

Introductions to the book — SUPPLE SCIENCE — and its various sections — OVERCOMING FITNESS, EVOKED EPIGENETIC ARCHITECTURE, THE SORE, OVERSENSITIVE, INSECURE, SUPPLE SCIENCES, RE-ENGLISH, COMMON CENTS — by Thom Donovan, Andrew Levy, Madeline Gins, Eleni Stecopoulos, Rob Halpern and Silvia Federici, respectively; followed by the GLOSSARY.

**SORE ETHICS:  
AN INTRODUCTION  
THOM DONOVAN**

Consider our behavior as a model for biology—as a model for a wished-for,  
viable biology (constructive wishful thinking).<sup>1</sup>

—Robert Kocik

Like so many polymaths throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the poet/prosodist- designer-theologian-critical theorist-healer Robert Kocik is hard to know what to do with. Having studied with Robert Duncan and other faculty members in the short-lived poetics program at New College of California in the early eighties, and having published in small poetry and poetics magazines for nearly three decades, Kocik's early purchases are in a realm of poetry/poetics that stretches back throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century North American *avant-garde* as well as many other cultural

traditions (European, Greek, East Asian, Indian, Persian, Native American). But Kocik has also designed buildings and furniture; he has had numerous functioning businesses for activist design and architecture; he has given talks and presentations on law, economics, politics, architecture, aesthetics, prosody, and medicine; he maintains a visual art practice (mainly drawings); and he has collaborated extensively with choreographers and performers, most significantly with his life partner, Daria Faïn, with whom he founded the Prosodic Body and the Commons Choir, organizations devoted to convergences between medicine, spiritual practice, movement, and embodiment. Kocik doesn't belong. His work is inappropriate, as only the work of the most generative artists, poets, and intellectuals can be: "like artworks that have departed from their proper genres."<sup>2</sup> By acting inappropriately, it becomes both a model and an allegory of how the individual may act far beyond the historical boundaries of their nominal discipline or field (poetry, design, architecture, visual art, etc.). Genreless, anti-categorical, identity-defying, anarchic, antinomian, inter- and anti- disciplinary.

I first discovered Kocik's work in graduate school, at SUNY-Buffalo's Poetics Program. Fortuitously, during a visit by David Antin to Charles Bernstein's seminar, Kocik sat beside me. I remember making a comment about Antin's improvisational practice and Kocik nodding in agreement, adding the comment that one of Antin's rarest talents was evidenced by all the things he *didn't* say; which is to say, by the attentional and intellectual reserve marshaled by his extemporaneous "talks." I have always been impressed by Kocik's understanding of matters occult, withdrawn, and subtle; the ways he constantly negotiates the invisible and potential (what he calls the "totipotent" throughout the collection before you). In Kocik's work—his cosmology, his 'poethics'—our greatest and most common resource economically, legally, biologically, and aesthetically is one that we cannot see, a "substrate" residing below the threshold of a perceptible world. Looking inward—"endogenously" (from the Greek *ενδογενής*, meaning "proceeding from within")—we can locate this resource in the hopes of drawing upon it. The following book presents a comprehensive ethics of the endogenous (of inner resource and potential) and the subtle (where subtlety identifies places "where the Original [ . . . ] can be re-written"<sup>3</sup>) in relation to multiple fields of knowledge, theory, and practice. It is a handbook or primer for how one may extend and practice such an ethics.

When Michael Cross and I initially conceived this collection with Kocik, we imagined a book that might not merely act as a career retrospective, but deliberately introduce the concepts and articulations of a work spanning over two decades (the earliest texts collected in this volume were composed in the mid-90's) to both a readership that has anxiously awaited an anthology of Kocik's texts for many years, and to a new readership for whom Kocik's syncretic, anti- (ante?) disciplinary projects may offer new pathways in poetry, linguistics, medicine, and sociopolitical/economic/legal activism: "Consider this approach a cross-amateurism."<sup>4</sup> My own

reasons for wanting this book to exist are deeply personal. They stem most of all from my friendship with Kocik and a sense of affinity with his and Fain's ongoing projects. It also stems from a sense that Kocik's work is urgent and needs to be read by a much wider audience than his reception in small presses and by select audiences across various discourses has allowed. Many of the concepts in this book have contributed to a conversation vital for contemporary poetry, regarding embodiment, the "Poetics of Healing" (Eleni Stecopoulos' term/event series), commons (ecological and socioeconomic justice), inter-disciplinarity, and prosody. It is my hope that an existing conversation may be widened and intensified by the availability of this book.

With regards to the structure of the book before you, it is divided into five principal sections: *Overcoming Fitness*; *Evoked Epigenetic Architecture*; *The Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Supple Sciences*; *Re-English*; and *Common Cents*. The book closes with a letter composed to the late poet and translator Stacy Doris (1962-2012), Kocik's longtime friend and an invaluable comrade for both his milieu and community. Additionally, the editors have included a glossary of terms composed by Kocik, an index, as well as acknowledgments. In organizing the work as such, our intention is to represent discrete aspects of Kocik's overarching project, what one might call his "poetics," acknowledging simultaneously that all of the sections and texts are necessarily overlapping and coextensive.

The first section, *Overcoming Fitness*, includes in its entirety a pamphlet Kocik published with the Brooklyn-based publisher, Autonomedia, as a staple-bound pamphlet in 2001. The text, "Overcoming Fitness," considers genetic expropriation with the nearing completion of the human genome sequence. One of the key questions it asks, which Kocik pursues in other texts included in the current volume, is how "poetry [and other forms of art and cultural production] portends physiology?"<sup>5</sup> Which is to say, how can the most fundamental substance comprising our being—genetic material—be taken-up as an *aesthetic* material? "Overcoming Fitness" also attempts to rethink notions of fitness in relation to a wider culture of exploitation and bellicosity, one Kocik locates within the economics of finance capitalism. To overcome fitness, as Kocik explains, draws upon every connotation of the term *overcome*: to transcend and to surmount conditions of socioeconomic oppression; to be overly generative, procreative, munificent; to 'fight,' as it were, corruption with an excess of generation. Drawing upon a hagiographic rhetoric of beatitude ("Woe to the rich for they have already got all they're ever going to get"<sup>6</sup>), a surreal literalism ("Poetry doesn't ask why two white rabbits don't produce a red rabbit but why two white rabbits don't produce a putto"<sup>7</sup>), and Augustinian antinomianism ("had they only made use of the world without using it"<sup>8</sup>), "Overcoming Fitness" presents the notion that "The Last Judgment is for the living"<sup>9</sup>; that, contra any number of official religious doctrines, it is in *this* world, materially, that justice, health, and well-being must be achieved. The third text of this section, "The Other Front Underfoot," is contiguous with "Overcoming Fitness" inasmuch as it

extends a meditation upon the origins of contemporary warfare and the task of the artist/poet in the face of seemingly endless military engagement.

The second section of the book, *Evoked Epigenetic Architecture*, proposes forms of architecture and design that may influence (human) being “epigenetically.” Whereas traditional science and a reactionary biomedical establishment presuppose that genotype determines phenotype, Kocik proposes the inverse may be equally true. By designing for “epigenomes” (the outer-lining of the gene which regulates genetic expressions) he believes that architects and designers can influence the health and well-being of the individual and society. In this section of the book, we also include specific design proposals by Kocik. In “Enwreathing Developmental Difficulty and the Feldenkrais Method” one can see clearly articulated many of Kocik’s principal ideas regarding how design can facilitate sensory-motor development. One can also see a correlation between Kocik’s approaches to disability and design in which he puts forth a dialectic of what he calls “far-side facilitation” and “far-side disablement”:

To the far side of the norm lies the underexplored frontier of radical facilitation. Like a sudden loss of resistance in the direction of one’s movement (as an overpowering wind at one’s back) this far-side facilitation can be as disequilibrating and debilitating as near-side intentional impeding. This far-side disablement sets up conditions in which exceptional capacities may be acquired by the disabled because disabled, while exceptional capacities may at once be acquired by the abled because they’ve been benignly blocked (kept from experiencing ability as norm). We cross into each other.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, in “Anechoic Naad Darkroom,” a proposal for an anechoic chamber to be installed in a public square in lower-Manhattan, one can see many of Kocik’s most fundamental ideas about the endogenous and evoked epigenetics given architectural expression. Whereas the proposed design for the Field Center may remediate built environments inauspicious to the disabled in the interest of empowering both the nominally disabled and ‘able-bodied,’ the Anechoic Naad Darkroom enables the common, non-proprietary study of our most inwardly kept resources—our minds, our souls, our genetics:

Prosody is perhaps *the* Open Science. It’s unbounded and non-self-reinforcing. It’s plenary—not another assembly of a field with relevance only to itself as it desperately lunges outward in an effort to avoid inbreeding depression. (How shall the very design of a building enact the communicability of Open Science? How can it countervail aggressive privatization and asociality and still be a recognizable

entity?)<sup>11</sup>

*The Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Supple Sciences* includes two key works from Kocik's *oeuvre*, "The Susceptive System," which playfully imagines a tertiary nervous system that would invite foreign pathogens, becoming "hospitable" to them, and "Without Suffering Succession," which entails a sustained conversation with disability theory and activism. Not unlike the philosopher and ethicist Emmanuel Levinas, in "The Susceptive System" Kocik imagines medical practices based on responsibility for the "Other" (foreigner, stranger). Only whereas in Levinas' philosophy the Other equates an ethical demand put-forth by the "stranger" with the "face" (of God)/"infinity," Kocik's others (foreign pathogens) take the ego-body "hostage" by demanding an invitation from their host. In the process they conceive original conditions of possibility for cooperative, convivial exchanges between heterogeneous embodiments.

Composed in the wake of 9/11, and not unlike Antonin Artaud's text, *The Theater and Its Double*, which imagines the Plague as a massive autoimmune attack within Europe's borders/political body,<sup>12</sup> "The Susceptive System" analogizes bodies and international borders whereof, as post-9/11 politics of exception have proven, foreclosure of boundaries and borders is more often than not detrimental to geopolitical health. In "The Susceptive System," in particular, one gets a clear sense of how embodiment, for Kocik, is both real and allegorical simultaneously—a problem Eleni Stecopoulos addresses in her introduction to the section, where she evokes the treatment of metaphor in works by Susan Sontag, George Lakoff, Ed Cohen, and others. In Kocik's work, the ways that we write about the body and behave as bodies are inextricable; so much so that one impinges upon the other, and language use often specifically determines somatic expression. The term Kocik uses for this phenomenon elsewhere in this book is *logosomatic*:

The logosome activates when a word from 'without' reaches and rewrites the originary 'within' (or perhaps nowhere inside or out) and then selectively penetrates the notorious germ barrier.<sup>13</sup>

The Booth [for Retrofection] uses an audio input known as a poetry pop-in to set off an aesthetic reaction capable of logosome activation. The *logosome*—the fusing of logo-centric song/verse and originary Logos (that which manifests matter)—selects the new somatic mutation produced by this fusion and sends it through the germ barrier and into perpetuity.<sup>14</sup>

Wording so potent it germinates *who* in *what* we are.<sup>15</sup>

The fourth section of the book, *Re-English*, provides a cross-section of Kocik's ongoing project/organization, The Prosodic Body, by which he attempts to coordinate poetics and linguistic theory with historiography and political economy. The first two texts of this section, "Dearest Choir" and "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E," originate in Kocik's collaboration with the Phoneme Choir, a performance group founded by Kocik and Faïn in 2008 which attempts to overcome the primary historical uses of the English language for mercantilism and warfare through its deformation into the primal elements of a universal linguistics: phonemics. "Dearest Choir" provides Kocik's conceptualization of the choir, and how specifically it may approach prosody through movement, gesture, and holistic bodily expressions. "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E" is a libretto that the choir uses for their performances. Within it one finds poems, chants, charms ("amulets"), and prose regarding the history of (land) expropriation since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E" anticipates much of Kocik's work in the fifth section of this book, which historicizes the 2008 financial collapse in relation to systematic assaults on a global commons. The other texts of this section, and the text "Poetry May Take Any Substrate (Including Poetry)" in particular, reconsider the role of the poet in society.

- 1) poetics as the art of poetry
- 2) poetics as creative commentary or literary hermeneutics
- 3) poetics as making in general; or, as I say: 'all-of-making'

I'll go one step further and propose poetics as 'materialization' — cottage industry logos, shop-built Big Bang. Word produces material. It is both supreme and servile. The art of poetry subsists in poetics.<sup>16</sup>

Posing one of the most radical definitions of the poet by any one in the last two centuries, and certainly by those associated with an historic European/ North American *avant-garde*, Kocik imagines an expanded function of poetry that would "outsource" the poet for legal and political activism, social work, non-exploitative business practices, community organization, medicine, and a potentially unlimited number of other activities.

The last section of the book, *Common Cents*, includes recent texts by Kocik which both historicize modern economics and propose creative responses to the current economic and political crisis originating in the financial collapse of 2008 and the subsequent 'bail-outs' of major economic institutions within the United States and abroad (however, much of *Common*

*Cents* was actually written before the financial crisis). I read these texts much as I imagine one encountering the antinomian pamphlets and broadsides concurrent with primitive accumulation in Europe circa the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are similarly strategic and rhetorically impassioned in their attempts to promote a culture of direct action against capital. Like many of the texts in this book, it is the hope of the editors that the texts of *Common Cents* may offer practical tactics for intervening in our current economic, legal, and political systems. Like the work of Strike Debt, Arts & Labor, and other affinity groups spawned by the global Occupy movement of 2011, *Common Cents* offers an original application for aesthetics, one that would not only transform aesthetic discourse (Art History) but hopefully strive to practice social justice beyond provincial discourse about aesthetic politics.

The book's title, *Supple Science*, refers to all those resources we may draw upon from both aesthetic and spiritual traditions that, coupled with the 'hard sciences,' may radically transform the micro- and macropolitical, ecological, and socioeconomic foundations of our current world. "This is where the 'nascent' or 'missing' sciences set in—at the point of the 'sore' question—the inappropriate, the awkwardness of the probe."<sup>17</sup> In the interest of providing additional insight into specific aspects of Kocik's lifework to date, we asked five of his contemporaries to produce introductions for the discrete sections of this book. The introducers were selected based on how we understood their relationship to Kocik and to his body of work. They include, respectively, Andrew Levy (*Overcoming Fitness*); Madeline Gins (*Evoked Epigenetic Architecture*); Eleni Stecopoulos (*The Sore, Oversensitive, Insecure, Supple Sciences*); Rob Halpern (*Re-English*) and Silvia Federici (*Common Cents*). The glossary—a paratextual form Kocik uses throughout his work—we hope may encapsulate key terms from the book.

Thom Donovan

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#### Notes:

1) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 203. 2) Ibid, 202. 3) Ibid, 42. 4) Ibid, 171. 5) Ibid, 187. 6) Ibid, 41. 7) Ibid, 27. 8) Ibid, 70. 9) Ibid, 41. 10) Ibid, 212. 11) Ibid, 173. 12) See Eleni Stecopoulos' book, *Armies of Compassion* (Los Angeles: Palm Press, 2010), for a brilliant exploration of this idea from Artaud. 13) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 312. 14) Ibid, 46. 15) Ibid, 313. 16) Ibid, 304. 17) Ibid, 203.

# THE PARTICULARS OF SUBTLE FITNESS AND ITS USE FOR LIFE

**ANDREW LEVY**

A theory that has ceased to have any connection with practice is art.<sup>1</sup>

–Max Horkheimer

I'm a carpenter and I can only write about what I can't write about.<sup>2</sup>

–Robert Kocik

January 30, 2008: Robert forwarded a note telling me that The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council had granted Daria Fain and him

a temporary workspace for the design and development of a building based on poetry (I actually prefer to say 'prosody'). To my knowledge there is not a single structure on the planet designed specifically for meeting the needs of poets—addressing such interrelated questions as working conditions, livelihood,

listening, learning, public contact, seclusion, social change, diverse assembling, hanging out, heating up, formal innovation.<sup>3</sup>

In sympathy with other philosophers of his generation who have engaged the grounds of language and life, I think particularly of Giorgio Agamben's work on "the coming politics," his philosophical and political exercises for disrupting ideational incarceration; it is the *concentration* that matters and not ideas. From Kocik's standpoint on poetics, those who think they have private thoughts have misunderstood language.

WHAT IS A WORD? (I sure don't know!) I'll present the 4 stages of speech and cosmogony of phonemic emanation of Kashmiri Saivism (particularly the writing of Abhinavagupta) as example and practice of 'word' at its fullest—in contrast to 'English,' psychoanalysis (especially Lacan's parole pleine) and the neurocentric 'problem of origins' in linguistics (is language acquired or hardwired?). All day Sunday 2/10 and all day Wednesday 2/13 (from 10am on) the two rooms at 14 Wall Street will serve as communal reading rooms . . . <sup>4</sup>

We're in what's become the Garden of Eden. Robert Kocik's "Overcoming Fitness" is a paradigmatically radical proposal for a contemporary poetics, perhaps the most radical made among his contemporaries. Like some among his more adventurous peers, his work calls for the rearrangement of one's reading habits as a first step, but then Kocik goes further. In re-imagining how things work and words fit together, how habits of language long ingrained are unfit for the world workers and writers live in as participants in a common destiny, he suggests American poets begin again, cognizant of the mercantile origins of the English language. In economic terms, that means that one does not sell somebody something they cannot evaluate. That we can no longer, by taking thought, transcend the life that exists by taking thought.

What I've always liked about Robert's work is how off the grid it is in relation to forms of academic discourse, which is not infrequently fueled by bad faith. I don't see how the hegemony of the university-factory could be effectively contested but that Kocik's lifework, as in "Overcoming Fitness," is an exercise in the powers of constraint that would fit form to fitness for a kind of nonparticipatory participation—conceived as an "indescribably more ruthless and cruel upheaval than any political revolution ever was,"<sup>5</sup> as Robert Musil writes in *The Man Without Qualities*. Kocik's writing is a return to the sphere of interest that art has left for what has become merely *interesting*. No one cares about banning ineffective art. Kocik's writing must

be understood within a political context that a work of philosophy and beauty can be.

Kocik's writing, in a way similar to that of Epicurus, tells us what is not, and what's not only better than what is, but much more like the truth—it might want not to, but it can't help it. Epicurus, in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “was aware that deeply ingrained habits of thought are not easily corrected, and thus he proposed various exercises to assist the novice.”<sup>6</sup> In “Overcoming Fitness,” Kocik declares his work “impenititudinist”; that is, “it views the world as a place of missing or omitted organs, organizations, life forms, agencies, properties and events. It sorts through the nonexistent.”<sup>7</sup> According to Robert, “Overcoming Fitness both conceives and constructs.”<sup>8</sup> The writing is in dialogue, reflexively organized about the ways in which an author ‘identifies’ with its genome, with its co-workers and friends—its readers. It arrives in our hands as a working draft.

The work of beauty, however, can be undone. Writer Sarah Jaffe has reiterated the point:

Politics has become a playground for the ultra-rich, where they get to test their pet theories on the rest of us and we're expected to smile and thank them for their charity [ . . . ] We're ruled by an ever-smaller group of elites (“the income defense industry”) [ . . . ] The same people who are pushing wages downward are the ones paying for politicians' campaigns, and they're the same people on the boards of directors and trustees of our universities.<sup>9</sup>

In “Overcoming Fitness,” Kocik shows what's at stake for life in our state of politics 2000; a forewarning that twelve years later is as yet inaudible in the mainstream media:

(The) unabashed government handing over to a single private interest of a public trust that is at once a biological commons. This permission of commercial takeover and the faith in the superiority of self-interested incentive characterize us more acutely than any genomic insight. The pattern is well established. Before technologies are marketable, cost and risk are socialized (paid for with tax dollars). Later, when profitable products are in view, the creative works of the public sector are given as gifts to the business world. The human genome is now added to an illustrious list of public giveaways that includes: transistors, the internet, computers, satellites and information processing. Once technology transfer of this sort is assumed, government and the corporate sector function as an alliance.<sup>10</sup>

Do the math. Screw the *New York Times*, Goldman Sachs, and the journalist who wrote this piece of fluff: “Goldman itself calculated that since 2008 it has showered \$76.1 million on community activities in Lower Manhattan.” BUT, it has received “\$1.65 billion worth of tax-exempt Liberty Bonds and an additional \$115 million in tax sweeteners.”<sup>11</sup>

From Philip Green’s “Farewell to Democracy?”:

While the self-protectiveness of the mediocracy edges out any possibility of contrary critique entering the public sphere on equal terms, the big- money propaganda barrage of the Right generates rarely challenged disinformation for anyone listening. What this means most crucially is that the fantasized “liberal bias” of “elites” who supposedly dominate the media comes to be seen as manifesting itself simply by expressing any opinion, or any allegation of fact, that is not that of the organized Right. This bullying, which taken seriously makes the exchange of viewpoints simply impossible, is tacitly accepted as though it were gospel by almost all but hard-and-fast liberals.<sup>12</sup>

I’m struck by the precise anger of Kocik’s social (and linguistic) critiques in regard to what he terms an “adversarial materiality,” evidenced in the example of Goldman Sachs’ largesse reported above. It reminds me of a well known statement by Karl Marx from the introduction to the “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*”: “The arm of criticism cannot replace the criticism of arms. Material force can only be overcome by material force; but theory itself becomes a material force when it has seized the masses.”<sup>13</sup>

A call for political and economic freedom from within our ‘bios/bias’ technologies and tautology, “Overcoming Fitness is based on experiential inheritance brought to bear on the genetic moment. We’re free to diverge from the dictates of our material substrate and the very life of that substrate, in fact, depends on our divergence!”<sup>14</sup> Where does poetry *fit* in such a course of understanding?

We’re immortal but not as expected or desired. The poetic view claims that we have sequenced the genome in order to confirm just this—to demonstrate scientifically what was already known poetically—the fact that we’re also not alive! Identifying with inanimation as ancestor, individual makeup, enlightenment and fateful flowering and feeding back into being, greatly expands human spirit. It furthers

or stretches sympathy to include all that's left outside sensation. As yet, the organ of such perception (enlivenment in *inanima*) is present only as a trace. Poetry is one of the few forces that can flesh it out.<sup>15</sup>

Epicurus? Kocik's defense of poetry vis-à-vis the work of poetics:

[. . .] poetic inquiry is, first, a matter of looking where the light is bad— beyond the instrumentation, if you will—looking into the blinding light and blind spots within the data, and remaining intact throughout the failure points of mental, mathematical, material modes. Second, poetics is the matter of that which does the looking. It is a distinctive sensory set up—set of recognition skills, proclivities, propensities and predispositions.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, the material of poetics is the non-exploitation of human life. And in that there's Robert's humor, too: "(I really should take out a patent on forward-looking exclamation so that I might collect royalties on all the goods it invokes.)"<sup>17</sup>

Philosophers often see themselves as builders or demolishers. The most ambitious ones tend to think that they can do both—Kocik's work may be described as a building's archeology though not enslaved by the building's text. The debris becomes as light as the page in a book. Imagination, as the Shakespearean scholar Harold C. Goddard pointed out, "is neither the language of nature nor the language of man, but both at once, the medium of communion between the two [. . .] Imagination is the *elemental speech* in all senses, the first and the last, of primitive man and of the poets."<sup>18</sup> Kocik's focus is upon that idea of elemental speech. He advocates, as did Elinor Ostrom, awarded the 2009 Nobel Prize in economics for her lifelong work studying how communities share resources, a "polycentric" approach to commons management involving oversight "at multiple levels with autonomy at each level." The chief virtue and practical value of this structure, according to Ostrom, is that it helps establish rules that "tend to encourage the growth of trust and reciprocity"<sup>19</sup> among people who use and care for a particular commons.

Resilience and curiosity have been the only fundamental particles predicted by theory but not yet detected in endowing theory with a material force. Building an ecology of restoration, laying the planks of resilience against imaginative drought, Kocik, who hails from Minnesota, imagines the commons to be national in scope; it coheres as an archive of cultures (to be as resilient and curious as the missing social services and omitted agencies in the Bureau of Material Behaviors,

Kocik's pseudo-parody of administrative and business models); its mode is thinking slightly left of center; the work

is metamorphic compassion; its diorama focuses on the small and finds the most beauty in the creativity of small things; it fires back at art talk and the cognoscenti who do and would encrypt the songs of life; his work says you and I are here; it does not nickel and dime the poor or workers with shovels; it is a hallucinatory poetry on the matters at hand; it challenges common conceptions of behavior and dialogue; it proceeds in fragments of a pre-Poundian logic ("The skull does not hold all the human intelligence"<sup>20</sup>) toward a coming democracy of communally-linked citizens. It offers critical models of enthusiasm and rapture to heal today's human commons trending toward ruins.

Whitman's voice is the gamete of a further society. While the poem is the heritable pattern of expressed characteristics.

(Of course I believe that prosody and cosmology are consanguine. And their common ancestor would be 'materialization' itself.)<sup>21</sup>

Kocik's writing arrives fully articulate in the mid-1990's; it has remained constant in its intensity, humor, intelligence and compassionate interest since that time. I believe his manuscripts to be among the foremost contributions to philosophy and economics of the past two decades. That twenty years have passed for a generation of readers to arrive equipped to exercise the sequential states of revision on authorial intentions his writings unveil, to discover in reading just exactly *what could be said*, is a testament to the generative power of his psycho-analysis of economics by poetics. Kocik's work places poets at the point of pure research in any materialization that grants poems the full status of personhood. Poems, in other words, have *beings* of their own. In Kocik's research it is people who become "material."

Today's political action eliminates the physical presence of people. People are the material of poetics. Overcoming fitness is about restoring value to the public sector, a commons that has suffered the loss and suppression of values for much too long, with the past 35 years bearing the greatest degradation of values in American history. Kocik has been working toward a restorative ecology of life for twenty-five years. I have been his friend, and sometime publisher, for twenty years. It is encouraging that a younger generation is hearing what he has to say.

## Notes

1) Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Towards a New Manifesto* (New York: Verso, 2011) 100. 2) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 52. 3) Email correspondence with the author. 4) Ibid. 5) Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities: Volume 1* (New York: Vintage, 1996) 399. 6) "Epicurus," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Feb. 18, 2009, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epicurus/>. 7) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 25. 8) Ibid, 26. 9) Sarah Jaffe, "Corporate Profits at All-Time High; Wages at All-Time Low: Can We Call it Class War Yet?," June 30, 2012, San Diego Free Press, <http://sandiegofreepress.org/2012/06/corporate-profits-at-all-time-high-wages-at-all-time-low-can-we-call-it-class-war-yet/>. 10) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 29-30. 11) N.R. Kleinfield, "It's a Goldman World," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/nyregion/its-a-goldman-world-in-battery-park-city.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/01/nyregion/its-a-goldman-world-in-battery-park-city.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). 12) Philip Green, "Farewell to Democracy?," *Logos: A Journal of Modern Society and Culture*. Available at <http://logosjournal.com/2011/farewell-to-democracy/>. 13) Werner Blumenberg, *Karl Marx: An Illustrated History* (New York: Verso Books, 1999) 51. 14) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 32. 15) Ibid, 34. 16) Ibid, 35. 17) Ibid, 36. 18) Harold C. Goddard, *The Meaning of Shakespeare, Volume 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) 10. 19) Jay Walljasper, "Elinor Ostrom Outlines Best Strategies for Managing the Commons," *On the Commons*, <http://onthecommons.org/magazine/elinor-ostrom-outlines-best-strategies-managing-commons>. 20) Ezra Pound, *Machine Art and Other Writing* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 27. 21) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 58-59.

CIRCUMAMBIENTLY YOURS:  
ROBERT KOCIK'S  
ARCHITECTURAL MOVE  
**MADELINE GINS**

The branch of art/architecture/science under discussion begins with, sails through and fervently insists on this question:

If suffering and disease come from dissonance in tissue and interrelationship, how can the dissonance be remedied by prosody (by breathing, by thoughtform, by tone, by phonic focus) with full assistance from its building?<sup>1</sup>

Into the “The Prosody Building” and then into the “Anechoic Naad Darkroom” go I. Who or what rides the waves of phonemes that nestle there, circumambiently, to form me further into (and as) life? I speak as someone who was partially whisked away and had better get cracking at undoing the negative cascading. Those who enter this chamber will meet vibratory knowhow within the dark or, better, find it hovering, tellingly, within both the darkness’s bright summoning dark and its darkest deepening dark. “There is no knowing what comes from darkness without being in the dark and having what comes from darkness come.”<sup>2</sup> Vibratory phonemes use hummings and croakings and sibilants and yawnings and roarings to encourage and generate tissue formation and organ sanctity and thereby forestall life’s being whisked away. How do phonemes manage to do this?

Two strands tether Robert Kocik to poetry despite his having struggled, probably since his womb days, to escape it for art/science/architecture. One strand is the usual one that keeps poet-people in the poignancy of life: “Mark of Poet: Drop even love if it interferes with love.”<sup>3</sup> Oh, that

poetry seduction: it does make some among us contortionistic. Then, in the end, I (big fish), will make world (small pond), just as I see fit, revealingly so, up to a point, more or less, except when I feel drowsy, says the poesie loyalist. How did poetry come to loom large for you, despite your having, early on, astutely, recognized it to be hideously entrapping? Name this first tethering strand, whose umbilicalness lives on borrowed time, the *quirk* strand, or if you like, the *penchant for penchant's sake* strand. The other strand that tethers Kocik to poetry is the *prosody* strand. Kocik cannot forget the power of prosody, and he is determined to show us that power. This saintly researcher sees himself and others as having been shaped and doubly shaped by prosody, considers this to be of the utmost importance and will not rest until prosody, as organizing principle, becomes nurturing environment. He turns to architecture to make this come about.

Choosing to put the emphasis on and to grow the prosody strand, Kocik succeeds in staying both utterly tethered to poetry while outdistancing it:

Prosody is interrelation. It's the rhythm of our speech and the quality of our silence. It's the pressure of what we say and don't say to each other. Light and sound (as well as their absences) are pulsations and pressures ('frequencies,' if you like, or 'waveforms' if you prefer). Our sensitivity to these energy patterns we call 'prosody.' Prosody is composition of the medium of which we're made, in which we move and interact.<sup>4</sup>

In "E-V-E-R-Y-O-N-E," Kocik and Daria Faïn's cascading phonemes sound and explode as (and through) prosody. For these two theorists, "Empirical knowledge and contemplative practice go hand and hand."<sup>5</sup> Within each phoneme, within each one of these neighbors of, and contributors to, the morphemic, lies fructifying symbolization akimbo. Oh, what a skillful species this. Adept but lost. Let phonemes grab precisely positioned areas of mounting concern that require recasting. Something is having its say through phonemes—who said that?!

Faïn and Kocik have produced what they speak of as "a combinatorial artscience that can be applied aesthetically or therapeutically."<sup>5</sup> They have determined that prosody and the phonemes that shape and inhabit it can give human organisms the overflowing amplitude they deserve. The power of phonemes has been put to therapeutic use and celebrated in cultures world-wide. Kocik and Faïn wish to consolidate and amplify this vibratory knowhow. They have conducted research while living for extended periods within the dark. During these periods, prosody came at them in reverberating phonemes.

Robert, you and I have often spoken of the close agreement we find ourselves in regarding poetry and action despite the utterly different ends-in-sight we are each urging forward. You have told me that you want to build structures that will help people die in a magnificent way, and, as you know, Arakawa and I have, for some time, been given to believe that structures can be constructed that will keep people from having to die at all. From my point of view, and I gather from yours as well, there can be no bigger disagreement than this; our views are diametrically opposed. Then what are we in close agreement about? Simply put, we each see human organisms as being in desperate need of augmentation and view the architectural surround as the best means for augmenting these poor, forlorn creatures. Why should it be that other people do not yet realize this? And once this realization has been arrived at, what steps should be taken then? You want to give great power

to the poet by putting her within the Prosody Building, but you also know that prosody is for all, probably subscribing, as do I, to this startling and enticing Lautreaumont dictum, "We are all poets to begin with." I think that as much as, or even more, than poets, we are all universes to begin with. It is unendingly abhorrent to me that these universes are discardable.

#### *Notes*

1) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: On Contemporary Practice, 2013) 170. 2) Ibid, 161. 3) Drawn from an earlier iteration of "Anechoic Naad Darkroom." 4) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: On Contemporary Practice, 2013) 157. 5) Ibid, 161.

# ROBERT KOCIK'S THERAPEUTICS OF RELATION

**ELENI STECOPOULOS**

All of Robert Kocik's art is a form of treatment. A poet, artist, and builder, he works both with the matter of language and the aesthetic elements of the built environment to redress disabling structures of thought and society. As a poet (although he rejects that label in favor of "prosodist"), Kocik uses prosody

to release the potency of language; prosody for him means "the aesthetics of poetry, the full influence of its sonic properties"<sup>1</sup>—extra-semantic elements such as stress, phoneme, and breath. As a builder, he designs spaces that perform a kind of healthcare through architecture. At the deepest level, Kocik seeks to treat the relations that make the world, and his work radically reconfigures the ways in which art might be therapeutic.

Ultimately, Kocik wants to open up how we relate to language and how bodies relate to environments—because these relations affect and effect each other. As a writer, his style is performative and playful, full of apparent neologisms such as "autoxenisis" and "wondercidal." Yet Kocik is less innovative than engaged in a precise retuning of what we can hear in a discourse, reactivating roots and relationships that have been suppressed, unrecognized, ignored. What seem like neologisms are actually restorations.

Through changing our language, he seeks to open up potentials that are unused. This aspect of his work is perhaps most effective when he takes on the antagonistic relations that produce the immune system, a foundational ideology of biomedicine. A number of scholars have shown how the concept of biological immunity was derived from political rhetoric, then applied to organic processes and mystified as natural.<sup>2</sup> In *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag famously critiqued the militaristic approach to disease which persists today (i.e., the war on cancer). Ed Cohen has written about the production of biological immunity as self-defense, and asks "what might have

happened if ‘community’ had achieved the same biological status that immunity did,” if Metchnikoff, the zoologist who first articulated immunity in observations of cellular behavior, had focused on the dynamics of co-existence instead of the individual organism and “the dynamics of aggression and response.”<sup>3</sup>

Kocik’s intervention into the discourses of immunity is wholly different from those of other theorists, because he believes the effects of language are not merely ideological and not only injurious. For Kocik, the material, somatic, and positive effects of language remain largely unexplored—not only in the field of medicine, but by poets as well. In articulating bodies’ interaction with the foreign, Kocik is not interested in attempting to banish metaphor; he knows that such Platonism would be impossible. More importantly, doing away with metaphor would be undesirable, a forfeiture of the transformative work poetry can do. Kocik uses metaphor excessively, baroquely, reinventing medical and scientific terminology as therapeutic performance. And he goes further than merely substituting one metaphor for another. Kocik draws on his extensive knowledge of both Western and Eastern medicine to elaborate another system, one that doesn’t fight invading pathogens, but welcomes them. Whereas “immunity” originally meant exemption, Kocik’s “susceptive system” receives the pathogen “convivially,” losing exemption from the foreign agent in order to benefit from it. “Susceptive” recuperates “susceptible” into “receptive,” a positive quality—agency rather than victimhood, a “proactive, free [and] gratuitous” response rather than a forced or defensive one. Kocik wants to break open the antagonism of self vs. other which pervades Western epistemology. To do so, one has to enter fully, susceptively, into metaphor, where everything is other. (As cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have shown, our metaphors come from embodied experience and our embodiment actually takes place through metaphor.<sup>4</sup>) Kocik asserts that poets have to “usurp medical terminology,” because that terminology is limiting and damaging *and* because poetic language has limited itself, a limitation which plays a fundamental role in the dead language of discourses such as medicine. Poets have the potential—and the obligation—to treat the language which produces our bodies, because “poetry portends physiology.” “The Susceptive System” is an act of treatment itself, a disarming of the antagonism in our language and thus in our bodies.

What other responses are possible? What if we responded by embracing the toxin? By welcoming the other? Can bodies—can we—respond differently? Can we get out of the economy of opposition and “belligerence”? For Kocik, these actually keep us from response—locking us into reaction, identification and target. He finds the same constriction problematic in the more obviously political work poets do when they proclaim themselves “against war.” Simply, poets can’t end or prevent war by using the language of war. Opposing war, studying war, only perpetuates the endless war our very language is locked in. Just as a focus on disease and pathology means Western medicine learns little about true health. Attempting to treat

antagonism with more antagonism only leads to further harm. And because all “language is a property of poetry,” poetry is complicit with the rhetoric of warmongers; it is poets who have failed to prevent war.

Fundamentally, Kocik wants to shift poets’ attention to reconceiving and expanding their role in society. All the ways that poets do poetry, all the ways poets imagine what they might do in the world, are limiting. Kocik’s message to poets is clear: we ourselves are responsible for our irrelevancy. For not having imagined—acted—outside of reaction, rebellion, alterity, outsider status, difference. It’s the job of the poet neither to voice consensus nor to resist it—to side neither with orthodoxy nor heterodoxy, but to get out of doctrine, to “get out of [. . .] *genre*,” get out of ‘sides’ altogether. Kocik asks, “How might poets, with their open identities, remain pertinent between breakaway utopia and turning into their own antithesis?”<sup>5</sup> Rather than being word workers, literary artists, or voices of the people, poets have the potential to be the ones who can utterly change the relations that structure society, change the very terms of our being. The “nonspecialist” status of poets is the key to reinventing what they can do—what their true work is, where their true efficacy might lie. This resonates with what Artaud writes in *The Theater and its Double*: “. . . poetry is anarchic insofar as it calls into question all relationships between objects and all relationships between forms and their meanings. It is also anarchic insofar as its appearance is the consequence of a disorder that brings us closer to chaos.”<sup>6</sup> It’s that anarchic potential Kocik seeks to provoke poets into actually engaging—on the ground, in service, in body/space/action.

Kocik wishes to break down the divide between activism and poetry. Specifically, his work explores the relationship between formal innovation and social transformation. In his life, Kocik is a caregiver. Like the therapist or caregiver in the Asklepion, the ancient temple which is a primary source for his *Prosody Building*, he attends and serves. A major way in which he serves is by identifying “missing civic services” and by addressing lack of access to services and to spaces. His work in building and design (for example, his proposal to renovate the Field Center) and his participation in a forum on the ways experimental poets might dialogue with disability culture have led him to engage the social model of disability and attendant questions of access and environment. Kocik supports troubling the abstraction of terms like “aesthetics” and “form,” too common among poets, with the somatic forms and experiments that disabled people create and conduct daily—the ingenuity that writer, performance artist, and dancer Neil Marcus describes when he writes that “disability is an art.”

Kocik raises the question of whether the social model of disability might be usefully extended to the ways others may lack access, the way many are “disabled” by society. Kocik seems to suggest that no one has full access; we all have varying levels of access, we are all dis-abled to

some degree by society, by the state. And he is provocative in asking whether identifying as able-bodied might be what is truly limiting; that is, disabling. Ableism keeps people from exploring the art of disability. Disability exposes the public secret that there is no normality and no standard body—only asymmetry, dis-ease, re-balance. Through encounters with disability culture, the “able” experience the beautiful particularity of every body, the particularity of their own bodies, the way all bodies are in some way disabled or will become disabled.

Of course, there is a danger in extending the term “disabled” to all who lack access, and ultimately, to all bodies. Some readers will see Kocik’s provocation as nothing more than appropriation—of a distinct cultural identity, experience of inequity, and lack of access on the ground—to extract metaphors which might be available to all, good for writing theory but removed from life. Kocik understands this danger, however, even as he courts it: “The predicament of poetics engaged with disability theory: how to not cause further harm.”<sup>7</sup> While he may elide the terms of disablement and disability, and seems less interested in disability as a cultural identity, he is really after the radical recuperation of all that is isolated and rejected as vulnerable, pathologized, and disempowered by society—the recuperation of these as its true foundation. Just as the susceptible system invites us to remake vulnerability and sensitivity into positive attributes of embodiment, rather than liabilities which allegedly deprive us of our bodies, the vulnerable and sensitive are for Kocik the sites where true re-cognition of our relations—our humanity—can take place.

#### Notes

1) Drawn from an earlier iteration of “Without Suffering Succession.” 2) See, for example, Emily Martin, *Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), and Ed Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending: Immunity, Biopolitics, and the Apotheosis of the Modern Body* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009). 3) Ed Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending: Immunity, Biopolitics, and the Apotheosis of the Modern Body* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009) 281. 4) See George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 2009). 5) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice 2013) 84. 6) Antonin Artaud, *Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag, tr. Helen Weaver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 236. 7) Drawn from an earlier iteration of “Without Suffering Succession.”

# WHAT A PHONEME CAN DO

**ROB HALPERN**

“Prosody can end ignorance.”<sup>1</sup> “Prolonged sickness does not agree with meter.”<sup>2</sup> “The English language has never been the language of a free people.”<sup>3</sup> Robert Kocik’s propositions are often startling in their simplicity while making good on the old Heraclitean adage: *Man is estranged from those things with which he is most familiar*. This estrangement is implicit in our current relations to both the body and the word whose powers escape our consequentially limited range of cognition and perception. In his work on and around “Re-English,” Kocik turns his attention against these limitations, and the Phoneme Choir is one means by which he, together with his partner Daria Faïn, organizes bodies and voices in real social space hastening our recovery from the damage these limitations impose.

Would that we had little in common with what we know. For while “what we know” might refer to that limited range of perception, “what we know” also stands as the material obstruction

blocking our access to an other future. The privileged mood of Kocik's writing here, as elsewhere, is the optative, the mood of wish and longing, one of English's many lost modes, and whose loss alone suggests how English has come to obstruct our desire to imagine more habitable worlds. Kocik's propositions expand in a syntax and a grammar that overcompensate for this loss in an effort to stimulate all the potential of that mood. Would that we were to know the material of our own poiesis. Would that we only knew what a word—or phoneme—could do.

According to Kocik, "English has never been the language of a free people" insofar as it is "an inherently commercial, mercenary, discursive, duplicitous tongue."<sup>4</sup> How does one live in a language so entangled with predatory commerce? This is a little like asking, how does one live in a land rendered "ours" by centuries of violent expansion, murderous dispossession and villainous expropriation? A land ruled by property rights at the expense of whatever commons the first person plural possessive—"ours"—might denote? Language, like land (or, as Kocik has suggested, like money) is a common resource subject to systematic enclosures—accumulation and possession— which have been so well naturalized that they've become dumb to their own histories, making it almost impossible for us to perceive what is common in them. As far as language is concerned, all our common making (production) depends on collective language use and a "general intellect" that can either be disciplined by profit or aroused and organized to resist the production of surplus value.

*Poiesis* is the making of our world.

For Kocik, to "re-english" is to reclaim a commons. No doubt, the sonic proximity of "re-english" and "relinquish" is telling: to Re-English— understood as a verb—is to insist that English *relinquish* its stranglehold on the making of worlds, to insist that English cease its policing operations along the borders of the perceptible and the imperceptible. By "Re-English," Kocik implies that language itself is a scene of struggle for perception, cognition, and sensation. This amounts to nothing less than a struggle for common sense against the privatization of consciousness, privatization being English's otherwise unspoken logic. In a world characterized by a widening gulf between material production (the living labor of bodies) and immaterial value (what counts as "meaning"), the work of re-englishing aims to undo the dominant enclosures of semantic sense, to defrock the *Oxford English Dictionary* as hegemon.

Prosody is the means by which Kocik proposes to arouse and organize the language's unexplored possibility and promise. In his expanded conception, prosody manifests the radical potential to redraw the lines governing the distribution of what is commonly perceptible. If prosody is organized stress, then Kocik summons prosody's potential to organize and stress all that falls above or below the threshold of dominant (deleterious) modes of linguistic production and consumption. Re-English pays acute attention to the way what we hear is an effect of the limited

range of sensory perception that capitalist prerogatives require and that commercialized modes of social life amplify, a range of sensation whose normalized produce implies a subtraction of the body from the very scene of cognition. By extension, prosody is a necessary gathering of energy, and this becomes a crucial component of what Kocik refers to elsewhere as “subtle fitness,” participating in the work to overcome conventional regimes of adaptation wherein our senses—like our language—have been disciplined to cope within the most inhospitable social conditions, ecologies of suffering within which our bodies’ capacity to evolve has been stunted. By contrast, enhanced prosody coupled with the aims of Re-English enable the individual—perhaps by way of seemingly “disadvantageous” traits and risking the allegation of non-communicability—to adapt to changing conditions in advance of their arrival. When effectively toned, prosody can prepare for the emergence of evolved sensory organs, which promise to overcome the limitations reinforced by dominant “fitness.” In other words, prosody awakens our diminished capacity for the very sort of enhanced sensory perception that will allow us to survive.

As Kocik activates it, prosody is fundamentally performative—it makes things happen, it creates—and like all art worthy of the name, it implies “an act capable of causing a heritable change.”<sup>5</sup> The imperative, then, is to heal ourselves by healing the language—and language’s extensions in social space—thru the activation of all its prosodic potential, which is also the body’s potential, its capacity to find the sounds, the tones, the forms that are awaiting it. What will it take for us to exchange the body we know for the world we desire? What body will have had to be here in order to activate an other future? And how will we perceive beyond the limitations of our current range in order to know our desire in the first place? Kocik’s thinking here helps us to move toward a place in our language—a nonsite—where we might, when the mood is right, pose the question of use—of the body, of the word—against a dominant regime at once mercantile and privatizing as we move toward the decolonization of language and body alike.

From another angle, one might say that what we perceive as sound is but the erosion of vibration in time. If this is the case, then what we hear when we hear is the effect of sonic entropy, that is, the ceasing of sound to sound. Prosody resists a terminal entropy—the deadly movement toward literal semantic value, the slow petering out of all the meaning making potential, the slow grinding to a halt of those difference engines known as tropes. In this sense, I like thinking of Kocik’s propositions in response to Wallace Stevens’ “Motive for Metaphor” insofar as that motive is nothing less than the motive of meaning itself poised against what that poem refers to as “the arrogant, fatal, dominant X.”<sup>6</sup> In other words, the motive for metaphor, like the motive for Kocik’s prosody, is life against death. Language communicates so much more than what it says, and while we might well know this, Kocik makes it clear that we don’t know this well enough. The very excess of communicative value points toward language’s material support: on

the social scale, this concerns the disciplined contexts and established discourses within which meaning circulates as value; but on the somatic scale, language's material support is the body itself, fleshy substratum of all our utterances, the very organism from whose untapped potential we are typically estranged at the expense of life. "When words mean only what they say, we die,"<sup>7</sup> Kocik writes. And so, rather than participating in the entropic arrest of linguistic value, the aim of both Re-English and Phoneme Choir is to stimulate prosody's aprotropaic function in order to turn away that which harms—to stave off death. This is prosody as "protection, regulation, balance abundance—in brief, all that's beneficial."<sup>8</sup>

Just as languages might arrange themselves prosodically around faults in word and line, lexeme and syntagm, social formations too might organize themselves ek-statically around collective stress points whose breaks open onto scenes of uncertainty and promise against the grain of static sense. Kocik notes one critical social fault—a "schism" of consequence—in the divide between *making* (poiesis) and *managing* (praktikos)—a gulf around which a whole division of labor maintains and polices a strict separation of disciplines, thereby reproducing an unsustainable society of suffering. This is the schism between production and administration, labor and management, and in relation to which even our work as writers and culture workers has been subordinated.

This is where Kocik's proposition that "poetry may take any substrate"<sup>9</sup> proves to be crucial. Poiesis, or "all-of-making," can manifest itself by way of any vocation whatever. As "poet" or maker, all of one's actions are committed to creating the world, and thus have the potential to yield a materialization of the immaterial, to render as living matter—meaning—that which, according to popular tenets or so-called 'common sense,' is matterless, senseless and meaningless. To risk doing the work of prosody is to risk the "immolation" of both the poem as a discrete object and the poet as a separated worker. The aim here is to "exfringe" the poem in an effort to overcome the divisions that enclose it on the page. And while we may have heard this proposition many times in various approaches to contemporary poetics, Kocik raises the stakes by linking aesthetic divisions with social and somatic divisions, while showing the enclosure of the page to be but an extension of more deadly enclosures of all our human and post-human resource. In practice, "immolation" and "exfringement" can only amount to a realization of the poem in social space: the poet as the overcoming of separated vocations (division of labor), poetry as the overcoming of the poem, and prosody as the ek-static overcoming of the static word. Prosody is not a divided discipline; rather, it is a praxis capable of transforming any social context whatever, radically arousing language in the interest of making the world we want to live in (poiesis). The word thus becomes a literalized *meta-phor*—a vehicle of transport—capable of moving us beyond the insufferable limitations we have prematurely accepted. In this sense, I'm reminded of Robert Duncan when Robert Kocik (via Whitman) proposes to "break out of the

little laws to enter the truly higher ones.”<sup>10</sup>

*Notes*

1) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 293. 2) *Ibid*, 299. 3) *Ibid*, 227. 4) *Ibid*, 234. 5) *Ibid*, 313. 6) Wallace Stevens, *Collected Poetry and Prose* (New York: The Library of America, 1997) 257. 7) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 293. 8) *Ibid*, 229. 9) *Ibid*, 303. 10) *Ibid*, 297.

MONEY, POETRY AND THE NEW  
COMMONS

## SILVIA FEDERICI

“Common Cents” belongs to an illustrious tradition. From William Carlos Williams’ *Paterson*, an “epic” poem supporting the social credit theory (and Party),<sup>1</sup> to Allen Ginsberg’s *Howl*, American poetry has repeatedly confronted the question of money especially in times of social crisis and revolution.

Poetic economics were expelled from the circle of literary respectability in the 1950’s by the likes of Randall Jarrell, who ridiculed *Paterson*, casting money, banking and credit as the “enemies of man, God and contemporary long poems.”<sup>2</sup> Since then, poets have feared economics.

Kocik’s move, then, is a bold one, also because rather than demonizing money, his objective is to re-imagine it, by analogy with language, as constitutive of a human common. Neo-liberal thinkers should not be too quick to applaud however. What makes money a common for Kocik are not its abstract qualities, fit to represent the abstractness of labor, which presumably make of it the great equalizer. Kocik’s vision is shaped by contemporary radical practices that, against the increasing privatization and individualization of everyday life, aim to create new forms of social cooperation and solidarity, whether by means of urban gardens, or time banks, or local currencies, as alternatives to the ongoing enclosure of all forms of social and natural wealth.

In this perspective money is the mover and circulator of goods in society, but not—as in capitalism—the instrument for the exploitation of labor and the creator of differentiated labor regimes. Rather, to use a once popular metaphor, money circulates through society by analogy to the circulation of the blood stream, transporting wealth and keeping the system alive—made not only innocuous but beneficial to humanity by the absence of the social conditions Marx so powerfully described: the separation of workers from the means of their reproduction.

Kocik’s poetic vision not only anticipates a new society, but stirs the desire to fight for it. In this he validates Shelley’s vision of the poet as the unacknowledged legislator of humanity, but with a crucial amendment. Instead of legislator, the poet should be the acknowledged champion for humanity! Thus, when discussing the 1976 Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act that committed the Federal Government to full employment (which is still law but the government has abandoned) he writes:

If literature is indeed the most relevant use of language, then poets can call upon their utmost to remove a law's disuse, or secure remedies from Federal courts when official policies *create* rather than *curtail* unemployment.<sup>3</sup>

In this process the struggle to transform money becomes the vehicle through which poetry can transform us and poets can become political actors. Kocik has even imagined a new organization for this task: the Pre-Distributive Poet and Performer Pressure Group [PPAPPG]. This would be an organization of poets and performers who would poetically "widen the wealth" and make "art the missing publicly owned public space."

#### *Notes*

1) Social Credit was a very popular theory and policy tailored for the creation of a "fair" capitalist society that saw the whole population as inheritors of the nation's commonwealth. In it everyone would receive a dividend from this collective commonwealth. This would create a continual stimulus to the economy and tame the capitalist class into organizing production to satisfy the consumers of their products. 2) Randall Jarrell, quoted in Joel Conarroe, *William Carlos Williams' 'Paterson': Language and Landscape* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970). 3) Robert Kocik, *Supple Science: A Robert Kocik Primer* (Oakland: ON Contemporary Practice, 2013) 343.

# GLOSSARY

**ACCOMPLISHMENT PASSING INTO UNCREATED LIGHT:** A somewhat pragmatic understanding of lifetime in which the sum of one's actions perfectly burns up one's portion of boundless energy to burst through the far side of our local rainbow.

**AHIMSA:** The principle of doing no harm, physically, verbally, theoretically or otherwise. The opposite of ahimsa is not 'killing' per se. Its object is the complex of doctrines that warrant or give rise to violence: just war, just and proportionate punishment, the justification and justice that propagate the greater part of aggression; discrimination, 'free trade,' letting off steam and, above all, 'survival.' Fully understood, ahimsa is not a practice that is primarily directed toward others. It involves the non-arising of injurious events within, with the political world as metaphor for inner moral war. "From wisdom's vaunted lore what doth the learner gain/ if as his own he guard not others' souls from pain?"<sup>1</sup>

**ALLOSTASIS:** Stability by means of change (replacing the classical, redundant model of homeostatic regulation: i.e., stability by means of stability).

**AMARGI:** "Enmetena instituted amargi in Lagash. He restored the child to its mother, and the mother to her child; he cancelled interest." Amargi is the earliest recorded instance of debt cancellation and the first known use of a word for 'freedom.' Amargi literally means 'return to mother.'

**ALL'S WELL:** The name for the time of crisis. The only time *before* it is too late.

**AMICUS CURIAE:** A 'friend of the court' who submits unsolicited materials or testimony to assist the court in making its decision.

**ANTINOMIAN:** It is faith that is against the laws. Unownable land and unoppressed spirit are congruent.

**ANTIPEPONTIASIS:** Fair exchange of goods and services. Laws aside, a sense of justice springing from the the natural vastness of one's heart. It is exchange itself that is 'common.' As equitable interchange holds all things together, so disproportionate exchange is the cause of societal dissolution.

**APAURUSHEYA:** Unauthored—by neither human nor divine agency. Hearing. Heard words. Hearing words that were not being heard. Words heard outside the limitation of person. Rather like discovering or being struck by a new mathematical truth, as distinct from having created it—though relative to reality at large as well as locally and in flux. Words as the interchange of inhering and incidental.

**APOPHENIA:** Recognition of the unrecognizable. Nonrecognition of the recognizable. Recognizing the nonrecognizable in the recognizable.

**APOTROPAISM:** Warding off evil through its depiction.

**APROSODIA:** Inability of affective expression and comprehension due to non-dominant hemisphere damage.

**ARTWORK:** As adaptation can no longer keep up with our modifications, only artworks can keep us safe. Not confined to evolutionary forces. Genomes's scratchpad. The invertibility of genotype and phenotype, and of acquisition and inheritance. Reverse transcription by means of the behavioral and the aesthetic.

**ASHTADHYAYI:** Panini's descriptive grammar that marks the shift from Vedic Sanskrit to Classical Sanskrit and introduces the secular into Indian thought by describing the morphology of such thought. The *Ashtadhyayi* was the first delimitation of language into 'phoneme,' 'morpheme' and 'root' from the illimitable sound stream of speech. Because of the *Ashtadhyayi*'s concise, comprehensive, rule-based approach, it can also be read as the first instance of computational language.

**ANCHORPHINE:** Biochemical unit of measurement for the satisfaction endogenously produced through interaction with the built environment. Imagine buildings rich in dopamine signaling. The anchorphine is a nonaddictive, non-adaptive (i.e., not a momentary, but continuous response), safe and salutary catecholamine release.

**ASYMMETRICIAN:** The potency of a single well-placed action on the part of the disempowered up against the vast vulnerability of empire. One who.

**AUTONOMIC BYPASS:** Regulating the body outside of the constant swings of the

sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous responses by means of mind/ body deselection.

**BANKELSANG:** Singing banner. Soapbox song. A street theater supporting its narrative with a sequence of unsophisticated images.

**BIOS/BIAS TAUTOLOGY:** The belief that behavior is nothing more than an extension of biology.

**BODHICHTTA CONUNDRUM:** Is *giving* fundamentally self-motivated and merit-oriented or can an act of generosity actually be free? Aren't altruism, sacrifice, helping out and volunteering rather one-sidedly presumptuous— assuming one imbalance or another (donor/needily, benefactor/beneficiary, enlightened/ignorant)? Does charity, as the quintessence of ethical

and religious conduct, merely serve to reconcile and maintain material maldistribution? Certainly the current Carnegie-method of philanthropic giving by the disproportionately rich is a serious distortion of opulence.

**BODY/MIND/BUILT PRACTICE:** Opening body/mind unity by means of the built environment. Body, mind, built inter-identity.

**CELERANTICS:** When government transfers publicly funded Big Science technology to a private company for resale to the public.

**CHOREOPROSODIA:** Interchanging choreography and prosody in the same compositional space. Extensive fusion of movement and the full range of poetry's elements of composition.

**COMIC WARFARE:** Unidentifiable poetry standing fallen soldiers back up before they fall. What poetry has not done continues to allow war to break out.

**COMMENSURATE ECONOMY:** The destitute south is financing the affluent north. Sub-Saharan Africa pays \$25,000 per minute to northern creditors. This is poor planning (i.e., 'planned poverty'). On the other hand, the organized eradication of poverty would, in effect, assure the greater well-being of all citizens (there is an abundance of data demonstrating that countries with the least income disparity have healthier and happier populations). Instead of focusing on the middle class (demand economy) or the upperclass (supply-side, trickle-down economy—the belief that the health of the financial sector is the precondition for popular prosperity), both of which are well-tested failures, we could pursue a 'third' or 'ignored' economy which I've provisionally named the *commensurate economy*, *consequence-side economy*, *epikeian (equity) economy*, or perhaps simply *conscience-economy*.

**CORYPHÉE (or CHORYPHAEUS):** Leader of the chorus, usually situated center stage, who speaks for the chorists when they're in action and occasionally engages them in dialogue. From Attic drama.

**CREDIT:** Debt. **DEFAULTER'S PARTY:** One quarter of the population united across all debt-types and class divides.

**DEHEEHÉE:** Viewpoint in which artwork coincides with the originary viewpoint from which the world issues forth.

**DISTRIBUTISM:** 'Third-way' economic philosophy based on the condemnation of both capitalism and state-socialism, subordinating all economic activity to fully realized humanity. Inclusive ownership of property, local cooperatives, credit unions, artisanism, solidarity and subsidiarity are key Distributist principles. Rooted in Augustine and reaching to E.F. Schumacher, the Mongdragon Corporation and Dorothy Day.

**DHVANI:** Words have the power of direct denotation and the power of indirect indication. Literal and implied. Dhvani is 'suggestiveness.' It is 'trope' itself. For the last thousand years the doctrine of dhvani has been at the center of Indian aesthetics and literary criticism. The more fundamental reality is trope. Our ability to refer to our feelings, to question, to imagine, is founded upon dhvani. It is, for example, the recognition of intrinsic awareness through an appreciation of its difference or distance from the objective world (the recognition being the trope). Without dhvani we live in a reductive, denotative world in which we are the end users of language as labelling. Dhvani is language's power of revelation. The definitive exposition of the doctrine of dhvani is the classic *Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhana With the Locana of Abhinavagupta*.

**DUTIFUL AVADHUTIPA:** Free-ranging nonidentification.

**DYSPROSODY:** Difficulty expressing and understanding the emotional components of speech such as melody, emphasis, inflection and gesturing.

**EACHOTHERSOURCING:** You are my unattainable results, as I am yours.

**ECONOMIC TRUTH:** Suffering is unavoidable. I see and what I see is that we don't see.

**EDUCATION OF INVESTMENT BANKERS INITIATIVE [EIBI]:** Investment Bankers paying people to have people explain to Investment Bankers how people want money channelled to themselves.

**EKASTOLOGY:** The belief that there is no common ancestor. (From *ekastos*, Greek for

‘each.’)

**EMPATHY ECONOMY:** Other-Oriented, Mothering and Empathy Economies all provide goods and services directly to the greatest need without intermediary profit optimization, as all industries that make money from money become regional public utilities.

**ENCLOSED ART:** Artwork narrowly concerned only with its own subsistence exclusively in relation to the materials and terms of its proper medium.

**EPIEIKEIA:** A sense of equity, as opposed to the strictness of law which typically favors the powerful. It’s not a matter of which political system is in force, but common munificence in a commensurate economy. Aristotle’s use of epikeia in his *Nichomachean Ethics* didn’t include women and slaves. The very duplicity in our foundational fair-minded terms constitutes a history of language that must, itself, be turned upside down.

**EPIPHORA:** Repetition of the same word or words at the close of neighboring clauses, pauses, verses, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or texts.

**EQUITABLE GROWTH INTERACTION:** Any action, from the panoply of practices proposed in this book and beyond, that takes us one step closer to realizing productivity as shared prosperity and celebration of life.

**ESTROGEN:** Estrogen physiologically forms female. To bring our planet back from the brink, Supple Science pleads that we now be led by maternal instinct. Supple Science’s medium is resonance itself. Phonic sequence, tone, intention, connotation, tune (what is herein called ‘prosody’) all directly influence neural/hormonal functions.

**EVOKED EPIGENETIC ARCHITECTURE:** The built environment acting back on gene expression as wished. Engaged, guided, non-invasive, instant inheritance entreatment.

**EXARCHŌN:** The person who starts up the chorus and remains its leader throughout, setting the rhythm and functioning as conductor for all three components (song, dance, instrumentation) of choral poetry (choreia) by performing one or more parts herself. Also a provisional leader of any part of the performance, stepping up at a given point to lead all or some aspect of the action.

**EXTRAORGANOPOIEISIS:** The making of further, omitted, surplus, extra necessary and salubrious 1) organs; 2) instruments; and 3) organizations.

**EXPANSION OF THE INALIENABLE:** No-Way-Not-At-Home [NWNHAH]. Sovereign even outside the sensory.

**EXTENDED AFFERENT NETWORK:** Adding the built environment to the signaling that conveys sensation back through the nervous system. Integrating architecture in an exteroceptive/interoceptive loop.

**FIRST PERSON PLURAL SCIENCE:** We're already suffering the ravages of an overwhelmingly individualist moral code. With so many sciences now reinforcing 'I' by admitting subjectivity and embodied experience as part of objective fact, in order to preempt a total takeover by self-predilection, it's imperative that we establish an offsetting, experiential and expansive First Person Plural Practice.

**FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT PRIVATE DEBT CANCELLATION:** With extreme expressions of privatization and deregulation, creditors openly call for the abolishing of government. Under Section 4 of the Fourteenth Amendment all debts owed to institutions that profit in any way from insurrection are uncollectable. Ruinous debt, like poverty and surplus labor force, is carefully planned. Colossal personal debt is our greatest national security threat.

**FRAME EXFRINGEMENT:** A lesser phenomenon encompassing the entirety of the world in which its insignificance subsists. When an already fringe phenomenon passes even further from center and begins the process of engulfing its surrounds. The poem wraps itself around poetics. The made wraps around unmade—while we still have a chance to survive.

**GENOTYPE:** Interior natural environment.

**GOLDWATER GOODNESS:** Welfare reliant upon the private sector. Opulence, social benefits and any sense of the the good life dependent on the discretionary philanthropy of the disproportionately rich.

**GRAY PIG:** Of the three poisons (attachment, hatred, ignorance) from which all suffering stems, attachment and hatred stem from ignorance, represented in Mahayana Buddhism as a gray pig. Perhaps no one knows precisely what ignorance is, but it certainly could never flourish without a strong sense of self as separable from all else and rock-solid substantiation of the phenomenal world. When one is freed from ignorance, the pig exits through the top of the head. In terms of prosody, the poisons (in Sanskrit *kleshas*) are dissonances (prosodopaths). Though there are as many as 84,000 kleshas, Buddhist schools typically break the total down to a manageable list of root poisons. In addition to attachment, anger and hatred, delusion, self-importance, greed, speculation, wrong views, unskilled action, torpor and passion are repeatedly mentioned as principle obstructions. Kleshas condition consciousness. The practice of the Prosodic Body removes that in which affliction roots by disclosing that in which it has no resonance.

**GREAT EPIC OF ALL MATERIALIZATION [GEOAM]:** Poetics' poem.

**GURAMYLAY:** In Tigrigna, *guramylay* means 'making a beautiful and healing pattern out of diverse elements.'

**HETEROSIS:** When increased vigor in offspring is correlated with the degree of dissimilarity in precursor gametes, as opposed to outbreeding or inbreeding depression.

**HISSISM:** The belief that only materiality exists. A world attributable to nothing.

**HOUSE OF SADNESS:** Even being free of. Every support of which reinforces the entire structure, while the removal of even one support leads to its total collapse.

**HUPORCHEMATA:** Movement subordinate to accompanying words. "Imitation of actions interpreted from the diction."

**HYPERTENSIVE TRAP:** Each time kindness accedes to competition, nurturing adapts to exploitation of the ascetic assaults—the hypertensive trap is then re-set as we eat ourselves from within.

**HYPERVIGILANCE:** Exhaustion due to continual scanning of the environment. Exaggerated behaviors developed to detect threat, provocative of threatening response. Trauma, prolonged lowered expectations, sustained hyposatisfaction and oversecretion are a few known causes of the hypervigilant condition.

**IKAROS:** Medicine songs (typically made of non-lexical vocables) imparted to poets by plants.

**INTERNALIZED COSTS:** Suffering the momentousness of the use of any material derived from the earth. How could anything not be invaluable?

**KINCICCALANA:** Subtle movement. Vibration that, itself, doesn't move, manifesting as motion. Like the shared light of consciousness.

**KNOCKOUT HUMAN BEING:** Delete, disrupt, inactivate or replace a gene sequence, stand back, await and observe the phenotypic fireworks. (There is a group of poets named SOLACE who have spent the last twelve years working on word sequences that comfort and compensate the horrifyingly modified.)

**KONKRETNÝ:** An activist focused on effective means for overcoming everyday problems and implementing ideas (as distinct from those who merely enjoy analyzing the situation). 1980's Poland produced a generation of konkretnies.

**KOTODAMA:** Words move heaven and earth. Knowing that no one knows what a word is, shall we say that the power of the word comes from what we don't know? Aikido is founded on the Kotodama principle that sounds have intrinsic value capable of affecting matter. Each word is incantation. Each sound a vast reality. Dig especially the Mahavairocana Tantra, the text that called Kukai to China in 796.

**LIFEWORX:** A somatic ultimately genetic influence capable of rewriting original, heritable DNA sequences.

**LIMBIC-HYPOTHALAMIC-PITUITARY-ADRENAL AXIS:** The immediate beneficiary of our vibratory vocalizations and thoughtwaves.

**LING:** The ability to make Heaven respond. Advanced practice involving the kidneys and lower cauldron in which incentive creates no contention with Creativity.

**LANGUAGE NATIVISM:** The theory that language capacity is innate. Innativists argue that a child's 'hypothesis space' is constrained by biology—like an instinct limiting the infinite number of possible grammars to common speech.

**LOGOSOME:** Biochemical agent activated by words so apropos they epigenetically and esogenetically compose genome as they call up cosmogonic logos.

**LOOP OF ABUSE:** Treating without care things made without care as we are rendered less caring. No attention paid to the attention with which things are designed and built.

**MACHIK LABDRON:** 11<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan yogini who originated the tantric practice of Chöd (of offering up the body—to whom it may be of benefit). “To consider adversity as a friend is the instruction of Chöd.”

**MATERIAL BEATITUDE:** Breaks the equating of material poverty and spiritual richness, as well as the meeting of material needs and spiritual debilitation. Democracy so advanced it can't even recognize itself. Heaven aspiring to earth.

**MATRIKA NYASA:** Consecration of the body by consecrating the letters of the alphabet as they are placed in the body. Matrika means 'mother.' The letters are mothers. Matrika Nyasa opens the body of sound in resonance with all around. The sound body as compositional capacity is called the Prosodic Body. Matrika Nyasa is the fabled Garland of Letters.

**MIND BODY DATA SOCIOSPHERE PROSPERITY CENTERING:** Whole bodyworks that effectively treat societal ills.

**MINGMEN:** The Dai Mai point located between the second and third lumbar vertebrae. The mingmen point is also called The Door Of Fate. The original energy of all of creation flows through this point to instill one's depletable portion of the infinite, igniting a flame between the kidneys that will burn for a lifetime. Concentrating on the mingmen cauldron replenishes and prolongs finite life force. Ming is basically a mandate from Heaven as 'creativity.'

Align personal action and Heaven, let spirit guide matter and bring effort and effortlessness into balance. A heart emptied of the world is filled with spontaneous affection. Mingmen tan-t'ien fountain of youth.

**MOVERB:** The organ of overlapped motor and verbal maps.

**NAZMA:** In Arabic, to string pearls, and to compose verse, while *nathara* 'to scatter' yields *nathr* or 'prose.'

**NON-AFFINITIVE BOND:** Vital interrelationship between organisms with nothing in common. When applied to self, breaks biodeterminism.

**NONDUAL REVOLUTION:** Am I identical to you or to that which is greater than both of us, even though you don't identify with this greatness? We don't even need to see the whole elephant. When we each touch our proper piece of the elephant we only need to say "I'm touching my piece of the elephant." We could even ask "What elephant?" The conspicuous becoming so conspicuous the room is empty.

**NON-OBLIGATE ENDOSYMBIOSIS:** Communities of entities living as one in a state of mutual benefit and inter-independence.

**OFFERED UP BODY:** Nonconfusion.

**OPTATIVE:** Near-extinct grammatical mood expressing wish, deepest regret, begging, pleading, imploring, potential, imprecation. English can cobble together optativity by means of modal verbs ('may you become who you must'), the subjunctive mood, intensity, counterfactuality ('if only I could dance,' 'were we at least free') or the cohortative ('Let's!'). Its absence as a grammatical mood may betray our lack of affective depth. "O that I might be a corpse, my child, instead of you!"

**OVERCOMING FITNESS:** Experiential gene expression devoted to equitable distribution of resources and intrinsic happiness. The opposite of transcendence, without being opposed. Matter over matter (biological divergence over biological determinism). Developmental independence. Exuberance. Abundance. The sexual transmissibility of artwork.

**OXYTOCIN:** Empathy reduces inflammation. Oxytocin is a nine amino acid neurohormone associated with birthing, befriending, bonding, breastfeeding, lowered stress response, wound healing through heartening social interaction, nonmanipulative behavior, lardosis, loyalty, group cohesion, ethnocentrism, emotional addiction and calm in the face of life-altering events. Pulsatile neurohormonal secretions are produced primarily by the hypothalamus that rests directly atop our vibratory vocal apparatus while enveloped by the undulations of thoughtwave.

**PANACEA:** Prosody.

**PAPILLONNAGE:** In Charles Fourier's system of Harmony, in keeping with his theory of "attractive labor," people living communally in phalansteries would change their work every few hours to avoid drudgery, flitting from one task to another like butterflies to the next source of nectar.

**PARASYMPATHETIC PROMINENCE:** Living in a predominantly relaxed, restorative, hypometabolic state.

**PARENT PULSE:** The beating that beats in us all. Tending to the neediest first.

**PAROLE PLEINE:** Lacan's 'full word' based on sanskrit *dhvani*. Suggestive, symbolic, prosodic aspects of speech revealing the subject (as had Freud's 'slips').

**PEPTIDE:** Just as neurotransmitters can be found outside the brain and virtually anywhere in the body, so the molecules that make up emotion are body-wide.

**PERFECT PROPINQUITY:** Our major neuroendocrine organs flowing and patterning atop the pulsatile voice box.

**PERINEUM:** Door of uncontrived being situated between anus and genitals.

**PHENOTYPIC PLASTICITY:** When our features are modified by genotypic response to environmental changes (particularly humanmade changes). Genotype determined by behavior overturns developmental biology.

**PHOLARCHOS:** A guard and guide during descent, trance, dormancy or enkoimesis.

**PHONEMIC EMANATION:** Cosmogensis through the phonemes our bodies have formed around in order that we sound them.

**PHONOMORPHOARCHITECTOLOGY:** Form following waveform.

**PHOTOBIOLOGY:** The study of the interchange of light and life form.

**PPOAE:** Planned Pauperization Of Almost Everybody morphing to the Planned Prosperity Of Absolutely Everyone.

**PLEONEXIA:** Insatiable appetite for accumulating what belongs to others. The belief that others, as well as all assets and resources, exist for one's own benefit. Advantage at the expense of others. Ruthless taking, as Larry Summers has pointed out, under a breakdown in social norms "by people in a position to take."

**POET:** Unpredetermined. Unobtunded.

**PRATYAHARA:** Usually defined as 'withdrawal of the senses', the fifth of Patañjali's eight-stepped Raja Yoga. Because the senses naturally flow outward, 'withdrawal' is a counter-flow. Exterior stimuli is cut off, as well as visceral, interoceptive sensation—pain, thirst, temperature, organ sensations, hunger, emotions as body-based, all homeostatic cues, and so on. Pratyahara includes withdrawal from the sense referred to as the 'brain.' All higher neural processes through which we form subjective representations of the world and our physical, sentient selves are cut, balancing the phenomenological fixation and fear of abstraction that can easily entomb our poetics.

**PRE-DISTRIBUTIVE POETS, PERFORMERS AND PEOPLE PRESSURE GROUP:** A multi-localized, global disorganization using the proclivities of the uniquely disempowered and disregarded to astound the status quo. Unexpectedly awaited. Admittedly greatly appreciated.

**PRE-EMPTIVE MALDISTRIBUTION:** Structuring income and growth so that material well-being is equitable to begin with—pre-taxation and pre-philanthropic payback—before the damage is done. Poetics is, by definition, predistributive.

**PRIVATIZATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS:** The original enclosure movement.

**PROSODIC BODY:** The science of vibe practiced for the benefit of all beings. A new field of research that explores language as sound, embodiment, movement, intent and the tacit. The Prosodic Body is involved in various domains, principally performance, the built environment, health, education and socioeconomic justice. Composing with that of which we're made.

**PROSODOGRAM:** Diagnostic tool that tests the qualitative and quantitative effects of prosodic phenomena on bioprocesses.

**PROSODOPATH:** Disease is dissonance—its unit and path, as detectable in the Prosodic Body.

**PROSODOPSYCHONEUROIMMUNOENDOCRINOLOGY:** This field simply overlays and interrelates our sensitivity to prosodic phenomena with the already-acknowledged indivisibility of psychology, neurology, immunology and endocrinology.

**PROSODY:** Prosody includes poetry's elements of composition. Intonation, accentuation, pause, gesture, cadence and pitch are all acts of prosody. Evocation. A limbic, neocortical and entire body function that allows graded, highly variable vocal, emotional and connotative expression. The ways in which words say more than they can say. Unspeakable. Matter and consciousness are emergent properties of prosody. The vocation of poets in the rhythm, regulating and fulfilling of all of life. Prosody is the original motherese.

**PROSODY PLATFORM:** A participatory space where practitioners from prosody-related fields can freely feed in their findings to form the vast, up-to-the-minute, ever-evolving area of prosody. The Prosody Platform will be an integral part of the Prosody Building.

**RE-ENGLISH:** Provides hegemonic English with new inferences, priming an openhandedness that can disclose duplicity, transmute the mercenary and heal through unexpected euphony.

**REPLICASE:** A generic term for a polymerase enzyme that copies DNA or RNA base sequences into progeny.

**RESPIRATORY SINUS ARRHYTHMIA:** Rhythmic recitation (for example, the dactylic hexameter of Homer) establishes respiratory sinus arrhythmia [RSA]. Under RSA, heart rate increases during inhalation and decreases during exhalation. With each breathing cycle, RSA syncs alveolar ventilation and peak cardiovascular perfusion of oxygenated blood. Extra, discordant heartbeats are eliminated as ventilation becomes more efficient. This variable, lower breathing frequency, which is our birthright, as we are born into this arrhythmia (though typically lost before adolescence) is the rhythm of full breathing and recuperation. Heart rate is one of prosody's key compositional elements.

**RETROFECTION:** Actions acting back on germline for more favorable outcomes.

**RETROFOREIA:** Reaching all the way backward and all the way forward as the sublime present.

**RIGHT OF DISCOVERY:** Right of Discovery or Doctrine of Discovery was the sleight-of-hand with which European nations claimed America for themselves. Right of Discovery is founded on the principle that what belongs to nobody may be appropriated by the finder. This principle became effectual for America only when supplemented by the Church definition of Native Americans as *nullus* (nobodies). Something can't be owned by nobody. And by

extension, a nobody, being nobody (and logically unable to own oneself), becomes part of the property.

**ROANOKE COLONY OF 1650-1714:** The only integrated commons ever established on U.S. soil. A non-plantation settlement in the recessed wetlands of the Albermarle Sound region of North Carolina, under the direct suzerainty of the Tuscarora tribe. Tuscaroras, Blacks, White Runaways and the recently-released Indentured, all of whom held founding-father society as common oppressor. Native Americans still comprise 38% of the population of the county in which this commons once flourished.

**ROTTING MONEY:** A financial system in which the value of uncirculating money (above a certain income and asset bracket) is outstripped by inflation. A local, perishable currency was introduced by economist Silvio Gesell in Wörgl, Austria during the Great Depression in 1932. It was called 'stamped scrip' because it would lose 1% of its value monthly (basically, a negative interest rate) unless a stamp was purchased and attached to the bill. Gesell attributed the depression to sluggish circulation of money. The purpose of the scrip was to increase the velocity of circulation by making money perishable. "We must subject money to the loss to which goods are liable through the necessity of storage." Gesell's readership included Rudolf Steiner, John Maynard Keynes and Ezra Pound. (The other pillar of Pound's economics was the A + B Theorem of Major Clifford Douglas.)

**SADHANA:** A means to an end in which obstacles become liberation.

**SAMASOKTI:** Use of words capable of multiple meanings in order to intimate a purport not directly stated by the primary meaning.

**SANCTIONED WAGE THEFT:** Acceptable, lawful injustice. When social conventions permit, and laws do not prohibit, the looting of the labor share of productivity.

**SEISACHTHEIA:** Too small to fail. Too frail to fail. When Solon became head of affairs in ancient Athens he cancelled all public and private debt, freed all enslaved debtors and returned all confiscated property. This measure is referred to as the *seisachtheia* (removal of burdens). Until Solon's reforms, personal freedom could be used as loan collateral and claimed upon default, or forfeited when a defaulter's debt exceeded total assets. Deuteronomy refers to *seisachtheia* as the "Lord's release" or the "sabbatical year" where every seven years "every creditor shall release that which he hath lent unto his neighbor."

**SERENE SHOCK:** Awake in nondifferentiation. Parasympathetic pointedness. Comatosely creative.

**SECLUDED INTERSUBJECTIVITY:** Unperturbable in tumult. Individual in indivisible.

**SHABD:** Inaudible sound behind creation. Hearing the way. Audible light. Phonic photonics. Ununderstandable knowledge. Inner auscultation. The speech pattern manifesting each form, perceived as form (not as active speech patterning). Secret, unless that with which it can't be sensed is set aside. Matter's technique. Our own speech, shabd's furthest ripplet, about to die out and into.

**SIMPLE MARKET:** Market as serving others. It would be possible for the problems met in maintaining a simple market, as distinct from a solipsistic market or contrivance or ignorance of the unknown, to not merely maintain unavoidable suffering. A path of perfection. To enter the market as one might have entered a self-subsistence monastery or sangha. Squandering a fortune in advance for the benefit of everyone.

**SOCIAL DIVIDEND:** Unconditional guarantee of sufficient income for meeting basic needs—pooled from profits drawn from public resources, a socialized financial sector and raising the labor share of revenue, with national productivity as profit sharing. Ultimately we are one another's commons.

**SORTITION:** “It is accepted as democratic when public offices are allocated by lot; and as oligarchic when they are filled by election.”<sup>3</sup>

**SOUFFLEUR:** ‘Prompter.’ Someone (typically hidden to all but the actors on stage) who whispers the lines for the performers at just the right moment. Souffleurs may also appear in plain view as proper characters carrying out agendas of their own, improvising text, tweaking action and fulfilling the music.

**SPAGHETTIFICATION:** Elongated deformation of an audience as it is pulled into the black hole produced by performers with too little presence to keep the space from collapsing into itself.

**SPECIATION:** The arising of new species. A branching that produces, not sister species, but stranger species or separate seedings in the same soil. Or, without splitting, flipping back along the same line to an extinct antecedent. Home is the drift.

**STRESSORS:** Predator replacement by becoming prey to purely psychological states, principally anxiety, pressure and panic.

**TENTATIVE GENOME EXPRESSION:** Moment to moment, most favorable phenotypic re-manifestation, without fixed identity as reference point proving one's existence.

**THRASYMACHUS:** 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE sophist. At the time, philosophizing was a new societal role requiring new language genres such as rhetoric and oratory. Truth was up for grabs, as traditional beliefs fell away. In their attempts to be persuasive and influential (and remunerated), the sophists gradually became objects of derogation. Thrasymachus was a forceful defender of injustice.

To drive his message home, he relied heavily upon the metrical unit called the ‘paeon’ (as this 4-beat measure had been, to his ear, vacated by the poets and was therefore available for re-purposing) as well as a highly developed gestural language accompanying his words (though no graphic, reproducible trace of this set of gestures survives). It is also known that his speech, as for all sophists, was utterly contrived so as to appear flowing, spontaneous and genuinely true. In the wreckage of epic and lyric forms, there was a strong preference for avoiding musicality, as song was considered inherently counterfeit. Thrasymachus is best known for his brief appearance in Plato’s *Republic*.

**TI-EH-NEH:** Tiwa word for ‘the people’ as well as ‘vibrations’ (via Beautiful Painted Arrow).

**TOTIPOTENT CHOREOGRAPHY:** Movement that generates more possibilities than it exhausts with each decisive step. Limitation refuelling the Space Of All Possibilities. The reaching out, undergone all over again, that formed all limbs.

**UBIQUITOUS DIVIDEND:** Equitable distribution of resources based on the recognition that all goods and services are the congealed commons arising from thousands of years of advances whose benefits belong to everyone.

**UNANNIHILATED POEM:** Poetry as the substrate of all forms. Unrestricted literacy.

**UNCONSERVED IDENTITY:** Letting go of that which identifies oneself as oneself, as need be.

**UNSTINTING BODY:** The body versed in evoked epigenetics.

**UZUME:** The Sun Goddess had shut herself in a cave. To lure the Sun from the cave and restore light and life to the world, the Shinto Kami Ame-no- Uzume performed a frenzied, lewd, comic dance on top of an overturned bathtub, inventing the flute and kota while developing the first Kagura. By exposing herself she was also reminding the Sun of her maternal obligation to nurture the earth. Laughter is the Goddess of the pathway between heart and tongue. The vagus nerve is her shamanic speech. Prototype of performance as possession.

**VIKRITI:** Vikriti means ‘crooked,’ ‘imbalance,’ ‘deviation from nature.’ Expression out of

sequence. Though a negative concept in Ayurvedic medicine, for Vedic poets vikriti was a codified, mnemonic recombining of syllables for the purpose of safeguarding the tonal and phonic integrity of Vedic verse. Eventually vikriti became a devotional practice in itself.

**VIRGINIA COMPANY:** Joint stock company that preceded Virginia and Virginians. (The New World was never other than privatized.) The main purpose of the Virginia Colony was to profit London stockholders (Shakespeare included.) To this end, the governor of Virginia (Virginia Company appointee Sir Thomas Gates) established marshal law—the earliest known English-language law in the New World, Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall, adapted in part from the military manual of William of Orange, which prescribed the death penalty for 25 of 37 civilian offenses (such as stealing a neighbor’s linen or an ear of corn, or for the use of disgraceful language). The severity of the law was less for maintaining worker discipline and more for keeping settlers from defecting to the amicable, leisurely, egalitarian Powhatans (1 in 8 had starved to death, 1 in 7 would defect). “Mowchick woyawgh tawgh noeragh kaquere mecher?” (I am hungry, what shall I eat?)—a question many of the Virginia Colony inmates had rehearsed. (A marshal law still too heavy to lift.)

**WEISMANN BARRIER:** The principle that information cannot move from somatic cells to sex cells. An acquired or engineered trait can’t be passed on. So some say.

**WONDERPENIA:** Deficiency of wonder: the insult that shrinks the brain as we age.

**WU CHI:** Limitlessness in which there are no organizational forces.

#### *Notes*

1) From Book 32 of poet/lawmaker Thiruvalluvar’s *Tirukkural*, quoted by Rev. G.U. Pope in “The Poets of the Tamil Lands,” *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Third Series, Volume V., Nos. 9 & 10, January-April, 1898: 364 2) Cuneiform tablet circa 2,400 BCE, translated by the archeologist Maurice Lambert. Cited in Michael Hudson, *The Lost Tradition of Biblical Debt Cancellations* (1993) 15, available at <http://michael-hudson.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/HudsonLostTradition.pdf>. 3) Aristotle, *Politics*, IV. 9, 1294b8, Loeb Classical Library No. 264 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932).