4 Oct 2008 13:43:10 -0400
thanks for alerting me to this -- This is the first poem ever published by
"Aldon Lynn Nielsen." I'm hoping he'll write more.

<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<><>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>
>>>>>>>>>>>>>

"Study the fine art of coming apart."

--Jerry W. Ward, Jr.

Sailing the blogosphere at: http://heatstrings.blogspot.com/

Aldon L. Nielsen
Kelly Professor of American Literature
The Pennsylvania State University
116 Burrowes
University Park, PA   16802-6200
(814) 865-0091

Subject: Re: fakeish anthology
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 01:46:57 +0200
Well -- thank you for your generally positive response (or at least not
aggressively negative, like some recent posts on the Poetry Foundation's
Harriet blog). For my part, I'm getting a good laugh out of this whole
thing. Just changed all my passwords to be on the safe side.

All the best --
-steve

Subject: Re: fakeish anthololgy
From: Lauren Russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 11:01:48 -0700
So Steve, how on earth did you get my name? I'm quite obscure to be included in such
public satire. Of course, the "researchers" are probably reluctant to reveal their methods.
This is a bizarre way to be spending your time, but it does raise some interesting
questions.

Lauren

Anthology
Sun, 5 Oct 2008 08:20:36 -0500

Subject: anthology
From: Samuel Wharton <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 08:20:36 -0500

maybe the best thing about all of this is that everyone listed is now on silliman's blog!

samuel

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Murat Nemet-Nejat <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 15:07:07 -0400
What this anthology is to me about is the celebration of the internet. I wonder what algorithm was used to arrive at the names of these poets.

Ciao,
Murat

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Adam Tobin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 15:23:51 -0400
What everybody seems to be missing in all of this: I believe these poems were written by a computer algorithm?

It seems to be a very sophisticated algorithm, written by somebody who "gets it"; among other things, I am guessing it uses related groups of words together as well as some ideas about poetic form. Perhaps it is drawing from our own poems as source texts?

Apparently it also passes the Turing Test, in that most people seem not to notice that it was not written by a human.

Kudos to the programmers! I've spent now several hours with the manuscript, and am finding real poetry within it.

adam tobin

PS Also, if I am right about it being computer-generated -- especially if it is using vocabulary and formal devices drawn from our actual poems -- it seems perfectly appropriate to attribute these poems to "The Poetry Community" (whatever that is: perhaps just a list of 3,147 names), rather than, say, any one individual typist.

That attribution may also apply to the work we usually publish under our own names, anyway.

Subject: Re: anthology

From: Maria Damon <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 16:03:54 -0500
The thing is, the poems are all quite similar to each other. they're not
bad, but the similarity quickly makes the whole anthology a bit bland; i
guess this is part of the critique implied by the process as well as all
the other critiques people have mentioned.

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Catherine Daly <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 15:00:48 -0700
Thanks, Jim.

Actually, it seems to me that the poems have similies because to the
algorhythm designer, a simile is an easy to program phrase (throw in like!
throw in as!) that makes it seem like a poem, poetic language; the list
seems to be 1) a lot of POETICS list folks (easy to harvest from archives,
probably comprepoetica), 2) a lot of "very online" folks, 3) a lot of poets
who play with computer interference of various sorts, 4) dead folks with not
particularly litigious estates: for 3000+ writers, seems like 3000+ of the
writers least likely to be freaked out. Names from other poetry listservs
or just groups of other poets I know aren't there.

--
All best,
Catherine Daly

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 15:41:31 -0700
Of course it's obvious that it was computer-generated, if only because it is even vaster
than the lifetime work of Ron Silliman and Clark Coolidge combined. But what's
interesting is how good it is. (Not as good as theirs, I mean, but pretty darn good--a lot of
the language has considerable presence.) As I just wrote back-channel to one of the other
correspondents to this list, isn't it interesting how much better this machine-generated
poetry is than most "written" poetry? Maybe that realization is secretly why so many
people are so upset.

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 16:23:19 -0700
It all makes me want to go back and re-read Kleist on why puppets are better actors than
humans.

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 05:22:15 -0700
I view it that way too and do have the feeling that it throws up interesting theoretical issues about authorship in the Age of the Computer/Web. Moreover, it does, in a very funny way, write for those of us who may be experiencing the "writer's block"! This is not being cynical; I'm dead serious!

-- Obododimma

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Mathias Svalina <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 14:42:11 -0500
Puppets can make great poets as well: http://www.effingpress.com/lester.htm

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 22:37:29 +0200
I also had a similar thought today that zigzagged my mind, that I am not writing anything, that is what I thought!

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Halvard Johnson <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 16:21:40 -0500
Did you think that as you wrote this? ;)

Hal

McCain / Palin -- Just say thanks but no thanks.
They're a bridge to nowhere.

Halvard Johnson

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Murat Nemet-Nejat <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 00:30:41 -0400
Or go back to Bresson why models, virginal inside and mechanical outside, are better actors than actors.
Ciao,
Murat

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 19:02:13 +0200
You mean, if I was thinking while writing that I am not writing any more but only thinking that I should write, and as they say, so forth?

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Halvard Johnson <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 17:48:17 -0500
Especially the "so forth" part.

Hal

McCain / Palin -- Just say thanks but no thanks.
They're a bridge to nowhere.

Halvard Johnson

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 13:48:15 +0200
Ah, that makes sense now. Thank you.

Subject: Re: anthology
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 21:26:55 -0400
It would be a way to interrogate our mistakes. We could sit back and "understand" our own flaws.

It would be like having a town hall debate, but with thoughtful questions.

Issue 1 anthology follow-up post
Sun, 5 Oct 2008 02:29:19 +0200

Subject: Issue 1 anthology follow-up post
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 02:29:19 +0200
In the midst of this so far rather minor flap (Until my SSN is circulated, I'm keeping my cool.), I'd like to make a request. Anyone out there with a

published chapbook, a favorable disposition, and the means to cover
international shipping should send a copy or two my way. My address is
below.

--
Stephen McLaughlin
Schilperoortstraat 84 A2
3082SX Rotterdam, NL

Fake Anthology
Sun, 5 Oct 2008 12:00:34 -0400

Subject: Fake Anthology
From: "Kimmelman, Burt" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 12:00:34 -0400

Well, Google Alert let me know that I'm in this anthology (see:

http://poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/10/3785_page_pirated_poetry_ant
ho.html)

but of course my name appears below a poem I have not written. So am "I"
in this anthology?

What I'm curious about is, first of all, if a poem of mine is in the
anthology sitting above someone else's name, and secondly, if not then
who wrote all this poetry-Kenneth Goldsmith?

Burt Kimmelman

Subject: Re: Fake Anthology
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 12:16:27 -0400
Of course, just write it!

Subject: Re: Fake anthology
From: Roy Exley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 10:52:04 +0100
'DEAD AUTHOR - FOUND DISMEMBERED BY ALGORITHMS - REMAINS
UNIDENTIFIED'

Proposition made by the French writer Roland Barthes seems to have become horribly true as panic sweeps the Poetics List.

Issues with Issue 1
Sun, 5 Oct 2008 16:13:13 -0500

Subject: Issues with Issue 1
From: Patrick Dillon <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 16:13:13 -0500
This morning I was pleased to see that my friend Steve McLaughlin is getting a lot of attention for his collaborative work Issue 1. I was also pleased to discover that I am included in the anthology. Many people are, understandably, unhappy. Depending on how one looks at it, those included are either the recipients of a gift or victims. The reaction seems rather split. Steve has more confidence than I do that it will be able to remain on the web, but I am enjoying the dialog it has triggered on its own page, Silliman's Blog, Amy King's Alias, and Harriet.

Issue 1 is edited by Steve and Jim Carpenter. The website lists Steve, Vladimir Zykov, and Gregory Laynor as co-researchers. There seems to be a lot of poor speculation about the authorship of the poems. For those who are not familiar with Jim Carpenter or who won't take the five minutes to research him, he is the creator of Erica T Carter or etc3, a random poem generator. The poems attributed to the authors of Issue 1 are most likely randomly generated poems using this software or another of Jim's creations.

The problem with this anthology is that it directly provokes an array of actual authors. Personally, I am flattered to be included in this anthology (no doubt because of my personal friendship with Steve), but I do sympathize with those that are unhappy to have their names included. My girlfriend, a law student not included in this anthology, has great fear about the potential of the internet to invade privacy and hurt reputations. Although I may not share these anxieties, I respect her opinion and have learned from it. People may be genuinely upset when false actions are attributed to them. So, in my opinion, this is a rather disrespectful piece of art.

That disrespect will be a pro for some, a con for others. While this is intentionally provocative, we must admit that the stakes are very small, and anyone with half a brain or an internet connection will know that these are unoriginal works. So what is the actual harm? Therefore, we must also recognize Steve and Jim's bravado.

The merit of this piece results from the collision of theory and the real world. We could use more of this interaction in almost every aspect of our lives.

Subject: Re: Issues with Issue 1

From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 5 Oct 2008 19:03:16 -0400

What fascinates me is the whole issue of intellectual property - as I mentioned, I've found my work taken, rewritten, recontextualized, reprinted, whatever - and that's great. If you're on the Web or for that matter published in punk etc. stuff you should expect this. I fail to see how any of our reputations are so precious that this is injurious - instead, it's probably the best piece of Net literature (however def.) that's come down the pike so to speak in a long while - it becomes a rorschach test for just about everyone, including myself - a test not only of our own reactions but the web. I admire this incredibly - so many people have downloaded it! as opposed to downloading one or another chapbook that seems somehow narrowed in relation to this ocean.

And the ocean of course reflects the Web/Net itself. I have a show up for example on SL and other people have created interventions and you just learn to deal with them – the net's porosity is only going to increase.

Re: Below - this anthology wouldn't have worked at all without either the provocation or names of actual authors - that's the strength of it!

As far as the net invading privacy and hurting reputations - get used to it; this happens to everyone who has much of an online presence. I think of this action as a kind of creative commons at work - which includes as some have pointed out - all these reactions.

And how is this invading privacy? My 'poem' (which I then sent out under my own name) isn't telling any deep dark secrets or giving away tax numbers, whatever. And how even plagiarism could hurt one's rep - I have no idea, but it seems to go back to the usual romantic notions and arguments about the inviolate author. There goes Lautreamont.

- Alan

Anthology Spoiler
Mon, 6 Oct 2008 05:18:09 -0700

Subject: Anthology Spoiler
From: amy king <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 05:18:09 -0700
From the Harriet Blog this a.m. --

I received the following email from Stephen McLaughlin this afternoon, who asked me to post this here:

"One morning about a month ago, I received a message from the

Poetics List that began something like 'Announcing Issue 1 of Broken
Caterpillar. Featuring new poems by . . . followed by a list of 45
poet's names. I'd seen one of them on Silliman's blogroll, but the rest
were just flat names. Barely names -- ethereal text strings. Keep in
mind that I receive hundreds of these announcements per year.
Continued at Harriet --
http://poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2008/10/anthology_spoiler.html#comments

Amy

_____

Recent work
http://www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/King.html

Amy's Alias
http://amyking.org/

Subject: Re: Anthology Spoiler
From: Maria Damon <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 10:08:45 -0500
wow, the list hasn't been this hoppin' in years!
reminds me of my father's old quip: "We haven't had this much fun since
the rats ate the baby." Usually i only get to use that line at
department meetings.

Subject: Re: Anthology Spoiler
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 6 Oct 2008 22:39:16 +0200
:-)
I was also observing that it is funny that the anthology appeared when the financial
markets are eating down the meager earnings of working people. What a coincidence,
anybody knows better

fake antho
Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:26:04 -0500

Subject: fake antho
From: Skip Fox <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:26:04 -0500

Herewith, the time it deserves

Generation game? (was fake antho)
Tue, 7 Oct 2008 12:44:04 +0100

Subject: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Geraldine Monk <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 12:44:04 +0100
> I envy you. I didn't appear, even once! Could you lend me one of your
> fictional selves, one of your invented selves, in that anthology?
>
> -- Obododimma.
>

I've been meaning to keep out of this but I've been genuinely surprised at the response
from lots of poets here. Many of you seem more than happy to have your names attached
to something a computer wrote. I just find this extremely weird. I can't honestly see the
satisfaction gained but I'm not disputing it because obviously much satisfaction has been
gained. But I can't get to the nub of why this should be because it's the very act of
writing poetry that gives satisfaction - apart from book production which I find integral to
heart of poetry. The rest of it - putting your name to it, getting it 'out there' is just the
mechanics of transmission, and the mechanics of transmission can be very rather tedious!

I certainly accept that something like this could act as a trigger for some poets to develop
work from it but if the satisfaction is merely to see your name on a poem you didn't write
then I'm totally mystified.

Why I saw Obododimma reply it intensified my mystification because I was delighted
when someone had gone to the effort to find out I wasn't included. I couldn't get up the
enthusiasm to check it out myself and somewhat dreaded being there. My name is who I
am and I don't relinquish that lightly.

Anyway I might be wrong in this but could we be seeing a real shift (or even rift) in
attitudes between younger and older poets? Many of you will have been brought up with
computer and be totally at ease with the computer age with its impersonal and intrusive
ways. Whereas poets of my generation (I'm 56) were brought up in a very very private
word, without television (although they were just about beginning to infiltrate the homes)
telephones (public ones would be streets away if you knew anyone who had a phone to
ring! - everyone wrote letters) - and of course no fridges, cars and all the other things we
take for granted. Apart from the radio which was the main source of entertainment our
known world was a small pocket of our neighbourhood. The pace of change has been
phenomenal and much of it for the better but it has been at the cost of our privacy. In a
way it's a matter of what you don't know you don't miss. I think a lot of poets of my

generation know what real privacy was so we have something to compare it to - and that comparison can be alarming.

Obviously I can't check out my 'age theory' in relation to the 'anthology' but I wonder if this is a salient factor in all our attitudes towards this.
Just a thought.

Geraldine

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 21:52:14 +0800
I was talking to my mother about this the other day. She's 60 and was remarking at how little I cared about my name appearing on things like this anthology. My response is that my name has very little to do with me. It's a series of sounds and/or letters that is used to designate me, and that i use to identify things that i've written, but beyond that? it isn't much of anything. by publishing, which was a choice that I made, i put my name OUT THERE. and i think that part of the generational difference that you may be talking about here is a different conception of what OUT THERE means. the public space of the internet, and of discourse, is one where Identity has very little to do with one's name and much more to do with ones actions. this anthology, because it's clearly computer generated, and because the way the names were presented were en masse in a sort of storm of names is very different from the sort of thing i might object to, such as someone specifically using my name to endorse something i disagree with or using my bio to try to get crappy poems published. There is no action attributed to me in my name's inclusion in this thing. The only thing that my name being included in this says about me is that I have a minor public presence as a writer, which fact is the result of intentional action on my part. the project itself, as a commentary on the field and as a utilization of machine generated poetry, is worthy and as such I don't really see anything objectionable about it at all. what you're calling real privacy to me looks like something that is either illusory or an over strong definition. a rose is a rose is a rose, and no number of garbage poems about roses have ever diminished the rose from being a beautiful flower. just the same, a JF Quackenbush is a JF Quackenbush is a JF Quackenbush, and attributing a computer generated poem or poems to JF Quackenbush says nothing about me or my work. so why should it bother me?

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Philip Rowland <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 23:41:03 +0900
Well, I'm younger (though not quite young enough to have been brought up with computers), but still hear-hear what you say, Geraldine.

Just because so many people have downloaded it -- out of little more than curiosity at whether they or their friends are included -- doesn't seem as incredibly meaningful as

some have said! Harmless fun, perhaps, loaded with a little bit of a subversive message regarding intellectual property/authorial vanity, but deserving of such admiration?

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Sharon Mesmer/David Borchart <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:02:51 -0400
Geraldine,

I write to you as a huge fan of your work -- I first saw you read in London in '86, in connection (I think, if memory serves) with MHorovitz's Grandchildren of Albion anthology -- and with no disrespect whatsoever. In your post, you wrote:

> But I can't get to the nub of why this should be because it's the
> very act of writing poetry that gives satisfaction

Indeed. So much so that having a little hoax poem (or two or three) with one's name on it included among over 3,000 other little hoax poems could/should never detract from that. There's no real satisfaction to be gained from seeing one's name on a poem one didn't write (sometimes there's no satisfaction from seeing one's name on a poem one did write!). There's a giggle, yeah, at the joke -- that the poems are so obviously not the work of the many, many poets whose names are affixed to them -- but a giggle's not satisfaction. Okay, sometimes it can be, but I think not in this case.

The anthology has certainly revealed a lot of very interesting attitudes (about, for one thing, litigation) among certain poets, and maybe that's its "value." But what you wrote here is the most cogent thing, in my opinion, anyone's said about it:

> could we be seeing a real shift (or even rift) in attitudes between
> younger and older poets? Many of you will have been brought up
> with computer and be totally at ease with the computer age with its
> impersonal and intrusive ways.

There has definitely been a shift in the way I configure time in my own brain, and the presence of a computer has contributed to that. I KNOW that the computer, as a kind of outside-the-body brain, has changed poetry. In my own life it is intrusive, but at the same time an interesting tool -- and there's the slippery slope. And if we slip, do we cling onto something, or let go and see where we land? Either way, it might hurt.

x, Sharon Mesmer

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: ALDON L NIELSEN <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:21:50 -0400

I obviously can't speak for anyone else on the subject of why they may be so pleased to find somebody else speaking on their behalf -- In my own instance, I thought it hilarious to find a (not so bad) poem attributed to Aldon Lynn Nielsen -- a name that has never appeared on a poetry publication in the past
--

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: "J.P. Craig" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 11:32:34 -0400
It may be generational, but I doubt it. I think the divide here has a couple of sources. I do think it's important to distinguish between the pleasure of the reader and the pleasure of the creator. I suspect many people who are happy with the poem attributed to them are happy as readers. There may be a few who look at the poem attributed to them as a piece of found art, and that's a sort of authorship, no doubt, although it doesn't fit the sort of writing experience you describe.

Anyway, here's a list of all the various positions or motivations I could come up with. It's by no means exhaustive. I tried to be fair, but no doubt I slipped in a dig or two despite myself.

There are people who, perhaps like yourself, see the computer as an agent rather than a tool. This is one reason why I think things like the Turing Test keep arising.

Some people are unhappy because they see poetry as one of the great humanist endeavours. That it, like opposable thumbs, are part of what makes us truly human. They tend to talk about soul, meaning, and Turing Tests.

There are people who are invested in such methods of creation and who see the computer as a tool, like a typewriter. This may speak to the divide you identify.

There are people who are invested in control more than others. That is, some of the folks outraged also don't place value in things like automatic writing, chance operations, and so on.

Conversely, there are people who get very excited (in a happy, appreciative way) about found work, chance operations, computer-generated texts, and so on.

Some may think of this as a sort of mechanical muse and that the poets' names listed here have a status similar to those real frogs in Moore's imaginary garden or Lorca in Spicer's After Lorca.

There are also people who feel that their name/brand is threatened by such activities. They therefore see this as fraud, theft, or some other threat to the value of their name and, possibly, to the real income it generates. I know at least two major poets have made it know that this is the issue for them.

There are people who see this as part of a disruption of subjectivity and who value it as a prompt to think about what it means to be an author.

There are others who see it as a threat to their author-ity as the creator. This is starting to overlap, but I want to make the distinction.

Some people would be okay with this project if the poem attributed to them or to some they like weren't what they consider a bad poem.

Others would be proud to call the poem the product of their own labor. (There may even be those who would be happy to have a published book or two regardless of having written it themselves or not.)

I bet others can add more to this list, and I'd be grateful if someone did. I think all of these are valid positions, but I disagree with some of them.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Marcus Bales <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 12:10:25 -0400
On 7 Oct 2008 at 11:32, J.P. Craig wrote:
> ... I think all of these are valid positions ...<

Please define "valid" as you're using it here.

Marcus

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 09:18:00 -0700

Excellently articulated.

-- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 09:38:33 -0700
This "fake anthology" and the question of "stolen" or "invented" identity it has raised would certainly be useful to me in developing the concept of the "indivirtual", which I tried to play with sometime ago but only succeeded in publishing a rather starved essay on my blog:

http://obododimma.livejournal.com/#entry_640

I think I have got very relevant data now from "fake anthology" and from those who have been writing in.

-- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: sheila black <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 09:38:40 -0700
At first, I had a similar reaction/response to the phenomenon that this "fake anthology" seems to represent as Geraldine. I am an older poet (60) and because I do not feel compelled to jump on the technology bus (although always extremely curious about anything new and mysterious), I have not completely explored all its possibilities. I can see because I teach that the younger generation have some advantages and disadvantages in their computer-driven history (the disadvantages are moot as they are so hard to reproduce for someone who hasn't experienced them). I envy the ease with which they have incorporated the seemingly scientific and concrete gadgets to make this new world we live in work for them. Our technology is affecting everything in our world---especially communication. If one of art's goals is to make a statement that reaches an audience, or to express something not previously expressed hopefully in its most beautiful aesthetic
form (or its most provocative), then am I wrong to examine the method of this most recent expression? The examination of that method is very nice.

 I have noticed over time that I don't care as much about what I have released for public perusal since my experience has been readers will interpret as they will. It is out of my control by then. I do enjoy the writing of it myself mostly, sometimes for a moment I enjoy seeing my name on it. That passes quickly. If I knew I didn't write something and my name was on it, I would say that's interesting, perhaps consider it as another phenomenon reflecting the society we live in. I am referring to the numerous incidents where name/authorship/ duplication/plagiarism abounds. As far as privacy issues go, Geraldine touches on a way of life that doesn't seem to exist as we knew it in the fifties and sixties. For example, what people considered was acceptable to write or talk about doesn't exist today. Of course, a LOT of things were secret then, also. That doesn't mean that people don't have privacy today; it just looks quite different now. The
 pre-empting of a group of poets names to demonstrate a computer program's expertise seems much less subversive to me than say hiding from the government to stay out of prison or something else like that.

Respectfully submitted (because of my age) ,

Sheila Black

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>

Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 09:26:20 -0700
Yes, I agree, the pleasure of seeing one's name attached to something one didn't write--when it is in a harmless situation such as this, e.g., as someone else said, where it is not implying endorsement of something one opposes--induces a sort of light and pleasurable shock: What if one had, if one could have, written that? What poet would one be then? It's a thought experiment of sorts, as in the Borges story describing a culture that enjoyed imagining that two completely dissimilar works were by the same author, and thereupon deriving an idea of an original psychology....

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: "Jorgensen, Alexander" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 10:02:41 -0700
Ever the brilliant man, Marcus. Has anyone heard of CLEVELAND.

Hey-o!
Alex

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: "J.P. Craig" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 14:05:07 -0400
Hmm. I wonder what I'm about to walk into?

By "valid" I mean informed by desires and assumptions that I think the majority of us should be able to accommodate in our little individual Cartesian theaters, either because they spring from desires we may share on some level or because they correspond to recognizable positions that have a history. Though I'm prepared to argue with many positions I'm willing to call valid.

If you're getting at what my position is on all this, well, I lean toward thinking we should see this thing as a work of art rather than an attempt to steal someone's identity. I think it's just as clear here as it was in After Lorca that we're not seeing real toads in an imaginary garden. That is to say, this is not a pipe, and you can smoke it in a nonsmoking area.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Halvard Johnson <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 17:52:30 -0500
I propose a Fake Generation game. Anyone born between Jan. 1, 1935,
and Dec. 31, 1939, is eligible for membership.

Hal

McCain / Palin -- Just say thanks but no thanks.
They're a bridge to nowhere.

Halvard Johnson

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: andrew burke <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 07:20:37 +0800
Hmm, I was surprised to find my name there. A friend told me I was there, so I checked. My 'fame' gland was momentarily excited – but then I read the poem. My 'shame' gland leapt into life. Awful; no redeeming features at all. I was disappointed in them portraying me like that. What if somebody should even half-way believe it was mine? Awful. An absolutely strange mix of 'poets' - just names drawn out of a cyber hat. I feel used - I laughed at the project until I found myself in it - so much work for what? It isn't even a good sham in as much as I doubt there is a public readership out there who would believe in it. Too much exposure has happened for that to be achieved.

... but a fun game for those who created it. That is all. It would be doubly cool if the perpetrators now offered us a 'true' anthology with OUR poems in it as Issue 2.

Andrew

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Geraldine Monk <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 01:39:13 +0100

Hello Jason (oh and thank you all for the other replies, but I just want to take up a point with Jason - sorry Jason - you've got the short straw this time!).

Aren't you being slightly contradictory here? You say your name has little to do with you. Fair enough, the word pain is not pain itself but it's the word we use to convey a state of mind or body. Your name may be a series of sounds and letters but that is what language is - so you could be saying that language has little to do with you. Try it out for a day. No talking, no word thought, no name - eer no don't try it out because except for exceptional cases it's usually called death. It's virtually impossible not to inhabit language ipso facto it has everything to do with us.

And I think, with all respect, that's why you end up seeming to contradict yourself by saying that you would object if you're name was attached to something you didn't like or was appropriated for foul means. But doesn't this demonstrate that we can't pick and choose - and that is the danger of being complacent about our names being stolen. Lots of you had a giggle at the anthology and thought it hilarious but what if the next list with all your names isn't so amusing - is something very dark.   It could be. This could just be the grooming to soften you up. Ah they love it - now let's give them more. The bottom line is it's identity theft and you don't care.

On an even more serious note I believe many on this list are dead and I find this rather sick. It includes my dear friend Bob Cobbing. So we're not talking long dead but recently dead with a widow and children. Poets with friends and family in living memory are fair game? Maybe I should check out what they have attributed to Bob - but I just can't do it because I know it's not him. The very callousness of these inclusion of the dead show that the people who did it don't give a fig about you, me or anyone - they are using us all - it's a practical joke - hilarious? I don't think so. If I was a widow and saw my darling husband in this list I wouldn't be amused.

Bob Cobbing used every artificial device available (he was the first person I knew who got a computer type thingy - we tried typing in poems into it and it keep saying 'fatal error' - we laughed our socks off at this assessment of our writing but it got a bit frustrating after a while). He/I loved and thrived off found writings, cut and paste, stick it in the tumble dryer, leave it in the sun, bung it in a shredder and see what comes out - brilliant - we have to try and bump ourselves out of our own mindsets (or into them before the word and world got to them). Computer generate your own poems but don't give up your identity when it pleases you otherwise you have to accept that it will be taken from you when it doesn't. Yes?

Geraldine

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 11:00:41 +0800
Hi Geraldine,
Here's my point:
Am I JF Quackenbush who writes poetry and publishes it in various small journals? Am I JF Quackenbush the widely published microbiologist? Am I Jason Quackenbush the minor league midwestern professional wrestler? If you google my name, you'll find all of those people. One of them is the result a collection of actions that I have taken. The others have nothing to do with me. Ultimately, it's just the internet and who cares. I can't pick and choose how my name gets used detached from my actions and the "JF Quackenbush" who is part of this anthology is peripherally related to me, but it's in that grey area where it doesn't get my back up. Now were someone to start a smear campaign against me and accuse me of taking actions that I find reprehensible, like murder or publishing bad poetry, that I might take exception to but because they're attributing actions to me that aren't mine. I don't think any reasonable person with a reasonable familiarity with contemporary poetry ought to be able to tell that the poems in this thing are computer generated, and the inclusion of "new" poetry by Bill Shakespeare, ee cummings, and Edna St. Vincent Millay should clue in everybody else who isn't paying close enough attention that these poems aren't real acts by the persons whose names are listed. That to me as a fundamental difference.

As a side note, this idea of name as personal property is not necessarily something that existed once upon a time and has vanished in the information age. Prior to the last couple hundred years and the expansion of copyright protections and libel/slander laws, there have been all kinds of uses of false attribution in order to make some sort of political or artistic point. Heck, some of the greatest selling poetry of all time, the stuff in the Bible, is largely pseudoepigraphal. Pseudoepigapha of unknown quantities like myself is maybe a little bit strange, but frankly I think that that sort of democratization is precisely what makes this particular project so interesting. It's precisely the sort of question that a piece of conceptual work like this should be acting. I think of all the poets I only know and interact with through the internet, and all that a lot of you are are neames to me. Who are Jessica Smith, Anny Ballardini, Geof Gatza, or Jim Andrews? They're all there in the Anthology, and I "know" them all, and as writers I know and respect their work. But really that knowing is just text on a screen, well and pictures and sounds sometimes, but really, it's not direct human contact despite the fact that if I was asked I might say, yeah I know so and so. I think it's possible that I've built up an unsupportable and overly strong idea of identity in the face of what I think is a reasonable rejection of Barthes claim that there is no author just text. And I don't think I'm alone in that. But in a world where all so many of us know of one another, and I think this is wider than just poetry but extends to everyone who is at all involved in human interaction through the internet which these days at least it's largely impossible not to be, is through a form of authorship, I think a project like this has value in the way that it highlights the vagaries of what actually is going on in that authorship which vagaries led to the authors epitaph in the first place.

Who knows though. I could be wrong. Maybe I really am a professional wrestler and shouldn't be talking about this literary theory stuff at all.

-Jason (or is it?)

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 20:11:51 -0700
Yes, Geraldine, dead poets are there. And, could we be wrong to think that dead poets don't write (bite/byte?)? Perhaps, in the thinking of the anthologists, dead poets, disembodied as they are, are the number one netizens. Which was why I had to write a comment on behalf of my friend, e.e. cummings, who is also listed.
-- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 20:00:18 -0700
 No, Hal. Let's use a computer program to generate a "fake" generation! That, I think, would be fair.

-- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Catherine Daly <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 19:57:41 -0700

 1) I view the writer of the algorythm, program, whatever, as well as the writers of any source material (but there doesn't seem to be any? ???) to be the writers of this work (except if placing it in .pdf format involved indents, for example); when I decided this, I started having very much more of a problem with the use of names of people who did not write the program with the results. It disguises the essential nature of the writtenness of computer programs, deliberately, and seems to align with posthuman theory I disagree with. It disguises the fact that the writing is "results" or "output" -- of, I may point out, a "test." Is the test of the system the real thing? Is the system completed? I don't know. What was the test bed? Can you feed this back in and get a different anthology?

It also raises another question, which is,

2) has the writer read the work? He has called the results poetry, but has he read it? How does he know?

His reading would make it more "his" -- his response: to publish it not under his name. Making Anne's reading of the poem ascribed to her, finding in it poetry, a second reading, not a first one. The first "reading" unfortunately cannot be the machines, because um, they can't read. They can scan. (How was the text fed in? Or not -- just trawled? Any intervention of any type? Programmed intervention? Human intervention not via programming? Any humans read anything? Tweak the code during output?)

3) Also, my piece is really terrible. It is just awful. At first, I was objecting to the program, since it was producing dreck. Then I thought, maybe something about poetry and aesthetics. Now I think: what a miserably aimed, sloppily controlled, misanthropic project. What was it devised to do? Why is that design or intention important, inherent, significant, or not? (for example, it is a design through and through?) Why did the writer insert or collate harvested names -- many of whom have very specific ideas and various ideas -- into a text that was "one substance"? That they were (mostly) poets from lists were postings about readings, publications, etc., has replaced discussion?

4) post-identity = posthuman?

All best,
Catherine Daly
not the author of ALL SHOOK UP

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Geraldine Monk <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 02:07:16 +0100

Dear Sharon,

Thanks so much for your reply. I honestly don't understand their satisfaction with being given a poem - it's not the same as a found poem you find yourself - its all done and dusted with no input from them whatsoever except the frisson of seeing their name - and then they have the 'hilarity' to argue that their name doesn't matter. Are they are reading everyone else's fake poems! They just don't seem to see the contradiction - nor the paucity of it. Hilarious! Bloody hell. I despair. I think the lesser known are most thrilled so maybe we shouldn't be to harsh on them but catch my next letter to Jason where I outline some more of my other concerns.

London 86! Was that at Young Vic Theatre on The Cut? I think I also read at the Festival Hall. 20 years ago! Oh no. 22 years ago. Not water but torrents under the bridge. How lovely that you were there.

Take care,

And best wishes,

Geraldine

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: "J.P. Craig" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 09:09:38 -0400
Some comments in defense of the "perpetrators" being pilloried as wicked, wicked people:

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Murat Nemet-Nejat <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 10:13:56 -0400
Up to now, the discussion of the anthology has focused on the quality of the poems and different people's reactions to having one's name attached to a piece they did not "write, " the delight and anger towards the process. I sympathize very much with those questioning the idea of "authorship," in Ron's words, "a brand" attached to that name. For years I firmly believed what Kent Johnson did with The Doubled Flowering and The Miseries of Poetry were profound activities. My own Eda Anthology of Turkish poetry resonates with a similar ambiguity about the nature authorship -though the Turkish poets in it are "real" persons. I also understand Barry's comment in a parallel thread about how a poem to which his name is attached by others can spur him to write other poems, again pointing to the porousness of poetic identity, how that can be a dynamic force.

But this collection is also an anthology and in an anthology the issue of selection, and indirectly authority, are of primary importance. I see absolutely no analysis of, interest in this aspect of the project. When, in a previous post, I asked what was the algorithm which made the selection, in a way determining what name is visible and in that sense "real, I

was pointing to that question. In a moment in our history when a completely obscure and unanalyzed series of programs -the creators of all those credit swaps, for example- will cause untold misery to potentially *b*illions of people, it is important to ask this question. Are we not similarly enamored of this mysterious "algorithmic edtor"? I believe there is a profound connection between our present economic/financial crisis -one can call the financial side the signifyer and the economic/main street side the signified- and this "fake anthology." For poets I believe this can be a great opportunity for poetry to emerge out of a coccoon -where poetry's place basically is in The United states, despite all its protestaions- and truly engage and merge with wider social issues.

Ciao,

Murat

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Tom Orange <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 14:51:14 -0400
geraldine, sharon, et al.:

i like j.p. craig's initial taxonomy of responses to the anthology project, to which i add my own take here: i see the gesture of distributing/attributing the computer's labor over/to a large community of poets as a reminder of broad custody (as opposed to ownership) we all have for the language.

my satisfaction or delight comes from seeing words combined in new ways, in large part without regard for whose name is or isn't on it. those who are impressed by the high quality of many of the anthology's poems will be further surprised to begin working through, as i have, the fruits of jim carpenter's electronic text composition project

http://www.slought.org/content/11227/

and find the quality appears pretty consistently high. i take this less as an effront to than a furtherance of poetry's humanist underpinings (the input and the algorithm and the hardware are after all human, it's only the processing speed that is super-human) and a clarion call to flesh-and-blood poets to step up our game...

tom orange

p.s. re "generational" -- my nephews (ages 7 and 11) already express no preference for reading printed pages over computer screens as do many of us older folk...

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Nicholas Piombino <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 10:51:30 -0400

I would just call it-The Unbearable Lightness of Issue #1. For days I've been coming back to posts about the faux anthology and trying to write a response. Geraldine Monk and Sharon Mesmer added perceptive things to think about and some of it connects to the aspect that I was focused on yesterday that had to do with the loss of something, maybe privacy, but that word does not get the whole thing I've been feeling today, a day later. In a way, I feel like this is the kind of note I should write drunk. As I've said publicly and privately many times, it was in the wake of 9/11 that I began to truly value and appreciate the opportunities for ongoing and immediate community with poets made available on this list. After the satisfactions and challenges of that experience, I began blogging, and have found great value in that as well. But, as with every expansion, there is a price to be paid. While I also very much miss the privacy Geraldine Monk is writing about so vividly and sensitively, I very well realize it is rapidly becoming a relic of the past like a tune you can tap your foot to but not quite remember the words of or the old mood completely. But there is something about that huge sudden ironic parody that calls for instant recognition of the non serious nature of the intervention. This is the "unbearable lightness of blogging" as I once termed it, par excellence. A poetry circus wagon blows in, warm wind and ill wind, spins a few sails, shakes a few tails and blows out: a party with real laughs, a few growls and roars and some intense conversations where you recognize a lot of people, don't know some, you figure "everybody" was there, but of course that's not literally possible. The feeling is, maybe they were out of town or something, or just couldn't make it, but not that they were deliberately excluded. I know I would have felt left out had I not been mentioned. But since I was I do get into that lightness, but it is a blue lightness while still feeling nostalgic for the more private days of the whole long stretched out thing- getting an invitation, figuring what to send, waiting to hear, then getting accepted. But in this party atmosphere it's just all so quickly thrown together, no time, so quickly check how my poem was dressed and acted, ok, did I see some friends, yeah, their poems are ok. So then it's over, and there's the hangover of- what did I do, did I actually write that thing, no way, nobody did, a computer wrote it. After all, it is the era of the machine. So what did I say- I'm not sure how I feel now. Then the party really starts and everyone talks about it for days. No, not like a reading or an opening, more like a bash, or an old fashioned happening where people were only half aware of what was going on. Maybe all the evidence has already been put away and the place has been swept up. Maybe a few people actually kept their party favors and others left and forgot them. But now there's a memory, that Godot thing that gets talked about. People have been saying that we are in a time warp in that in New York now, that we are in a repeat of the Weimar era. Maybe this Godot thing is our cabaret- rude, crude, risque, funny, a little dark, with music by Kurt Weill and a set by Kirchner, Grosz or Hannah Hoch. I had even written in the comment section of Issue 1, "There has been talk of a poetry bailout. Is this it?" It looks like the powers that be are plotting to send the whole batch of us poets and day workers out onto the streets as in *The Threepenny Opera* while "citibank" robs everybody blind. And then we'll listen to the barrel organ sound, in the city while the sun sinks low.

Nick

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 15:45:03 -0700
JF/Jason/whoever you are-- So does that mean my name is mine if the only other one I
can find with first and last identical is dead (and the only thing on her is an obit)? Or does
that mean that with my middle name included, it's definitely my name since I'm the only
one who comes up under it? Hurrah for given and family names with mismatched ethnic
identities then! (I prefer, too, to be referred to in publication with my middle name
included not for this reason of uniqueness but for the related goal of ensuring that my
initials are different from those of my brother, my late father, and his late father.)

Really, my primary thought about the anthology was that it was boring. A big mass of
dull, dull poetry sometimes mediocre and sometimes dreck; I'd really rather have
godawful poetry that mediocre work associated with the name that perhaps by the
wonders of idiosyncrasy I could be said to possess. The outrage responses, however, are
hilarious!

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.net

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Geraldine Monk <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 00:35:15 +0100
Oops. Pardon me. This was meant to be private. So apologies about the tone. Not saying
anything in it that I haven't already said but it's all in a more flippant and jokey tone. I
don't of course despair of this anymore than I'm in a constant state of despair about
everything - better than being bored. Bring back melodrama.

Cheers and hopefully no offence caused.

Geraldine

Subject:Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Sharon Mesmer/David Borchart <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 19:44:14 -0400

Hi Geraldine,

I saw you at Young Vic on an afternoon AND Festival Hall the next evening (I think)!
Young Vic was also my intro to the work of Elizabeth Smart, who had just died -- before
the Young Vic performance a tape of her reading from "By Grand Central Station ...
" was playing. WOW. I chased that book down when I got back to the States (couldn't
afford it when I was living/travelling abroad) and now I teach it in an MFA seminar on

book-length prose poems at the New School. (Oh --during my residency at
Hawthornden Castle in Scotland I was in a room that Sebastian Barker had previously
occupied the month before!).

> I honestly don't understand their satisfaction with being given a
> poem - it's not the same as a found poem you find yourself - its
> all done and dusted with no input from them whatsoever except the
> frisson of seeing their name

I wouldn't say there's the kind of "satisfaction" you get from your own work. And I
must say I was a little disappointed that the poems themselves were not, in fact,
hilarious. Or even dirty. If you're going to offend, at least have the decency to be
obscene.

x, Sharon

p.s. After I wrote you yesterday I re-read "Spreading the Cards" and
"Tiger Lillies" -- absolutely wonderful.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Jim Andrews <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 17:10:20 -0700
one of my fave net art pieces (unfort it isn't online anymore) was such that you'd type
your name into it, whereupon it would generate about 25 pages on you as a profile. it
would do a search on your name (or whomever's name you typed in) and assemble
pictures and text based on that information. and the texts would key on
sentences/paragraphs culled from the net including your name.

'jim andrews' is a common name. there is another poet named jim andrews. there's a porn
star named jim andrews. a sports surgeon. a sherrif. and on and on. so the portrait of 'jim
andrews' is quite extensive, and it involves elements of all these people.

certainly the act of using the internet's vast data is fraught with moral peril. no question.
but, also, it really is tantalizing, as an artist. i use google+yahoo image search in
dbCinema. because you can type something in and get 5000 related images. how sweet is
that? o mi gawd. but then what? what are you going to do with them? the art is not simply
in enabling a google search but in what is done with it.

and, in my opinion, using web services to tap the social scope of the search term is just so
compelling as something for artists to investigate.

of course, that doesn't give anyone permission to act unethically.

i didn't have a problem with steve and jim's project. as jason pointed out, there are plenty
of clues that the 'authors' aren't the real authors. and it's amusing for those in it to see

what they 'wrote'. as steve pointed out, very like looking at a horoscope and seeing relation with one's life. also, i admire jim carpenter's poetry generation software. that's hard stuff to create and he's maybe the best at it. and steve has done a remarkable job getting it out there, in the concept, in the framing.

rest assured that what we are seeing now is the tip of the iceberg concerning artists using the vast resources of the internet to create new work. if steve and jim's project scared you, hold on to your hat.

the moral issues that arise have to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

ja
http://vispo.com

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 08:56:04 +0800
I think my point, as my thinking develops on this, is that perhaps there is a sense in which our names are not ours at all. rather they belong to the community as signifiers of us, but that use doesn't limit them from being used in other ways. names are perhaps the most public of language. wittgenstein would suggest that a use of a name is meaningful if there are public criteria by which the particular use can be determined to be used correctly or not. i'm inlcined to agree with that sort of thinking, and as such think that the correct reading of this is that these names are used en masse in a group of writer's names. it is clear from the content that none of the writers listed actually wrote this stuff. so i'm inclined to think that the meaning in this is that this is a list of writers, here are some poets they didn't write, and as such this is a use of a name that is very different from the normal sorts of uses that we think of for names, such as signing work, hailing someone, or specifying a specific person.

the interesting thing here then is to ask whether the use of your or my or geraldine monk's or shakespeare's name is meaningful at all. i think it is, and am inclined to read it in the way that nick piombino mentioned and that silliman hinted at in his blog post about the topic. that is, these things function as a signifier of our communal stewardship of the language as writers, even those on the list who aren't poets, and further that there is something here in the questioning of authorship in the age of authorial identity through textual communication the likes of whcih so much of our socialization revolves around.

as such it as value and meaning and is a good thing.

or maybe i really ought to go back to a one fall cage match and shut the hell up.
-J

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)

From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 21:02:35 -0400
I'm surprised at this. For one thing I'm never sure what "the writers of this work" means, especially when online work is considered. Second, if 'real people's' names weren't used, the anthology would lose its axis; it's about, among other things, poetics and the 'poetry world,' such as it is - not an attempt to create a fictitous school of writing.

Third I'm not sure about the 'essential nature of the writtenness of computer programs' - why this is essential. And it doesn't spout post-human or other theory - you're making the connection - one might just as easily see it as the last gauge of romanticism.

Why on earth a 'test'? If I write something, say this, is this also a 'test'? Is it a 'test' if you can't locate intentionality in the - what? word choice, method of composition, thing itself?

Does the writer read his work? Do all writers read their work? Does Kenneth Goldsmith? I've known writers who don't in fact; I think we all must.

How does he know it's poetry? Is there a test about what's poetry and not? What's bad poetry and not?

I think harvesting names is wonderful, and a text which (you say) is one substance is fascinating and raises a lot of interesting questions about aesthetics, Kant, sublime of course, etc.

What bothers me on this list most of all is that I think what was produced was and is amazing, brilliant, and I worry that the authors etc. will back-track. I wish I had done it. And it's raised as much discussion if not more than Yasusada did, or is that another bad person thing?

- Alan, confused

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Elisa Gabbert <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 18:18:38 -0700
>It isn't even a good sham in as
>much as I doubt there is a public readership out there who would
>believe in it. Too much exposure has happened for that to be achieved.

That is the point, of course. That there is no "public readership" other than us (those whose names are in the anthology). The joke is on us and for us, no one else. That's what makes it funny.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Catherine Daly <[log in to unmask]>

Date: Wed, 8 Oct 2008 21:52:04 -0700
thanks for the questions

 I'm surprised at this. For one thing I'm never sure what "the writers of
> this work" means, especially when online work is considered.

just because it is online doesn't mean there aren't writers, and they can't be determined

> Second, if 'real people's' names weren't used, the anthology would lose its
> axis; it's about, among other things, poetics and the 'poetry world,' such
> as it is - not an attempt to create a fictitous school of writing.

Is it? I'm not convinced, especially not by virtue of the text.

>
> Third I'm not sure about the 'essential nature of the writtenness of
> computer programs' - why this is essential.

It seems to me essential that computer programs are written and that computer languages
are largely English-based. I have long placed a value this way. This leads me to say that,
for instance, computer garbage on a VAX was written by all the users of the VAX as well
as the programmers and perhaps some of the designers; in a similar fashion, I argue the
anthology was written -- more so, more so than a garbage file -- ; and then I learn that it
is a sort of super advanced gnoetry that doesn't use a deliberate aiming perhaps? I dunno.

> And it doesn't spout post-human or other theory - you're making the
> connection - one might just as easily see it as the last gauge of
> romanticism.

But it does, because I think a guy in a room wrote the thing and pretended that 3000
people with some duplicates, non-poets, and spoofs did, to show what?

Why on earth a 'test'? If I write something, say this, is it also a 'test'? Is it a 'test' if you
can't locate intentionality in the - what? word choice, method of composition, thing itself?

If a person writes it, it is tested by reading and revising; if I have a test bed of stuff and
run it through my program, that is also called a test.

Does the writer read his work? Do all writers read their work? Does Kenneth Goldsmith?
I've known writers who don't in fact; I think we all must.

How does he know it's poetry? Is there a test about what's poetry and not? What's bad
poetry and not?

But this is the prime area of my concern; Kenneth at least proofs the majority of his work: that involves reading of a sort. By publishing it as poetry, at least he and / or his editor or publisher call it poetry because they make the similie: they publish it as poetry. But here, a writer and an editor called it poetry for the very overt signs that make it bad and because they ascribe it to poets who call themselves poets.

I think harvesting names is wonderful, and a text which (you say) is one substance is fascinating and raises a lot of interesting questions about aesthetics, Kant, sublime of course, etc.

I don't, but I don't care for Kant much either.

--
All best,
Catherine Daly
[log in to unmask]

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Nicholas Piombino <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 01:20:02 -0400
I had to go back and reread The Barrel Organ (1938) by Alfred Noyes after I alluded to the poem at the end of my last post. I hadn't remembered these lines:

"There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,
And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses and--they're each of them alone
  In the land where the dead dreams go.
There's a labourer that listens to the voices of the dead
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and--there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
  Through the land where the dead dreams go...
There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
  In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
  In the land where the dead dreams go."

Nick

On 10/8/08 8:56 PM, "Jason Quackenbush" <[log in to unmask]> wrote:

> I think my point, as my thinking develops on this, is that perhaps
> there is a sense i

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: steve russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 00:15:59 -0700
Wonderful stuff, Nick, I mean your prose. Aside from the unbearable lightness of
blogging, have you read Italo Calvino's comments concerning lightness? I was losing
patience with this whole Fake Anthology bit, but, hey, I'm suddenly nostalgic for privacy.
Damn, if I had a penny or two I'd consider Kurt Weil, but far 2 many cameras point in
whichever direction one walks, yep, D.C., and I'm already off of the topic.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 01:19:45 -0700
This is a very interesting point, Catherine, that hasn't been brought out until now: How
much "reading" is a component of "writing." To some extent you are saying that if the
anthology had been subject to more editing, it could have been a better piece of work.
This is undoubtedly true. On the other hand, I always recall something I read as a student
in that Fussell-fusty book on Poetic Meter and Poetic Form (or something to that effect):
"Any of the passing infelicities in Paradise Lost would have sunk a sonnet." True, and the
same could have been said of a sonnet in relation to a haiku. There is some essential
connection between the scale of one's overall form and the scale of one's attention. To
compose something on a huge scale is inevitably to exercise a certain disdain for detail,
but that is not necessarily to damn the result.

2) has the writer read the work? He has called the results poetry, but has
he read it? How does he know?

His reading would make it more "his" -- his response: to publish it not
under his name. Making Anne's reading of the poem ascribed to her, finding
in it poetry, a second reading, not a first one. The first "reading"
unfortunately cannot be the machines, because um, they can't read. They can
scan. (How was the text fed in? Or not -- just trawled? Any intervention
of any type? Programmed intervention? Human intervention not via
programming? Any humans read anything? Tweak the code during output?)

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>

Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 01:39:35 -0700
Well, it was pretty insulting, at least for those of us who nourish the fond illusion that we have made some impression on this little world and are no longer desperate children hoping that teacher will call on us rather than all the others in the class...but no matter, you should see what I backchannel about the people on the UK list.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Obododimma Oha <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 07:20:40 -0700
jason & the argonauts;
no,
jason & the poesienauts....

-- Obododimma.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 11:19:44 -0400
and thanks for the replies of course! - see below -

On Wed, 8 Oct 2008, Catherine Daly wrote:

> thanks for the questions
>
> I'm surprised at this. For one thing I'm never sure what "the writers of
>> this work" means, especially when online work is considered.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: "J. A. Lee | Crane's Bill Books" <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 14:00:31 -0600
It reminds of Ray Johnson's rows and rows of identical bunny heads, each labeled with a different name. The arbitrary naming is the joke.

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Catherine Daly <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 13:56:16 -0700
I think it would be fairly easy in the current environment for someone to jumble together 3000 pages of pro-terrorist (orgs, politics, slogans, anarchist handbook instructions for wmd, nearly-secret docs, etc.) and sign the names of 3000 artists likely to need to enter or leave the US. I think all of us know people who, over the past few years, have been scheduled to speak, or read, or perform, somewhere in the US and were not allowed into

the US. This person might even do such a thing so that 3000 more articulate people start battling a bit harder to return the laws to normal.

It would be easy to harvest the names of a group of academics at schools with a religious mission or at publicly-funded universities where the legislature has more direct oversight, and write something that would create job problems for them.

It would be easy to publish a number of anthologies on the "wrong' side of the culture wars to create an overall impression of poets that would be untrue: these are the dark things I thought about when Geraldine mentioned them. Note they all have to do with human intent -- of a writer, say.

*

I don't see a reason why this particular anthology, since the "poems" are lineated, couldn't be reformatted with every poem being split into 25 lines, say, and the names also seperated, so that each one of us wrote 3000 x 25! poems. Except for Quackenbush, who'd write 9000 x 25! poems.

--
All best,
Catherine Daly
[log in to unmask]

Subject: Re: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Jason Quackenbush <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 12 Oct 2008 08:43:24 +0800
forms are an algorithm. although i've never tried, i would think that getting a machine to compose something according to the following algorithm

print fourteen lines
each must contain 5 feet or redo
final output must adhere to rhyme scheme abab cdcd efef gg or redo
insert stanza breaks at lines four, eight, and 12

would not be all the difficult. now, it may not be a good sonnet, and that's where the art of something like Erika T. Carter comes in is in the figuring out of what the machine has to do in order to pass quality muster.

Re: anthologizing mistakes
Tue, 7 Oct 2008 15:51:39 -0700

Subject: Re: anthologizing mistakes
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 7 Oct 2008 15:51:39 -0700

Well, I suppose it could be done. Ask poets to send in their own
mistakes or to trawl the web for mistakes they see other as having
made; this would probably best be done as a blog to allow for links to
mistakes (to avoid fussy legal issues) and to allow readers to point
out mistaken identifications of mistakes (and this could be extended
ad infinitum).

Or maybe a wiki would be better? Only one that foregrounds the
palimpsest of edits rather than the finished thing.

I adore mistakes.

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.

Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
Thu, 9 Oct 2008 09:56:14 -0700

Subject: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: David Chirot <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 09:56:14 -0700
A few days ago I wrote a letter here re anthologies and prisons, who filling them may in
some ways be analogous. And, with the use of the Internet at one's fingertips, made all
the easier!

That is to say, the compiling of lists of both "poets" and "suspects" is made much easier,
as well as, if need, the retrieval of quite a bit of data about any of the names one has come
across by whatever method.

The suppying of the poems/evidences by a machine--"an anonymous source"--adds an air
of mystery and confusion does it not--? For after all, there is an appeal to the vanity or
the the affront to the insecurity of the poet/suspect upon reading the charges/poems laid
against them.

The Internet is not only a source of information, but also a megasource for the
megaproduction of propaganda, disinformation, dis-translations, re-editings of entries and
re workings of maps. There are anumber of groups dedicated to just such tasks, some of

them open and publicly proud like CAMERA which alters any site with maps and information on Israel-Palestine to erase the Palestinian presences, towns, etc--with those CAMERA sees fit to supply. Then there a host of more "under cover" operations and operators at work also, going about steadily eating away at the structures of knowledge like so many termites eating away at the old Colonial homes of the Master or the rotting shnty towns of the "wrteched of the Earth."

When studying even the antholgoies easily availble of for example ancient Greek lyric poets, or pre-Socratic thinkers, it is very difficult for the foremost of scholars to establish always with any real certainty who wrote what and when--and what is simply a poem written "after" the style and diction of the copied Master or Sappho, the Ultimate Lyric Poet, or may be a few lines "quoted" from a long lost original and included in an otherise shoddy "late Hellnistic Latin job." How much indeed, of these antholgies comes down to one as third hand quotes and glosses, and the overheard urban legnds carted about the Mediterranean by sailors conversing with the would be Herdotus' of their day?

Much the same meay be said for a great many constructions in words found on the web, and so the anthology of poems attibruted arbitrarily to this or that person who is also listed as being a poet-is no surprise, just as it is no surprise how many persons have come under suspciion and harssement or arrest simply by being lanted as part of a parcel sent out over the Intenet mails.

All kinds of amazing "information" can be passed along in this way,and have the utmost certitude given to it-- --or be passed off as a kind of "experiment." For example, when there was a huge argument at the FBI over some of the evidence provided by "Curveball" that led tothe War in Iraq—one of the doubters in Curveball's veracity asked a defener of his all knowing truths--show me some evidence! Where did yo find it? And the evidence turned out to have been corroborated by some found on line--To which the doubter responded--where do you think he (Curveball) found it!

There are all sorts of other consequences of things found on line, whther they are faked or not--at one point there had for the second time been ciruclating a story attacking the teaching methods of some Muslim schools in Great Britain--which Leevi Lehto was mass distribtuing. When it was pointed out that these stories were fakes, and had been used previously and exposed--and were now being used again with a lsight change--Lehto responded that he thought that they might have been not true, but since he agreed with the cause for which they were being psuhed across the web, he had sent them on.

In this manner, though someone might know or think they may know a poem attributed to a poet is indeed not by them, they might still pass it on or include it elsewhere as by them nonetheless.

I think that these are some of the "other side" of the issues which the idea of Anthologies itself suggests in relation to prisons, arreests and the like--that is, that if one may consider how easy it is to create a genration of fake poets, or genrate an anthology of ake poems--

who easy is it not also to generate a fake generation of suspects and detainees, and to create an Anthology of them in the form of a prison?

here is the intro to the previous letter, with the link to it (it has illustrations with it now, too!! how marvelous! indeed is the mighty web--! that web of the "spider's strategem--") Wednesday, October 08, 2008 Poetry Anthologies &/As Prisons & Prisoners<http://davidbaptistechirot.blogspot.com/2008/10/poetry-anthologies-prisons-prisoners.html>
Note: Recently in the blogosphere there has been a lot of "controversy" among for the most part American poets over their inclusion or not in an Anthology of Poetry which is created by a computer program, with the names of the poets being affixed to the machine-made poems by a process that chooses from various lists of names. Some of the poets are also non-American and others still are also dead. (So far there have been no signs of any uproar coming from the last named's direction.)

Since the Internet is already used to compile all sorts of lists, many of which can possibly lead to arrests, or the person whose name is being tracked being counted as a suspect of some kind, involved in anything from a shoplifting ring to massive identity fraud to "terrorism," the using of names for a poetry anthology created by amassing computer generated poems seems relatively innocuous.

Innocuous, that is, unless one begins to think of anthologies themselves as another form of prison-creation, or prisons as another form of anthology making.

After all, the throwing together of a seemingly "loosely associated" group of people under one rubric might seem to designate the persons named and assembled thereby as a "movement," a "trend," or even a "terrorist cadre," made up of several interlinked "sleeper cells." Even if the various "cells" are unknown to each other, by showing them to be linked in some way by the over riding theme of the Anthology, one has created of them an overall face & effect of "Terror," and "Alert," or of a new kind of poetry "that bears watching in the future."

Since critics and agents often share the same goals of uncovering "secret" analogies, "hidden" symbolisms,"traces of fragments of the palimpsests of previous plots," and so forth--it seems quite possible that a critic could turn out to be an "undercover" agent-- seeking for what is indeed "between the covers of the book," as, after all, the agent/critic continually reminds one, "you can't judge a book by the cover." And that person who claims to be an agent in the field working for the government might well turn out after all to be no more than just another critic desperately hunting for the next "great and sobering poetic discovery," the next "pre-teen prodigy of poesy." or "the latest previously unknown towering genius, all these years lost in the back lands, hidden among the knitting and the sheep."

Whoever they are, whatever they are up to, the Internet, so rife with names and information about the names, is a regular Happy Hunting ground beyond the wildest dreams of Ernest Hemingway set loose in a Protected Wild Life preserve for those who

are hot on the heels of compiling Anthologies, let alone filling prisons, or committing kidnappings for huge ransoms, or uncovering the Babylonian origins of the Sicilian Code.

So here are some thoughts addressed to this topic--
to while away the time of one's sentence--
a continually postponed hearing--
where death row and publisher's row
are the same place

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 21:26:28 -0400
On Thu, 9 Oct 2008, David Chirot wrote:

I always like your writing, but this is really pushing it; you might
reverse things and say that anthologies are based on those who go to
heaven and therefore are blessed, not prisons but openings; certainly the
Mormon archives tends towards this.

You're using [anthology] I think and by stating this "Innocuous, that is,
unless" seems a kind of problematic baiting that ignores in fact the
freedom and fancy of the particular anthology under question.

You then jump to cells and terrorism, and for me, this jump is a kind of
cell or terror itself, not the thing itself, but an accumulated surplus;
for me if we're going this route, I'll take Mormon.

But then I've edited a number of anthologies.

- Alan

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: David Chirot <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 09:05:40 -0700
Dear Alan:

I don't know if you read the entire piece as it is linked to--

I am NOT denying "the freedom and fancy" of this particular anthology nor of any other.
In fact I am *fighting for the Freedom* of ever more Anthologies to exist and to continue
to exist.   I think you misunderstand what I am writing and in turn deny it its own
"freedom and fancy" and refuse to understand it's point by lumping it with beings going
to Heaven and Mormons, etc. in the tone of mockery used to consign actual ideas to the
dustbins of rubbish of religions the enlightened writer and audeince take to be

superstitions, and so present the ideas as nothing more than a kind of debased and laughably "irrational" concept.

"Sad but true, folks, "sighs the Wise Sheriff, reassuring the anxious populace, "all the monkeys ain't at the Zoo! But don't you worry, we'll catch'im, this dee-ranged fella. Can't have no smart ass Simians disturbing the sleep of the Just, now can we?"

In the part of the piece that appeared here some days ago and is linked to, one of the points is how many lists a person is already on by virtue of the Internet, how much information about anyone is so easily available, and as well how easy it is to fabricate information and "evidence," plant false stories, alter encyclopedia entries, create distransaltions of poems, news stories, reports, essays. Photos and videos, voice recordings, everything is malleable.   The War in Iraq was stated with "proofs" that were known-to-forged letters and information from an extremely dubious informant, whose evidence, as I gave an example of, when "proved" by images on line, was in reality only using the same images on line that the informant had used to offer as "proofs."

Since one of my ongoing projects is "The New Extreme Experimental American Poetry and Arts," I am simply using my own "freedom and fancy" to further examine the rnage of possiblities of the Anthology's mixing of "fake" poems with "real poets' names" in terms of the ways in which "fake" evidence may be used to round up "real" suspects. Or, to create "fake" suspects using programs producing from already available information "profiles" which make them seem in terms of the new laws to be "real" threats and so worthy of apprehension.

Now, from the point of view of a proud Commandant of a First Class prison in which there is a cross section of various profiled "types," is it not possible that this person might not speak of his assembled "detainees" as not simply a "collection," but an Anthology of the various kinds of "profiles in terrorism?" You see--there is a gallows humor in all this you are missing.

I think perhaps what disturbs you may be that for the most part the use of the Internet and programs in connection with projects is considered from a "freedom and fancy" perspective while ignoring the immense and often already actual possibilities for the dystopian uses of exactly the same methods and media and techniques with which such an Anthology may be produced.

That is, I am using all these examples and questions imaginatively, in order to say--how the Freedom underlying the production of things filled with "freedom and fancy" is threatened by the very techonolgies and methods which it uses.

If this is evidence of religious superstion of some kind to you, perhaps it is because you might want to dney this? I do not know--

And, also, I think that there is for a very long now the separation of the artistic "avant-garde" from its originary connection with the military in the term "avant-garde" itself.

By this separation, it is easy to make onself believe that there is no connection among things such as poetic and military productions which share the same technolgoies and often very simlar methods of "composition."

In the "New Extreme Experimental " works I write of, invented, imagined and actual also, I make use of "real events" and examples along with my own inventions and terms from poetry and literature to restore a connection between these two--the military and artistic avant-garde. My point is that a great deal of what happens today, is kept separated, so that the right hand is to not admit to what the left hand is doing. My enquiry is to look into the ways in which every aspect of a society is part of its overall system, rather than being discrete parts from which one may pretend to detach oneself from those one refuses to acknowledge, while championing those that one does.

The project I am working on has at its very heart Freedom, and investigating how it is threatened, and how often what in one area is seen as a thing of "freedom and fancy" can as easily function in the overlapping area in the same society for uses which deny any freedom and fancy.

I have cited the quote before, but repeat it as it provides one of the keys to my project:

In the first lines of his Introduction to Torture: Cancer of Democracy France and Algeria 1954-62, Pierre Vidal-Naquet asks "Can a great nation, liberal by tradition, allows its institutions, its army, and its system of justice to degenerate over the span of a few years as a result of the use of torture, and by its concealment and deception of such a vital issue call the whole Western concept of human dignity and the rights of the individual into question?"

I think that by extending the terms and tropes of poetry and literature beyond their own area and into those of the political and military, and vice versa, by investigating their ways of being used to create this new form of poetry which I invent and imagine, and discover as I go along, , I am creating an ongoing "panorama" as it were of a literature which exists and is hidden in plain site/sight/cite as there is a refusal for the most part to make any connections among any of these events in the world and events on the page or in virtuality.

That is, that for most part, the society practices a deliberate self-deception which qucikly calcifies into a recieved wisdom, and makes it nearly taboo to question any of its practices and assertions and theories, as these themselves are the outgrowths of an inital self-deception.

I am working with the Fake that already exists, and the Real that is Faked, as well as with information from many sources, texts, and yes, lists, anthologies, compendiums, the Internet and the library and the daily news in all different media, and using with these works from poetry and writing, cinema and painting, to create a work that is both imaginative and critical, a critique and and an investigation and into enquiry into "findings."

These writings are supplemented by the ongoing series of stories featuring the character called "El Colonel," which go much further into the "literary" realms of many of these questions and turn into themselves investigations of the :"literary" and many questions of "conceptual" literature and the like.

All of these actualites are the source for fictions, as are all the fictions and fakes sources for many actually occurring events.

I am not al denying the "freedom and fancy" of this particular project, but extending it much further, that is, I have been before it came along already going much further in many of these areas. I think that the misunderstanding and rejection of what I am writing is that it proposes a different approach in which one is taking theory and using it with things that are actually occuring in the world and examining these in terms of the languages they employ in order to present themselves.

In a sense, a convention of the "seperated" avant-garde today is to use words very often as if they have no meanings and consequences. This is fine if it is limited to a predefined area, yet once out of there, everything changes swfitly and who controls meanings and who performs consequnces becomes quite another matter to say the least.

Again, part of the fear in your criticism of my ideas is that perhaps I suggest underatking a much different investigation into the nature of what is meant by "language experiments," and "experimental writing," that is, I propose extending what is understood as writing and as experiment on a vaster scale and sphere of action than one perhaps more limited to the areana of "language games." It is not even that I propose any such thing--it already exists all around one, and in order to understand it, one needs to accept that all kinds of workers in language exist as well as poets and writers, and that all of these may be engaged in their own various ways on projects which might be approached more "subversively" so to speak by using some of the methods and terms of poetic and literary theory, not for creating further abstractions and theories, but for creating works of imagination and imaginative critique which help make visible those things which are either concealed or deliberately overlooked, go unseen on purpose in a society such as the US is today.

In a sense, for myself, when you mock such ideas, all it does is exhibit that you have a belief in and support of the status quo. That's fine with me if you choose this route, all I ask is that you respect my right to follow mine.

I think that with the Anthology what you are defending is a kind of conventional idea of the "freedom of the web." Due to its manner of presentation, for you, there occurs in the Anthology the feat of separation, in which it is agreed that in some areas, any kind of intrusion of such things as the disinformation, surveillance, coercive, constraining, capturing aspects of the Internet are denied in favor of only the "fun" aspects. And the same with separating the idea of Anthology from a gallows humor in which it is proposed

that some jailer might look about at the cells of detainees and say--ah!! my Anthology of the faces and persons and words of terrorists!"

And, after all, are there not the Poems from Guantanamo anthology, or the writings of Roberto Bolano about poetry and Chile's fascist era under Pincohet among a great many others in which these things are seen as united? That is, that poetry and torture are not seperated, but part of the same system, co-existing? And that even within that system, some forms of "freedom and fancy" are allowed, while, of course, several others are not.

Until very recently, there has been very little in the American arts and writing that has examined at all what the open use of torture by this society means, in the sense that Vida-Naquet is writing of. What are the effects and behaviours of the language itself of a society which makes use of torture, which supports Apartheid, which is genociding the Iraqi people, which is threatening to continue to widen the scope of Wars which are annihilating its own economy and people? How does such a society remain so quiet in so many areas about what it is doing and what is happening to it? Why the kinds of taboos which Vidla-Naquet observed in France, a nation which had only recently had its own citizens tortured while being Occupied?

Why is it that you accuse me of "denying the freedom and fancy" of an Anthology when I haven't at all done this, but think of it as a part of a vast parade of projects investigating similar aspects of some of the much larger overlapping areas I propose to examine? Why do you say that project has "freedom and fancy" and in a sense deny mine this, and mock it with allusions that are distasteful to yourself?

Is this its own form of a "Homeland Security," conducted in order to protect said Security from too many questions, ideas, imaginings, findings? Does this mean that only a few persons are allowed to have dominion over what is considered to be "aceptable practice" within a confined realm of writing? And is not that in a sense constructing its own small sytem of prisons or gulags or exiles for that particualr aspect of writing? If one is not allowed to question or have a different "take" or come up with "alternative ideas"----then how much freedom and fancy is there really being allowed to happen?

If one is truly concerned about Freedom, is it not necessary to go beyond the happy faces of the received ideas and conformism-by-consensus acceptances of what constitutes projects which are "good, healthy examples" of "freedom and fancy" and question how it is that those same methods that create happy faces can be used to create torture cells? Is the web so "free" as one is continually being told, so much a vast gateway to the wondrous new experimental poetries of the future, riding a wave of hyper texts into a spectacular simulated sunset?

Or is it not also a tool which may be used to assemble information, create disinformation and target anyone and everyone in some way that is useful to the ends of someone else, whether it is Amazon keeping track of its "preferred customers' interests," or a covert operation tracking the daily shopping routes of a young mother suspected to be

purchasing chemicals at the store along with the baby formula, chemicals that someone claims are going to be used for a suspected or framed up plot to incinerate some gated community, some private plane, some local Mosque?

Right now, people are detained and being readied for trials in Minnesota as "terrorists"-- and their act of "terrorism?" Demonstrating at the Republican National Convention. Under al the new laws passed in such a hurry and subtly attached as small riders to much larger pork barrels through the years since the First Patriot Act, it is now possible to try people for things no one would ever have thought possible, and to punish them for these, too.

The State makes use of the threats of "terrorism" to cerate its own Terror, a Terror which it calls for "one's own good," Security.   One of the functions of Security in a sense is to perform the kind of operation one does in separating what is a project that is full of "freedom and fancy" from one that is full of the kinds of things I write of.

Ironically, your not understanding my project misses the point that my project is all about there being the Freedom for works of "freedom and fancy" to continue to exist.

I write out of personal experience with many of things I present, as well as with imagination and invention, and a continual research into the information, history, backgrounds and literatures of the subjects I make use of.

At one level there are "language games." At another level are the areas where language is weaponry, manipulation, propaganda, deception, provocation, control, and also torture, life and death.

Both need to be thought, and not separately,as you are advocating, but as two sides of the same coin.

It's saddening that you don't understand my project, and that in a sense advocate a conventional wisdom which is to "play it safe" as it were by playing "language games" and not investigating any further what language, technology and their consequences may be, beyond the realm of language games. If there is to be freedom and fancy, why not think of how this is existing because some are concerned about the freedom in the world to actually be able to create Anthologies of this sort?

In a sense, what you are saying is that, as in George Orwell's Animal Farm, "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others." That is, one idea of Anthologies is Good, and any investigations of my sort are Bad. Therefore, "freedom and fancy" are considered the "pastures of plenty" for some, and for others--get rid of them, pay no attention, etc.

Or, perhaps, there is a line being drawn between allowing "fancy" but not Imagination?

How does one in fact legislate Imagination? One method you used already is to mock it, and say it is a threat to "freedom and fancy." In an implicit sense is this not saying figuratively--lock that guy up! Shut him up! Or simply--don't listen, it is too far out there to be considered.

Which is precisely one of the points I am trying to make, that things considered "too far out there" are already happening, and that too little note is being taken of them at all. One may delude oneself with freedom and fancy and at the same time have freedom like an old rug be pulled out from underneath one without even noticing, so rapt is one in the delusions, or the distractions, the entertainments as it were. You see? Without fighting for the old rug of Freedom, there isn't going to always be "freedom and fancy" to play with, if some have their way.

And what, after all, is not "enhanced interrogation" but an "experiment in language, in the body of the text, in the production of language out of the body--"

The same electricity running the computers for our conversation is powering the wires which are used to torture someone somewhere during this very same time--
Have you ever seen the convulsive dance of the "Body Electric?"--

Just imagine the day when such interrogation can be conducted via computers--directions given from a modem in a city thousands of miles from the on-screen prisoner-- and a jolly party of invited guests having some wine and cheese and discussing the aesthetico-linguistic mastery of the keyboard torturer's control and manipulation of the "Body Electric" as it dances and sings and spouts sound poetry for the benefit of the acute and enlightened art theorists and critics, the literary theorists present, and the poets who see before them the Theater of the future, a new form of Puppet Theater! The Marionette wires being those carrying electrodes attached to different pressure points and tender spots, and making the movements of the gesturing puppet before them seem oh so very lifelike, and at the same time so puppet like!! As it dances its way along the paths of the Dance of Death.

You see, there is literally a "connection" which "runs through" all these things even as we converse-!

I hope that you may understand that my project is not at all what you think it is.

I often wonder if what I write is understood or not, if it is even noticed to begin with, and, if often it is very hard to be understood becuase all the training that one is gievn is to not believe in the things I write of, even when one may give al the examples of it happening in front of people everyday.

The problem is that those things one believes in, is trained al one's life in a society to believe in, do not exist--the soceity long since has dispensed with them. They may exist symbolically, and in language, and as things people trumpet about and convince

themselves are the foundations of their thought--and al of this is manipulated by those who would like one to continue to believe in all of this.

If in order to believe in it, one has to steadily readjust onself through time to the ever shifting meanings of words as they make room for ever more things thought impossible in the system before--since one has fought to make a place in that society, one goes along with it.

Yet all the same, the gap between what words are saying and what they are doing grows larger and larger.

The greater the gaps are, the harder it is to "connect the words and actions"--such as simply re-connecting the military and artistic meaning of "avant-garde" in order to findout what this may lead to, and to help in understanding why the avant-garde functions quite differently once it has abandoned that early connection, which Italian Futurism embraced and Dada was so "violently" opposed to

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 18:19:03 -0400
Whew, first I hardly support the status quo; second I wasn't mocking your ideas; third I appreciate your reply; fourth you should be aware of my work at least to the extent of knowing it deals precisely with larger contextualizations, not just political or hilosophical (which in fact is one of the reasons most of my posts aren't accepted here); fifth, I don't know what 'freedom of the web is' - when I've taught the net etc. I've gone over the territory you describe in detail but - in relation to this anthology, I find the approach heavy-handed, your agenda - which I largely agree with - crushing the work/s as thing/s in itself/themselves, in other words looking at the work and giving it room to breathe. And what happens too often on this list is a hypostatization of the preciousness of the proper name, as if all kinds were natural, so that any possibility of celebrating what might be seen as alternative communities and their inhering even in these dark times is lost, which makes the times darker. I think of alternative universes or discourses of poetry/poetics in which these very names might be attached to all sorts of writings, and while some people have pointed to identity theft, this is hardly the case any more than if I call a name on the street for proper or mistaken identity, that is no one will take the "Alan Sondheim" poem for my work for example who has ever read either my work or any of the other works in the anthology. It's interesting and depressing that you and Catherine I think both bring up torture as if there's a theoretical lineage between the antghology and that sort of violence and again, I see these lineages as suspect in the same way as Ayers/Obama is suspect, yes, but for example, although I may be guilty of misreading. So from Issue I and relatiely innocuous generated poetry to torture for me is problematic. You mention language games; I have no interest in them and never had, nor have I had interest in language poetry, just to set the record straight.

I'm not doubting your project or your personal experience, I hope any more than you're doubting mine. But I think when [x] whatever comes along it doesn't have to fit into either your worldview or ideas or mine and that maybe the best approach is not to do that, not that I have any real say or taste in the matter. I do read a great deal of what you write, including this long piece, which I appreciate - I can't write that much or reply to the whole thing unfortunately - I just think in this case the relation of torture etc. to this is misguided and certainly takes the joy and wonder out of reading such an anthology, although "such an" is meaningless since this was the first at least to create such a commotion on the list. Now Yasusada did, but Johnson was pushing the political there as well as the proper name and a phenomenology of authenticity, for me Adorno comes to mind, but this is different, and for me one of the major aesthetic categories - if not the major one - and again I'm speaking only for myself - is wonder, and wonder appears in the sense that Merleau-Ponty speaks of Cezanne - James Elroy uses the term as well in a similar sense - and this moves me, and the anthology moves me, and I think moving in the direction of torture (which can be done with anything or anyone, this movement and that is a problem of function and/or structure) just, for me takes the joy out of the thing, and I want that. This doesn't mean I'm not political or politically active, but that I worry about seeing the world always throughthe same lens, which is what it would mean for me. - Alan

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Catherine Daly <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 14:28:53 -0700
One of the reasons I want to take my time carefully replying on this thread is that the literary hoax is directly aimed at many of the reasons this list devolved into obsessive postings about computers, identity, and experimentation, and also about identity and hoaxes and writing and then became a mostly announcements list.

Many, if not most, hoaxes are misanthropic; this is certainly no exception. See the JACKET hoax issue for more information about a few 20th century poetry hoaxes (including my article on Marjorie Seiffert, who was involved in an anti-modernism hoax). The primary genesis, for the editor, is supposedly

"One morning about a month ago, I received a message from the Poetics List that began something like 'Announcing Issue 1 of Broken Caterpillar. Featuring new poems by . . . followed by a list of 45 poets' names. I'd seen one of them on Silliman's blogroll, but the rest were just flat names. Barely names -- ethereal text strings. Keep in mind that I receive hundreds of these announcements per year."

Words – nouns – names – no longer indicate anything to the future editor; he feels besieged by an announcements list he has chosen to join. He doesn't manipulate text well, as the dupes in the names list indicate. Find and replace two spaces with one, alpha sort, delete dupes.

He finds the announcements nature of the list funny, and the complaints of those whose names he's used – or not – numbingly funny. I don't think it funny, but this is the hoax's point. A feeling of exclusion yields to sang froid when others feel excluded? The list ought to be dominated by divisive arguments about hoax poetry and computers & poetry, and not about announcements? I would love to find the spot in the archive pointing to Broken Caterpillar.

If it is any solace at all, Bob Cobbing is probably on the list because there were so many tribute sections in 'zines after he died.

As I've mentioned, I am concerned with my name being associated with what I did not write, not because I wish to protect my literary reputation or identity (I am far too online not to have my identity stolen with great regularity), but because this is a poorly-designed and executed literary project of misanthropic intent I do not share (I am made a target, in fact) and it is repeatable. Names of (mostly) artists have been associated with things they did not make. The anthology demonstrates malign results can spring from a fairly benign idiocy. "The seal is broken," as my college friend Keith McCabe would say

The second post could be about Carpenter, but it could also be about Ray Biachi's great book I just published that uses, oh, you know, Mein Kampf and some fairly simple web-based cutup engines as starting points to individual pieces. He wrote it; Waltraud Haas did some great drawings to complete the collaboration.

I hope to try to enter some of my thinking into the discussion, because while I have long been interested and involved in computers and poetry, I really don't follow the beaten path. Jim Carpenter's work is I feel misapplied / poorly designed in this hoax.

But just because copyright is waived and/or fair use / creative commons use is encouraged doesn't mean Carpenter didn't write the code, btw.

--
All best,
Catherine Daly
[log in to unmask]

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Robin Hamilton <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 13:35:33 +0100
<<
One of the reasons I want to take my time carefully replying on this thread
is that the literary hoax is directly aimed at many of the reasons this list
devolved into obsessive postings about computers, identity, and
experimentation, and also about identity and hoaxes and writing and then
became a mostly announcements list.
>>

The bottom line is the entire damn thing is *trivial.

It says little about identity and less about post-modernism.

Guy Debord would boke into his cravat, if he were still alive.

   :-(((

R.

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Robin Hamilton <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 13:47:42 +0100
> Guy Debord would boke into his cravat, if he were still alive.

There's a slight degree of interest here insofar as this turns on
computer-generated texts -- but insofar as it intersects with (as has been
suggested) dadaist phenomena or Situationist manifestations ...

      ... jeezuz, jimmy, geeuz a break ...

                  R.

{Who published in a magazine in the sixties with the resonant banner of:

     "The revolution will come when the last bourgoisie is hung from a
lamp-post from the guts of the last capitalist."

Willie Maxton.}

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 06:03:10 -0700
My earlier impression would have been that the impetus behind the project was not
necessarily misanthropic but possibly just playful. (And of course it is the work of two
people; they may have different agenda.) But as I consider it more, however, I'd agree
that there is a strong component of misanthropy involved. But implied in what you write
here is that to ascribe misanthropy to a literary work is in itself a negative. I don't think
that can be right. Although I myself am not at all misanthropic (I don't think), I can't deny
that there is much just cause for misanthropy in the world. And misanthropy has been a
motiviating factor in much great literature--Celine, Bernhard, and Swift are just thee first
to come to mind.

Subject: Re: Generation of A Fake Anthology/Anthology of a Fake Generation
From: Thomas savage <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 08:52:41 -0700
For what it is worth, I incorporated the poem falsely attributed to me in the "Fake Anthology" into a poem which I consider a response to it. Although I've posted it on Wryting-L, I thought I would add it here in the possibility that others may have concocted poetic responses to this massive bit of identity theft that has been perpetrated on many of us. The poem goes as follows:
   Poem Written in Response to a Poem Attributed to Me Which I Never Wrote

                             " A gilded heart

                             The gilded hearts
                              Heaven"

If my heart were in Heaven,
Where would my liver be?
Would it be dead?
Most gilded things tend to be inert.
As for my name, I won't
Change it to Emily Dickinson
Although I heard her voice once
When I was "ill."
If there are any hearts
Gilded or otherwise
In Heaven, I hope
They've remembered how to beat.

Tom Savage
10/8/08

Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
Thu, 9 Oct 2008 20:04:29 -0700

Subject: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Catherine Daly <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 20:04:29 -0700
I think it would be fairly easy in the current environment for someone to jumble together 3000 pages of pro-terrorist (orgs, politics, slogans, anarchist handbook instructions for wmd, nearly-secret docs, etc.) and sign the names of 3000 artists likely to need to enter or leave the US. I think all of us know people who, over the past few years, have been scheduled to speak, or read, or perform, somewhere in the US and were not allowed into

the US. This person might even do such a thing so that 3000 more articulate people start battling a bit harder to return the laws to normal. It would be easy to harvest the names of a group of academics at schools with a religious mission or at publicly-funded universities where the legislature has more direct oversight, and write something that would create job problems for them.

It would be easy to publish a number of anthologies on the "wrong' side of the culture wars to create an overall impression of poets that would be untrue: these are the dark things I thought about when Geraldine mentioned them. Note they all have to do with human intent -- of a writer, say.

Still, quoting from sustainable aircraft:

"The fact that there are 367,294 Iraqi civilians who we couldn't say are alive or dead right now is indicative of both the impossibility and the urgency of the project". Meg Hamill (to write an obit for each)

"The impossibility of the project is not merely a result of that mathematical sublime..." Diana Hamilton

*

I don't see a reason why this particular anthology, since the "poems" are lineated, couldn't be reformatted with every poem being split into 25 lines, say, and the names also seperated, so that each one of us wrote 25! poems out of 3000 x 25! poems . Except for Quackenbush, who'd write 3 x 25! poems. God bless Japes.

The intrinsic mathematical, and mathematically extensible nature of this raises questions, most of which are boring, but my primary question today is: are the poems -- given that a certain number of "cursory readers" and one "writer" see a homogenity, and a certain number of readers -- and an editor -- see a divergence: are the recombinant poems actually separable, or individual poems?

--
All best,
Catherine Daly
[log in to unmask]

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 23:39:47 -0400
As far as I'm concerned, the right has won, given the way these discus- sions are going. Yes, you could have 3000 pages of bombs and slaughter, you could also have 3000 pages of bird behavior, even in "the current environment," and by this reasoning, you should be

suspect of every single-authored book since Hitler wrote Mein Kampf and who knows what lies beyond even this simple-minded response of mine, perhaps I have a gun.

So the anthology is now associated with terror, and so is Obama. Great.

- Alan

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Thu, 9 Oct 2008 22:28:35 -0700
given that a certain number of "cursory read
Catherine Dalt writes:

given that a certain number of "cursory readers" and one "writer" see a homogenity, and a certain number of readers -- and an editor -- see a divergence: are the recombinant poems actually separable, or individual poems?

---An interesting question, but one that arises any time a body of work seems self-consistent. Maurice Sceve's Delie, anyone?

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: David Chirot <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 08:04:56 -0700
Dear Alan:

I don't think that the discussion means that "the right has won," at all. Perhpas some might see the creators of the programme producing the Anthology as "the Right" as it is intended as an anti-experimental example; that is, that a computer program can produce peoms just as intersting as any given set of "experimental" as well as dead poets.

The anaology with terorism is not to say at all that the anhtology is terrorist, or even terrifying. For you it brought a sense of wonder, and wonder is something the world is ever in good need of.

I think that --well, I know in my case, what intersts me and brings a sense of wonder is how many things have a doubled, punning nature, are two edged swords. On the one hand a method may produce an anthology of poems; on the other hand the same method may be used to fill a prison with "suspects" complete with the "evidence" from an "unidentified source."

Personally, I don't think there is a "terrorist" aspect to the project in itself,; rather, like many hoaxes, it is intended to expose an aspect of something whith which the authors are in disagreement, or are crritical of, or simply laughing at.

The real Terror is when the State uses forged documents and faked evidence to begin genocidal Wars as the US State has in Iraq. The use of lies to mureder milions and destroy an entire society and culture--well, the US has done this before, right "at home," it is only that the technology used has changed.

Barry has a very good point. I don't know if anyone here--I am sure many probably have!--has run into someone they know who is a hard core Dead Head, and has just acquired about a hundred new bootleg tapes and CDs of Dead shows from various tours that they immmediately kindap you and hold you hostage until you have gone with "on the journey" for many long long long hours, far longer than one can bear, if one were not a captive audeince so to speak.

When you have heard about fifty different versions of the same song which are being played amazingly almost exactly the same--even the "jams" after awhile are incredibly similar--the non Dead Head is bewildered by the endurance for montony and self-consistence which one's Dead Head friend has. yet al the while, the Dead head will point out some very tiny difference, some slightly different vibration in the Cosmic groove--as though this is a Revelation from the Mighty Source itself.

I've been passionate about some artists in the same manner, and listened to every single creaky old vinyl, every bootleg, every cassette recorded radio show, of some one whose music I was manic about--and within the same song performed a different time heard entire symphonies of difference, where others might not distinguish anything much other than a variation in the degree of the quality of the recording from good to barely non-noise sounds.

I also used to collect versions of the smae song done by as many artists as I could find, especially obscure Punk gargae band versions of massively covered songs. One might hear five or six bands in a row that sounded almost identical, trying their hardest to sound note for note like the Yardbirds, say. Then would come some explosion and a suddenly completely different version, so different that in effect it was a completely new song.

(In Jamaica, when an artist cut a cover, they called it simply "Version.")

As an auctioneer in Vermont my brother and I were fans of said once, when selling "a real special pair of tires,"--"what makes these tires so special, you see, is that one's the same and the other's different."

And they sold at quite a good price!

Lists of names with affixed "crimes" have been produced throughout history to send persons to prison or beheadings, the gallows or simply to vanish into the Blacklist oblivions. It is simply that now with computers having at their disposal such massive lists of names and amounts of information—as well as disinformation--one could indeed compile both an Anthology of poetry as well as a list of suspects to be "detaineed indefinietly."

The wonder to me is how different--or even the same-- persons, taking the same method, may see quite different methods of employing it.

After all, not that long after the invention of writing in ancient Iraq—the first forgeries also began to appear.

Considering what has happened to Iraq based on forgeries-- one may ask, is that thanks there is for the invention of writing?--

As though writing itself is to pen a Pandora's Box!—

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Troy Camplin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 09:49:20 -0700
When the machine can write a sonnet, I'll be impressed. Can it write a sonnet? If a mere algorhythm can produce your kind of "experimental" poetry, then perhaps you're not really doing anything that interesting.

Troy Camplin

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 10:38:39 -0700
Ironically, that sort of statement places more importance on the easily analyzable structure and technique of a poem than on its subjective effects. Dickinson, who I seem to recall writing in formal verse, would have been horrified. More to the point, it seems to ignore even devalue the main difference between we humans and machines so far, which is that capability for irreproducible and not-wholly-logical internal experience. Last I checked, the definition of interesting was more connected to that than to whether a machine could imitate an item's structure.

Furthermore, I wonder if it has occurred to you that it's possible that people haven't created sonnet-writing programs because the people creating writing programs are more interested in experimental styles.

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.net

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 15:34:53 -0400
On Sat, 11 Oct 2008, David Chirot wrote:

> Dear Alan:
>
> I don't think that the discussion means that "the right has won," at
> all. Perhpas some might see the creators of the programme producing the
> Anthology as "the Right" as it is intended as an anti-experimental
> example; that is, that a computer program can produce peoms just as
> intersting as any given set of "experimental" as well as dead poets.
>
I wonder if this is the intention - certainly I haven't seen it stated anywhere. But in any
case, most poetry, machine- or organism- produced, just isn't interesting in any case!

> The anaology with terorism is not to say at all that the anhtology is
> terrorist, or even terrifying. For you it brought a sense of wonder, and
> wonder is something the world is ever in good need of.

Yes! But I do find the analogy problematic.
>
> I think that --well, I know in my case, what intersts me and brings a
> sense of wonder is how many things have a doubled, punning nature, are
> two edged swords. On the one hand a method may produce an anthology of
> poems; on the other hand the same method may be used to fill a prison
> with "suspects" complete with the "evidence" from an "unidentified
> source."

This is true of almost anything; you can use a fork to eat or to stab someone - for me
there has to be a balance.
>
> Personally, I don't think there is a "terrorist" aspect to the project in
> itself,; rather, like many hoaxes, it is intended to expose an aspect of
> something whith which the authors are in disagreement, or are crritical of,
> or simply laughing at.

But certainly it's not a hoax - it's far too transparent for that. Which is one of the things
that makes it interesting - it occupies an anomalous position in relation to the 'fake.'

> The real Terror is when the State uses forged documents and faked evidence
> to begin genocidal Wars as the US State has in Iraq. The use of lies to
> mureder milions and destroy an entire society and culture--well, the US has
> done this before, right "at home," it is only that the technology used has
> changed.

Absolutely, not to mention doing this on our own turf as well.

> Barry has a very good point. I don't know if anyone here--I am sure
> many probably have!--has run into someone they know who is a hard core

> Dead Head, and has just acquired about a hundred new bootleg tapes and
> CDs of Dead shows from various tours that they immmediately kindap you
> and hold you hostage until you have gone with "on the journey" for many
> long long long hours, far longer than one can bear, if one were not a
> captive audeince so to speak.

Most of the deadheads I know are far kinder than that!

> When you have heard about fifty different versions of the same song
> which are being played amazingly almost exactly the same--even the
> "jams" after awhile are incredibly similar--the non Dead Head is
> bewildered by the endurance for montony and self-consistence which one's
> Dead Head friend has. yet al the while, the Dead head will point out
> some very tiny difference, some slightly different vibration in the
> Cosmic groove--as though this is a Revelation from the Mighty Source
> itself.

That's generally true of restrictive styles in general, even blues or Carl
Andre. -
>
> I've been passionate about some artists in the same manner, and listened
> to every single creaky old vinyl, every bootleg, every cassette recorded
> radio show, of some one whose music I was manic about--and within the
> same song performed a different time heard entire symphonies of
> difference, where others might not distinguish anything much other than
> a variation in the degree of the quality of the recording from good to
> barely non-noise sounds.
>
Examples? This is interesting -
>
[...]

> Lists of names with affixed "crimes" have been produced throughout
> history to send persons to prison or beheadings, the gallows or simply
> to vanish into the Blacklist oblivions. It is simply that now with
> computers having at their disposal such massive lists of names and
> amounts of information--as well as disinformation--one could indeed
> compile both an Anthology of poetry as well as a list of suspects to be
> "detaineed indefinietly."

But lists don't _inherently_ have these connotations, any more than positive connotations.
And for lists, of course there's Auschwitz, the HUAC blacklists, all sorts of lists; even the
Poetics list is just that, a doubled list, of subscribers < email posts > archives.

> The wonder to me is how different--or even the same-- persons, taking
> the same method, may see quite different methods of employing it.

Which is also true of a fork or just about anything, I think.

> After all, not that long after the invention of writing in ancient
> Iraq--the first forgeries also began to appear.

That I haven't read, are you talking about after the bullae? I think Egyptian hieroglyphics have been pushed back earlier recently. I also think that even before the invention of writing - graffiti! - in other words, a poetics of the (im)proper name.

> Considering what has happened to Iraq based on forgeries-- one may ask,
> is that thanks there is for the invention of writing?--

Again, I'm likely to thank Egypt; I also think China can be pushed back. Not to mention Acheulian pebbles which are a form of writing, from France, and Marshak's early book on scratched enumerations/tallies on bones going tens of thousands of years back in Europe. More and more I think the idea of _an_ origin of writing - in the sense of a singularity - is going to be questioned.

I find it interesting as an aside that Sarah Palin can't deal with the 'issues' but her handlers have her verbally spewing hatred which usually starts and stops with being local except for the occasional new/byte that comes up here to Brooklyn.

> As though writing itself is to pen a Pandora's Box!--

[...] - Alan, thanks

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 15:36:50 -0400
On Sat, 11 Oct 2008, Troy Camplin wrote:

> When the machine can write a sonnet, I'll be impressed. Can it write a
> sonnet? If a mere algorhythm can produce your kind of "experimental"
> poetry, then perhaps you're not really doing anything that interesting.
>
> Troy Camplin

Yes, it can write a sonnet.
Why are algorithms "mere"? Have you ever written one? In fact algorithms or machines or organisms can produce boring or interesting writing, whatever, which increasingly has very little to do with the source of the production but more with the wonder and delight of the reader.
- Alan

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Troy Camplin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 12 Oct 2008 13:39:49 -0700
On the last statement, I don't think so. They are creating programs that can do what is easy. Creating a program that can create sentences that are grammatical, logical, and have sound-rhythms, whether it be iambic or rhymes, and structural rhythms is practically impossible for a computer to do at the present time. What computers can do is throw labeled words together into simple grammatical trees to create something that sounds like "experimental" poetry. If people could write an actual sonnet-writing program, they'd have done so. Many of the people I know who are into using computers for this sort of thing would certainly love to be able to do it.

Troy Camplin

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Troy Camplin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 12 Oct 2008 13:48:50 -0700
Show me a sonnet written by an algorithm. I want to see it. Does it have the complexity of meaning found in a Shakespearean sonnet? Or a Petrarchan? Or one by any of the romantic poets? Does it have the proper development of a sonnet of thesis, antithesis, synthesis?

Algorithms are "mere" because they are math, the simplest form of knowledge on earth. They are typically linear (unless neural nets) and thus can only create simple things. I'm not saying that computers won't some day be able to create a sonnet, but they are nowhere near complex enough to create one with the kind of complexity a human can create yet. If you can, though, prove me wrong.

Troy Camplin

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: steve russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sun, 12 Oct 2008 16:23:12 -0700
& further>>> more, I came across this brief impression today, by William Bronk, from "The Cage of Age,"

MEGA-META-

All our realities are virtual.
We feel it all in all ways. It's as though
it were and the were a we. When we turn it off,
we don't feel anything-as though we weren't
but are, as though it is. A beyond.

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 11:46:47 -0700
On Sun, Oct 12, 2008 at 1:39 PM, Troy Camplin <[log in to unmask]> wrote:

> If people could write an actual sonnet-writing program, they'd have done
> so. Many of the people I know who are into using computers for this sort of
> thing would certainly love to be able to do it.
>
> Troy Camplin

Names please.

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Ryan Daley <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 15:42:44 -0500
Troy,

Wasn't this same quip used in your attack on younger poets not being as talented? "Show
me their complexity," you bellowed. That this "show me the complexity" continues to
come up baffles me...

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 17:18:30 -0400
oh man I was doing this in the 70s with assembly language on a ti59 - it's come a long
way since then - alan

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 17:19:56 -0400
- simplest form of knowledge? where does that come from? have you read much higher
math? you could just as easily argue it's the most complex knowledge on earth. and
algorithms need not be linear at all but that's another story - Alan

On Sun, 12 Oct 2008, Troy Camplin wrote:

> Show me a sonnet written by an algorithm. I want to see it. Does it have the complexity
of meaning found in a Shakespearean sonnet? Or a Petrarchan? Or one by any of the
romantic poets? Does it have the proper development of a sonnet of thesis, antithesis,
synthesis?

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Troy Camplin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 07:33:13 -0700

Let me ask you: what would it take to write a program that could construct grammatical sentences? I'll even go so far as to suggest not including the lists of words as part of the algorithm. How many more bits of information are required by the written program to create the sentence than are required by the sentence it produces?

The arts are more more complex than the social sciences, like economics and sociology
Economics and sociology are more complex than psychology
Psychology is more complex than biology
Biology is more complex than chemistry
Chemistry is more complex than physics
Physics is more complex than math, on which it is built.

The more complex something is, the more complex the math needed to explain it. It has been shown that there are things in the universe that are so complex, that even if the math were developed, it would take longer to do the calculations than to just sit there and wait for it to happen. Why? Math is too simple to properly deal with it. That is why the most complex things listed either do not have the math do describe them, or only use statistics.

And, yes, I know math can be nonlinear. I mentioned neural nets, though I also know there are more. There are also the kinds of time series which give rise to fractal patterns, among others.

Troy Camplin

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Troy Camplin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 07:19:34 -0700

It's because complexity is a essential element to good art. Do not mistake complexity for complicatedness. Complicated means "knotted," meaning once you unknot the thing, you find out that what is there is one-dimensional, that it is simpler than you thought it was. Complex means "folded," meaning there are layers upon layers. As you get into the thing, you find out there is more and more there than you could have first imagined. SOmething folded has a surface you can see, of course -- meaning it has something anyone can enjoy -- but the more you get into the work, the more there is, and the more you can learn about it. If the more you read something, the less you get out of it, that work was complicated (and, I would also argue, ugly); if the more you read something, the more you get out of it, that work was complex (and, I would argue, beautiful).

Troy Camplin

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 17:21:04 +0200
>Let me ask you: what would it take to write a program
>that could construct grammatical sentences?

There's been a lot of work done in this field, as you probably know. SmarterChild is the
irritating pop culture example. But a current researcher who comes to mind in a literary
context is Nick Montfort, who's done a lot of work on dynamic grammar generation for
interactive fiction. That is, his software comprehensibly 'talks back' to the user, without
using the madlib cut-and-paste method you'd see in a MOO or something.

>I'll even go so far as to suggest not including the lists of words as part of the algorithm.

This doesn't really make sense, unless you're talking about a program that goes out into
the wild and automatically learns its vocabulary and grammar by crunching huge data
sets.

>It has been shown that there are things in the universe that
>are so complex, that even if the math were developed, it would
>take longer to do the calculations than to just sit there and
>wait for it to happen.

Yes, there are obscure cases in which flipping a coin solves a problem faster than
carrying out the necessary calculations. Is this what you're talking about? But these are
really esoteric cases, and definitely exceptions to the rule. Would you flip a coin
repeatedly to calculate the load distribution among suspension cables in the process
of building a bridge? Would you just let the bridge 'happen' by itself? Would you give the
project to a team of poets? It seems to me that this sort of "math vs. poetry" conversation
bears little fruit and breaks down quickly.

-steve

Subject: Re: Fwd: Generation game? (was fake antho)
From: Alan Sondheim <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 19:26:56 -0400

I have no idea whatsoever why complexity is an essential element of good
art, beyond your sayso. If you look at Kant's sublime, where's the
complexity? Or for that matter Carl Andre or Robert Barry.

Personally I like ugly but that doesn't have to be complex or complicated
for that matter, either. - Alan

Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
Fri, 10 Oct 2008 11:50:52 -0500

Subject: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Eric Elshtain <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 11:50:52 -0500
The great and tawdry paradox of the pseudo-hoaxy "fake anthology" is that while the project wants to make a cynical and, yes, misanthropic statement against human-only poetry in order, it seems, to say "if a machine can do it, then poetry is dismissed as an endeavor" (I'm 99% certain this is the primary intent of the project) it, the project, must LEGITIMiZE ITSELF by pretending to be human!?

In that, the whole project feels like a sham on the face of it. Let alone that fact that the "sophisticated algorithm" does nothing that hasn't been done already by poetry-generating programs dating from the 1970s (Racter, for one) and even earlier. It's not at all that difficult to get a computer to spew out free verse using source texts based on some form of Markov Chain or other stochastic logic, nor is it that difficult, in the open field that is poetry, to hit upon a few machine-assisted poems that read, in style, like poetry written by mere humans. Joshua Kotin wrote a trim essay a few years back on this very subject: what are the implications of a poetic "style" if a computer can successfully mimic that style?

So, yes, machine assisted poetry raises very interesting questions about poetic origin, readership, authorship, &c but without the need for clap-trap one-upmanship (one-upmachineship??) and thumbing one's nose at human-only poetries.

Let machine poetry be machine poetry! Let computer-assisted poetry be just that--another tool in the procedural verse tool box. It's a shame to reduce machine-assisted poetry to the level of a bad joke.

Also--can anyone else use this software? Can we see the code?

Eric Elshtain
Editor
Beard of Bees Press
http://www.beardofbees.com

Subject: Re: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Jim Andrews <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 19:02:09 -0700
> the project wants to make a cynical and, yes, misanthropic
> statement

> against human-only poetry in order, it seems, to say "if a
> machine can do it,
> then poetry is dismissed as an endeavor" (I'm 99% certain this is
> the primary
> intent of the project)

wow.

anyone who does the sort of work jim carpenter does will have more or less constant occassion to realize how much fear there is of his sort of work. fear from artists. but also a more widespread contemporary fear of machines being made to do human things.

fear of being replaced. fear of our humanity being diminished; fear of humanity being diminished. fear of poetry being diminished; fear of poets being diminished. fear of the life being squeezed out of things into mediocre mechanized processes accepted as replacements for what is beautiful and lively.

one cannot scoff at these fears.

there is a long way to go concerning the dissemination of a more capacious vision of the possible roles of computers and software in society and art.

and that is precisely one of the things work such as jim's is concerned with. it raises these questions even when the poems themselves may not address this sort of issue. which is one of the reasons it also needs steve's sort of work of considering a frame and a concept for jim's work.

anyone who spends the sort of time jim has to program his software—count upon it--is seriously interested in poetry both as a fully human undertaking and also, of course, interested in the degree to which poetry is mechanical. when we really understand that, that's when we'll know what is essentially human about it.

it isn't about trying to fool people into believing what was written by a computer was written by a person. it's about trying to explore the difference as poetically, dramatically, and thoughtfully as possible.

one emotion, though, that i imagine would be relatively easy to program into software: fear and its predictable responses.

ja
http://vispo.com

Subject: Re: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: steve russell <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 06:04:28 -0700

you know, the ageless free will/determinism issue hasn't been resolved, which is why it's ageless. Human or not, we may be mostly, maybe completely determined creatures. I say, give the machine a break.

Subject: Re: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 08:51:45 -0700
I was interested to find on that page the following statement:

"I am releasing all of this source as public-domain work. The onnly restriction is that you may not copyright it. You may modify it, distribute it in any fashion, use it for commercial purposes, sell it, rent it. Whatever you want. You can claim authorship. You don't even have to mention me. Just don't copyright it."

Let me repeat that: "You can claim authorship." So just to say, Carpenter is not claiming anything any exclusivity for himself that he is denying anyone else.

Subject: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Tom Orange <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 09:29:52 -0400
eric and others,

jim carpenter, who authored the software that created the poems used in the issue 1 anthology, is very clear about his intentions, the availability of the code, demonstrations of the parameters under which it can be run, etc. here:

http://etc.wharton.upenn.edu:8080/Etc3beta/Erika.jsp

note also that stephen mclaughlin, who compiled the list of names and added them to the poems compiled by carpenter's software, like had intentions other than (or at least not 100% consistent with) those of carpenter.

allbests,
tom orange

Subject: Re: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Murat Nemet-Nejat <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 12:52:56 -0400
Tom,

Thank you. I was fascinated to read the perimeters within which Jim Carpenter has built his program: a grammatical model interacting with a finite lexical set. I would be curious to know how one can build a grammatical model which, it seems to me, may contain

infinite variations. I wonder if by grammatical model he means a set of rhetorical devices, which is more circumscribed.

I am particularly fascinated by his idea of an "inhibiting" dimension to contain the "irrational exhuberance" of his software program, its permutative possibilities, to prevent the result fom turning into "gibberish." A few months ago, I was discussing with Chris Funkhauser an idea he posits in the last section of his book, *Pre-Historic Digital Poetry* (a great book, by the way). Chris says that for digital poetry truly to become its own, first, it must develop a sense of the "outside"; second, the digital language must integrate the ability to "learn." I responded that, since in digital work learning consists of positive reinforcements of responses to it, does learning not progressively narrow down the range within which the program moves -which is the very opposite of developing an outside. I told him perhaps what digital work needs is the ability to un-learn, to create resistances to its cumulative knowledge (or, may be put in another way, its permutational impulse). Resonance occurs moving through a resistant space. I wonder if Jim Carpentar's inhibiting dimension is pointing to something similar to "unlearning" or if it has a more limited practical application, basically an attempt to create "balance," a kind of golden rule.

Ciao,
Murat

Subject: Re: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Steve McLaughlin <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 14:49:07 +0200
Erica T. Carter's source code is here:
http://etc.wharton.upenn.edu:8080/Etc3beta/Source.jsp

-steve

Subject: Re: Let Machine Poetry Be Machine Poetry
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 20:55:17 +0200
Under 'About' :

This project originated as a graduate research project the intent of which was to learn whether machine-generated poems could compete in the marketplace with the poems of blooded authors. (They can.) But it has evolved into an aesthetic proposition: That the MACHINE is a legitimate methodology for artistic expression.

In so doing it has also become a barometer for measuring the sincerity (even the humanity) of the community of academic writers and critics whose gatekeeper status it openly seeks to subvert: We're pretty sure they aren't wearing any clothes, but you never know, they might just have a corner on the invisible threads market.

That is not to say that the project is an elaborate articulation of the often voiced objection to contemporary art that "My 5-year-old could do that!" And the obvious response: "But she didn't." That is not it at all. Rather, the project seeks to disrupt the Academy's mission of exclusion, its selfishness and greed, its supercilious arrogance. It does so by composing texts that democratize both the processes of reading and writing. It's obvious that many of Erica's poems are as good as most of what emerges as academic verse. But more important, absent an author, any reader's reading is a valid reading.

In short, We don't need no fucking academician to tell us how we don't get it, how we could never get it. We get it--we *always* got it.

Fine with me, it goes with the Dadaists (1916-1920), nothing new under the usual Sun. It also stuck with our private pasts, usually a typical adolescent syndrome. It sticks with us, otherwise we would not be here in this moment typing and typing and trying to invent. The Machine is new, partly. As Eric Elshtain already said, we had Racter before (1970, exceptional, indeed!). The same quotation shows where we are:

 *poetry is still the biggest snob-racket in the Arts with little poet groups battling for power - Charles Bukowski

*
The
We, children of Bukowski. Then, why am I disturbed? Why am I writing in this moment? I don't think that I am a fucking Academician, even if I teach. Nor do I think that Barry Schwabsky is, nor Tom Orange. We could be sharing the rules of a competition for the "best," but within this process there is a refinement that requires a lot of work. If on one side I applaud this Anthology, on the other I do not agree with the verbalization of the Authors. Authors, by the way, who are themselves part of the same process since the Experiment was "originated as a graduate research project."

Just this. I accept their work and cheered it. They should be humble enough to accept mine.

Laura Riding on Issue – Anthology
Fri, 10 Oct 2008 14:27:29 -0700

Subject: Laura Riding on Issue - Anthology
From: amy king <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 14:27:29 -0700
"No one seems to realize that the destruction of poetry as a tradition would not destroy poetry itself."

--Laura Riding, CONTEMPORARIES AND SNOBS
_____

Recent work
http://www.writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/King.html

Amy's Alias
http://amyking.org/

fake anthology :: flawless fakeness ?
Fri, 10 Oct 2008 21:11:59 -0400

Subject: fake anthology :: flawless fakeness ?
From: Aryanil Mukherjee <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 21:11:59 -0400
I haven't been following the fake anthology thread. missed the first dozen emails, picking up the thread thereafter didn't make much sense. a poet friend (not fake) from outside the listserv called today to talk about this unique project. he said - you are there. curiously amused I took my first peek at it. well.....funny. the fakeness seems to have logical cracks in it, at least one. I have two poems in it, not one. and my name shows up twice. first with my Bengali last name - Mukhopadhyay and then with the English, Mukherjee. I wonder if that was bad oversight or the editors knew I was a bilingual writer.....

has this happened to anyone else ? showing up twice ?

aryanil

Subject: Re: fake anthology :: flawless fakeness ?
From: Hugh Behm-Steinberg <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 18:43:08 -0700
I'm in there twice two, once as Hugh Behm-Steinberg and once as just Behm-Steinberg. I suspect the second one was drawn from Dusie, where my wife and I collaborated on a chapbook.

Hugh

Subject: Re: fake anthology :: flawless fakeness ?
From: Elizabeth Switaj <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Fri, 10 Oct 2008 20:08:02 -0700
The flaws, in my flawed opinion, bring Issue 1 closer to the realm of human work. What I mean is that computers can't make mistakes: they can break down and have errors, but

the software does only what it is told to do. With perfection's even surface, it would be more identifiably the work of a computer. Its computerized approaches to perfection accounts for the blandness I have found to be characteristic of the work as a whole. (Where are the exceptions?)

The growth of computer poetry should lead to a greater celebration of mistakes if we wish to banish fears of replacement, though we must always strive to err in greater less predictable ways if we wish to stay ahead of algorithms. But then, I have long held to the belief that it is the intriguing flaw--the departure from one's stated poetics, the line the poet can't quite explain, the divergence from grammar or syntax with powerful effect-- that gives a poem its greatness for however long that subjective stature can last. This connects, of course, to aspects of wabi-sabi, though outright simplicity is more of something to be striven for than something to achieve in my ideal (subjective) poetics.

Elizabeth Kate Switaj
elizabethkateswitaj.net

Machine poetry
Sat, 11 Oct 2008 08:59:17 -0500

Subject: Machine poetry
From: Eric Elshtain <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 08:59:17 -0500
Jim Andrews wrote:

>>it isn't about trying to fool people into believing what was written by a computer was written by a person. it's about trying to explore the difference as poetically, dramatically, and thoughtfully as possible.<<

Then why submit poems composed by his software, like Carpenter has done, to journals without mentioning the fact that a computer assisted in the poem's composition if not to try and perpetrate, at least in part, a sort of hoax hinging on the fact that people (editors in particular) were "fooled"? This action also seems to fly in the face of exploring "difference," no?

All I was saying is that computer poetry can raise all the kinds of questions and make the kind of explorations you mention without all the folderol.

I think you also mistook annoyance for fear--yes, many people do not like the idea of machines "encroaching" into what they consider a purely human endeavor, but I have no such fear. Machines can do things in poetry humans can not or dare not, but humans can also do things a machine can not be programmed (as yet) to do.

From the outside, looking through the lens of the actions Carpenter has taken with his software, I think it's fair to think that there's something snarky lurking within...

Eric Elshtain
Editor
Beard of Bees Press
http://www.beardofbees.com

Subject: Re: Machine poetry
From: Jim Andrews <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Sat, 11 Oct 2008 14:50:09 -0700
Those who have children usually like to raise them not to inflict damage but to contribute in the spirit of cooperation, enjoyment, and benevolence. We would do well to extend that attitude to our art works, also.

Pranks will amuse during adolescence.

The power of the prank to amuse doesn't last long though.

There is much more serious work to do in machine poetry than fooling editors.

The important issues are as important as the question of what we are, what it is to be human.

When we look at the poetry communities and the dynamics thereof, what gets lauded, accepted, and why, well, it's all over the map from silly to serious (and will be for the duration). More important is why we ourselves are involved in poetry and what we ourselves are trying to do. Eventually it isn't sufficient simply to subvert the corpus but to offer a body of work--whether of poetry or criticism or whatever, poemy poems or some alternative--that *is the thing itself you want to bring into the world*, not just criticisms of what already is.

ja
http://vispo.com

A clarification or two
Mon, 13 Oct 2008 10:41:50 -0400

Subject: A clarification or two
From: Jim Carpenter <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Mon, 13 Oct 2008 10:41:50 -0400

Hi,

I just wanted to weigh in a bit on some of the recent discussion about Issue 1 and maybe help to make a couple of things clear.

First off, Issue 1 is not a hoax nor a prank. It is (and I think should have been immediately seen as) parody, parody as obvious as anything on The Onion. If there is anything amusing about the project, it is that so many folks did not see that. Maybe that's because it is bad parody. I'm too close to the project to be objective about that--I'll leave it for others to make that judgement. But speaking for myself, there was no intent to fool anybody, just to evoke a chuckle or two.

Second, the ETC project is, and should be discussed as, separate from Issue 1. I was multiply motivated to continue the project after completing my thesis. I did not feel as if the thesis satisfactorily answered the question as to whether machine poetry could compete with traditional poetry. I had attempted to devise and implement some controlled testing, but could not for the life of me devise an adequate null hypothesis. So after some considerable time, decided that the only way to test was to actually send out the work and see what happened. It was important that in sending poems out I not identify them as machine works because that would irreparably compromise the experiment. Some editors would accept the work only because it was borne of the machine and others would reject it for the same reason. So Erica was born. And of course that kind of exercise does have at least some of the characteristics of the hoax. And I confess to some pleasure in the act.

And as are most alternative artists (and I would think, just about everyone who participates in this list), I wanted to be disruptive.

But there is another, to me, more important motivation, which speaks squarely to Issue 1. And that has to do with the broader community of computational artists, particularly those working with text. A problem confronting these artists is where to get text to support their work, especially since the demands of an artifact capable of processing thousands of elements per second and storing gigabytes of data require enormous amounts of it. It is physically impossible to manually write the 1000s of pages needed to support certain types of work. Further, developing excellence in the skill sets required for developing computational artifacts and literary artifacts would require double the effort it takes to become either a highly-skilled technician or highly-skilled author. My thoughts were that artificially generated texts could be used in such works. (One of the reasons I wrote the most recent version in Java was to facilitate such usage--and also why I've posted the source.) So far only Issue 1 has taken me up on that.

Finally, all of this is past. I have turned to other interests, none of them computational, and at this time, have no ambitions toward furthering the project (another reason for releasing the source). If the project has value, someone else will pick it up. If not, not. BTW: There is a clear line along which Erica's poetry can be improved significantly, which does not require any programming knowledge whatsoever. Just a little Xml.

If anyone is interested, I am happy to respond to questions about the software's design. Just email me directly: [log in to unmask]

Best,
--jim

Subject: Re: A clarification or two
From: Barry Schwabsky <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 00:59:09 -0700
Thanks for that. I have a question in response: With ETC, were you attempting to create poetry that would be good according to your own lights, or that would be acceptable according to the criteria of a certain poetry "market," or both?
Also, would you say something about how you defined the literary criteria you wanted the result to fulfill?

Subject: Re: A clarification or two
From: Jim Carpenter <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 10:50:52 -0400
I wanted to see if ETC could compete, so I tried to attach to that which was successful in getting itself noticed. Erica's sensibilities and mine are not the same. The literary criteria were simple: What's publishable?

Here is a post I wrote a while back that I think brushes up against your question:
http://theprostheticimagination.blogspot.com/2007/10/just-when-we-thought-we-were-making.html

Best,
-jim

Subject: Re: A clarification or two
From: Anny Ballardini <[log in to unmask]>
Date: Tue, 14 Oct 2008 22:08:44 +0200

Well, Congratulations. As I said in my previous previous post you had an
incredible marketing strategy, see the number of people who know of your
work now. And as I said in my previous post, the only thing I did not like
was the following sentence:
Rather, the project seeks to disrupt the Academy's mission of exclusion, its
selfishness and greed, its supercilious arrogance.

I do not identify with this concept and there are about 300 people that I
know who do not. Then, there are about a couple of dozens whom I would set

there, in their hell or arrogance, included some that you excluded (I love it, chuckles from here),

devilishly,
me.