"The public reading is a matter of the public reading": the *85* Project[i]

Lianne Moyes, Claire Huot, Robert Majzels

LM: When you (Robert) first spoke about your poems, your *85*s, with me in Spring 2007, you described them in terms of the problem of reading, in terms of the different experience that members of the audience — the "public," if we translate from French — have in reading the poems projected on a screen. I began to think of the poems as installations, as installed in public space by the event of a public reading. When I contacted you about the possibility of having a conversation about poetry readings, you explained that you and Claire Huot were preparing an exhibition of the Tang Dynasty Chinese based *85*s for the Nickel Arts Museum at the University of Calgary, displaying the poems as visual art and including a video of various people (poets, children, etc.) reading them, with the camera on the face of the reader. Given that I have not been to a reading of your poems (I have only heard you read fiction), I am interested in knowing more about the different kinds of "poetry readings" in which you have been involved, about their physical set-up, the configuration of space, the positioning of the poems and video images, the possibilities for exchange between writer and reader, between reader and poem, between media, the question of who is reading, and so forth. Have you read your poems without making them visible within the space of the reading? Have you read them without inviting members of the audience to read? Why is it important in the case of these poems that they be imaged and read (silently? aloud?) by members of the audience?

RM: Your question invites us to begin with a discussion of the reception end of *85* rather than at the beginning of the creative process (the Rabbinical philosophical ground, the process of explicating the Chinese characters and the transinhalation into 85 letters). So, let me try to spin around and think of the project as it reads now rather than describe how it got there. I think the poems work best when an audience can hear them read aloud by someone who's never read them before. This section of *85* is about the reception of the Chinese language and culture in the West, and the relationship of the West to the external Other that China represents. In a public space, we display the works, either as large prints or projected on a screen or surface. We then ask for volunteers to read the poem. Because of the layout of the text, the absence of spaces between words, the right to left and down reading direction, the performance is slow and difficult, full of stuttering retreats, amendments and repetitions. The reader experiences the difficulty of opening up to the Chinese text, realizes and undertakes the work required on this end. Of course, the exercise is about translation: exploring ways to resist colonization, to counter the smooth absorption of the Other into the Same which has traditionally characterized English translations of the "Orient."

The act of reading by the audience rather than by the translator/author also works against that relationship of author, authority, presence, the aural experience that seems to be such an integral part of the tradition of the "literary" in Canadian letters, which I abhor. I've always had an aversion to readings, to the way they reinforce the idea of the author as the source of meaning, to the logocentric illusion of presence. And to the way bad poetry, bad writing in general, can be made to sound "good."

The other thing the reading does is to make apparent the materiality of language. Visually the letters lose their transparency, as well as a great degree of their utilitarian functionality. All the letters are equal, whereas we tend to perceive certain letters as subservient (vowels, silent letters). The physicality of the letters presents an obstacle to the usual absorptive reading. This is

reflected in the stuttering quality of the oral rendition. You get a poetry reading that's very different from the usual expressive, elegant, rhythmic performance. I find the result quite beautiful (or sublime). When the videotapes of faces reading the poems are projected beside the poems, a fourth level of production is introduced. In fact, the process of the work incorporates and interacts in several (five) different media and over at least five different subjectivities. The work starts as Chinese text, translates into English text and into the medium of visual art. Then videotape is added, and finally the result is projected in a installation space or on the web. The subjectivities are complex: an original Chinese author is translated by Claire Huot and turned into a poem in 85 letters by me. A fourth participant, a performer, is taped reading the work, and that performance is viewed by an audience, either on the web or in a gallery or other space.

We become an audience watching the reception of a translation, which is a reception of a poem in another language.

Although I have not read the poems myself in public, I have read the Chinese version of the poem aloud. This introduces two things: the sound of another language, Chinese, into what is usually a very white Anglo-Canadian space (especially in Calgary), and the difficulty of my own poor Chinese language skills. In fact the original Chinese appears on each of the prints of the poems. Usually non-Chinese readers ignore it, or see it as purely visual art. One of the videos you can download on the website is of Lu Peizhen, a Chinese maintenance staff at the University of Calgary charged with cleaning my office, reading Wang Wei's poem in Chinese. Her reading is far smoother and more expert than the readings in English, including those by experienced poets and readers.

CH: I would add two points concerning the Chinese reading. 1) Robert read the Chinese in a very competent way (he practiced; he's a student of Chinese). Lu Peizhen read the Chinese in both a reverent tone (these poems are classics, which all school children in China have been taught), and a fluent manner (Chinese is her mother tongue). The Chinese poems are included in the work as both a reference to the original (they are the original texts, after all), and a visual cultural marker (they are transformed into Chinese seals, a non-amendable block of words which is fitting since they are Tang dynasty classics, tiny monuments or canonical jewels). 2) The Chinese text is not difficult to read, if you can read Chinese: the presentation is the normal (albeit traditional) top to bottom, right to left. That's why Ms. Lu, when simply asked to read the poem, did not even look at the foreign alphabet, but went right to the Chinese characters. Just as the non-Chinese readers do not attempt to read the Chinese but take on what is at least a familiar alphabet. But, in *85*, this does not eliminate the difficulty…

LM: There are so many possible avenues here. Perhaps I should pursue the question of the poetry reading a little further. What you describe — poems read aloud by members of the audience, poems accompanied by videotapes of readings, poems that take up public space and invite the museum visitor to read aloud — all of this reading on the part of the public pushes "the public reading" to its definitional limits. The poet is decentered and so, to a certain degree, is the poem. What matters is the public airing of the process of reading. All sorts of things are exposed by such an airing: the way reading depends on pattern and convention; the role of visual as well as aural poetics; the facial and corporeal accompaniment to reading; the *work* of reading. I showed a couple of your poems to a seven year-old whose experience of language is limited to English and French; he asked me if they were "mots cachés," word searches, and in what direction he should be looking. The visual arrangement of an *85* is not unlike that of a word

search (although there are usually extra letters in a word search whereas there are none in an *85*); and word searches are one place Western readers tolerate words running in all directions. Of course, a word search is not a translation, or a poem, and does not ask to be read as a serial unfolding in time.

One question I have — and that I'm grappling with at the level of my own discourse — is how to identify and interrupt mechanisms of orientalization, including constructions of Chinese culture as puzzling or obscure. In reading the poems, I was struck, for example, by the extent to which they make the *English* language strange. At the same time, are there risks in translating Tang Dynasty poems in the way that you have?

CH: Again, children come to our rescue. I like the comparison the child made between the *85* and the game of *mots cachés*; in a sense, they're the same, both are word puzzles, no more no less. The rewards are different: the *mot caché* offers you an extra word, opened up but physically embedded, while the *85* offers you a poem, an organic unit where the letters can make sense.

It is legitimate to pose a question around orientalism any time non-Asians, especially Caucasians, work with Asian cultural products. If orientalism is a discursive formation wherein the East is discussed as fundamentally different, and as ultimately inferior to the West even when it is depicted as morally superior, then the 85 project is in fact resisting orientalism. *85* is a cross-cultural exploration of philosophical issues around the question of texts. In fact, it opens up a face-to-face between Judaic thinking and Chinese thinking, where the constraint of *85* Hebrew letters (defined in the Talmud as the minimum required to constitute a book) marvellously corresponds to the 20 Chinese characters of the Tang poetic form called *jueju*, or complete sentence. The odd man out in this case is English, and our relationship to English as a language, which differs so much from the relationship to language within these two old civilizations of the written word. The *85*s render English, the language most readers of these works live in, just a little bit alien.

As for the translations themselves, Robert's translations are the least orientalizing translations of Tang dynasty poems I've ever encountered. They neither exoticize nor romanticize nor expound. In a nutshell, those are the three usual avenues of orientalism. Robert has avoided all these pitfalls, and he's done something more: his translations are flashes, very much like the original Chinese.

I think that, if there were a problem of orientalization in *85*, it could be located in the visual layout of the poems. Let me try to refute such an accusation. 1) In their lack of spacing, or of word grouping, the *85*s follow both the ancient Judaic and Chinese traditions, which omit punctuation and differentiation between words. That's the philosophical base. But there is more: without the absence of spaces, the project wouldn't make much sense artistically. The idea of foreignness, of translating and reading from an old civilization today and in English, would be lost. A reader would zip through familiar words and have experienced nothing. 2) However, Robert's decision to write the poems in the traditional Chinese fashion from top to bottom and right to left is tendentious. But, if a child can do *mots cachés*, can an adult not grant the artist this little bit of artistic licence? I believe the unusual ordering of letters becomes part of the game, makes the reader constantly aware that she is reading something that's not English culturally. And maybe it's fun — at least there are no diagonal words and useless letters! 3) As for the overall visual layout, it's a kind of homage to the Chinese written civilization, to the forests of stelae. We tried to imply the feeling of the inscribed stone slabs which, though they often commemorate a military or historical event, can also be works of great calligraphy, for example

a letter written to a nephew, or a Tang poem, initially written on paper, then transferred to stone, and subsequently transferred via rubbings back onto paper, so that they could be widely circulated. Thus, the *85*s appear as yet another transference. The seal of Chinese script, which appears at the bottom of the translation, is in fact the original Chinese poem now sealed in the process.

RM: Orientalism always presents the "mystery" of the Other in a familiar form. That romanticizing is what we are trying to avoid. Traditional translations of Chinese tend either to normalize the poem (usually into a Shakespearean experience), or to reduce it into a poor English (Charlie Chan speech). Ezra Pound's translations, in spite of a number of problems, at least resist both these pitfalls; hence, their profound transformational effect on English and English poetry.

LM: I took a look at the videos on the website http://285bungalowdrive.blogspot.com/. Watching the faces and listening to the efforts of the readers unfamiliar with Chinese, I was reminded of five or six year olds learning to read: painstakingly sounding words out, stopping and starting, running words together, giving up, leaving the reading "unfinished" or continuing to read even when the previous sounds don't add up to words. The facial expressions in the videos — concentration, effort, frustration, pleasure, satisfaction, bafflement — say a lot about a subject's relation to a given language, but also about how important it is to that subject to make sense, to demonstrate their mastery of language. I noticed how "porous" many of the readers became to the poem they were reading. The *85*s seem to perturb the sense of English-language entitlement. If I'm remembering correctly, the videos show English-speakers reading English-language poems and one Chinese-speaker reading a poem in Chinese. The English-speakers are the ones asked to do the work of translating, not of translating the words (you have done that for them) but of translating the visual poetics and other cues.

CH: For me, the unforgettable moment is the 8-year-old girl stumbling on the 4-syllable melancholy which evokes nothing to her and which she pronounces like chocolate.

RM: Reading *85*s is very much like learning to read. It seems to bring back the adult reader to the scene of her original apprenticeship of language. The letters are materialized, the fluid transition from reading to making sense is made fragile and irregular. In that sense, our mastery of language is undermined, at least momentarily. I think this is experienced differently by the reader being videotaped and the audience watching the reader struggle, in the same way (but more evidently) a reader of a translation experiences the struggle of the translator to move from the source text to the target language. I like the way the poems don't always end up making sense to the reader, and the relationship between the audience — rooting, criticizing — and the reader.

Your question makes me question the way we've presented the videos. In fact, we generally ask the readers to reread the poems several times, but we've only presented one of those attempts for each reader. It might be even more interesting to watch the process as a reader goes back and starts again, gradually producing a semantically useful reading.

LM: What happens when poems such as the *85*s are bound into book form? Book publication fosters a further level of production but not one likely to provoke public reading. You told me that you have not yet published these poems in spite of having a complete manuscript. Is it

possible to read the delay symptomatically? Are public readings of these poems even more crucial to their cultural work than publishing them in book form? Are they installations? By installation, I mean a series of relations among different parts assembled within a given site, a site through which one moves (in different ways, depending upon the media involved), a site that multiplies lines of perception / attention and asks participants to make their own connections, to do their own reading. Public readings of the *85*s bring readers into a space and confront them with poems: provocations to read rather than products to listen to.

RM: Yes, absolutely, they are installations. I mean that's the way we prefer to think of them. We're hoping to present them in public sites conducive to the work of reading, juxtaposed with projections of the readers' faces reading. That's our current project.

On the other hand, we've played with them in many contexts, media, and forms, some as visual works, some as reading experiences, and in a number of forms as texts. Claire stencilled a number of the *85*s directly on the walls of our home in West Bolton, Québec. In 2006, eight *85*s, translations of Paul Celan's poems, printed on transparent medium were part of a group exhibition in Cleveland.[ii] The transparencies were glued onto the glass wall of a gallery in a mall. Some photographs of those stencils have been posted on http://www.vispoets.com/. I also consider our 285 Bungalow Drive blog to be a kind of installation. We'd also like to convince a number of merchants in the Chinatown area and elsewhere in Calgary, where we're living and working these days, to display an *85* in their storefronts. We've printed *85*s on Chinese ghostpapers, small very delicate paper with gold and silver leaf, which is traditionally burned at funerals to assist the dead in their passage to the other world. And some *85*s, translations of Celan, Tang dynasty or Bada Shanren, have been published in the New York journals *NO* and *Sleeping Fish*, in the Calgary journal *fillingStation*, and online in *Cipher*.

Of course, each of these media and forms produces a very different experience, and the installation incarnation we're discussing is the one that most involves and explores the public act of reading, the relationship to language.

LM: I'd like to turn back to Claire's comment about the face-to-face between Judaic thinking and Chinese thinking. Claire is referring specifically to constraints: the 85 Hebrew letters that constitute a book as defined in the Talmud and the 20 Chinese characters that constitute a sentence in Tang poetic form. Why did you choose to work with constraints? I imagine that they have a greater impact on the creative process than on the reception of the poem. What were the effects of the constraints on the process of transforming the translation from Chinese into an 85 letter poem? What is a "transinhalation" into 85 letters?

CH: We should probably begin by pointing out that the writing of a 20-character Chinese classical poem has many more compositional constraints than an *85*. On top of parallelism and rhyme, each word is chosen following strict tonal rules. The *85* project is not an attempt to replicate or adapt into English all of the characteristics of Chinese poetry. Hence the word "transinhalation" for the translation process.

RM: Transinhalation because these translations begin with inhaling, a gesture of retreat, of humility, of making room for. The constraint that imposes a limit of 85 letters is a gesture of withdrawal that makes room in our language for the other, a gesture that runs counter to the arrogance of English in the world today.

In fact, I feel that all creation begins with a gesture of concentration and withdrawal. According to ancient Rabbinical thinking, the creation of the universe we inhabit originates with *Ein Sof* or No-one. How does No-one, that absence that is omnipresent, that occupies all space, that is everywhere and everything, make room for a new creation? In the Hassidic tradition the act of creation is described as a process called *Zimzum*, which begins with a gesture of retreat. This withdrawal and concentration of the creative power happens through inhaling. God (which, let's not forget, is No-one) inhales and withdraws into itself to make room for the world. This concentration, retreat, inhalation is followed by the creation of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the subsequent permutation of the letters produces all the various creatures and forms of being in the universe. In French this inhalation produces *souffle*; in Chinese it is called *qì*. In every case, this writing operates through the body's breathing. *Zimzum* describes the process of translation, or transinhalation, and of writing (permutation of letters) in general.

LM: I have a number of questions related to the face-to-face between Judaic thinking and Chinese thinking, between "these two old civilizations of the written word." Robert explained at the outset that the Tang Dynasty *85*s explore the reception of the Chinese language and culture in the West as well as the representation in the West of China as external Other. Claire talked about various aspects of Chinese written culture, including the stelae. I'm hoping that the next couple of questions will allow you to say more about Judaic written culture and its role in *85* — in the project as a whole as well as in specific poems. How has the thought of writers and intellectuals such as Celan, Jacques Derrida, Edmond Jabès, Emmanuel Levinas and Marc-Alain Ouaknin (and others) marked the *85*s? I noticed that you cite Ouaknin's *Le livre brûlé* in the opening pages of the manuscript of *85*. Could you say a little about what is at stake in the translations of the Hebrew *Song of Songs* or of German works by Celan? What might English-language readers learn from them about relationships to language; about the letter, the sentence, the book; and about the way the visual and the linguistic interact?

Claire mentioned the lack of punctuation and differentiation between words in both ancient Judaic and Chinese traditions. Are there other key continuities (or discontinuities) in the written culture or visual poetics of these traditions that have shaped the process of writing, laying out or displaying the *85*s? Has each tradition shaped different parts of the process? What is the significance of poems as visual art, of calligraphy, in each tradition? I was going to ask if the final products are any closer to Judaic or Chinese traditions. Then I realized that there aren't really any final products. The myriad forms and media in which the poems appear (stencilled, projected, printed, on walls, on the internet, on ghostpapers, on huge panels, on transparencies) interrupt such questions and cultural certainties. At the same time, some of those myriad forms and media reference specific Judaic and Chinese visual poetics and writing practices. I don't know enough about the latter and my questions are stumbling, here, over my own cultural illiteracies.

CH: Your comments / questions raise an interesting point about the visual aspect of the *85*s. The *85*s, including those that adopt something resembling the Chinese stelae format, are nevertheless at odds with a work of Chinese calligraphy. Calligraphy, the art of writing Chinese characters, is, in the classical sense, an art of expressivity. The final product, let's say a Tang poem, is read both for the poem itself, for its content and visual form, *and* in appreciation of a surplus, which is the mark of the artist. The artist can stress or unstress certain words by altering the size of some of them; by making the ink more or less unctuous or dry for some of them; by varying the speed

of the brush, and so forth. Calligraphy has been compared to the execution of music (Billeter). Canadians Glenn Gould and Angela Hewitt do not play Bach the same way, although they play the same notes.

The *85*s are printed or stencilled; there is no surplus of humanity or mark of the maker in the letters. Rather there are “accidents of nature,” especially when the *85*s are printed on the very delicate ghost papers. Already no two sheets are the same, not because they are handmade, but because they are made in bulk; some have more or less silver (in reality, tin) and the gold (in fact, the orange coloring) is not always in the center of the page. Sometimes the printer wrecks a part of the tin, sometimes the *85* is partly on the gold, and so on.

RM: When I began the *85* project by applying the constraint to verses of *The Song of Songs* and to Celan’s poems, I initially tried laying out the words in lines of free verse. But the effect was too much like poetry. I wanted to break free of the immediately recognizable discursive formation that we can easily dismiss or elevate as poetry (the result of which is the same). In the process of my research, I was reminded that in the original Torah scroll, there is no space between words. Often, I find, the way forward is by going back. By returning to the Old Testament scroll, the text of origin, I discovered a way to return the plasticity of language to the work, and to face the strangeness of the other text. When Claire and I later turned to Chinese poems, we realized that the equi-distancing of all the letters reflects a similar relationship between Chinese characters. One of the strange coincidences of this project.

I should also explain where the specific number of *85* letters comes from. In *Le livre brûlé*, Ouaknin is seeking to define the essence of what is a book. He returns to the *Chabbat* Treatise of the Talmud, where the Rabbis are debating the question. The argument begins over the question: what exceptions are permitted to the proscription against work on the Sabbath. If your house is burning down on the Sabbath, the Rabbis agree, you are not permitted to extinguish the flames, since that constitutes a form of work. On the other hand, if there is a holy book inside the house, you are permitted to save it. But what if the book is damaged, no longer intact? Is it still worthy of being saved? Depends on the damage. How much damage? At this point the question is posed: what is the minimum number of letters a (holy) book requires if it is to maintain its status as a book? Our attention is drawn to a particular passage in the ancient Torah scroll (Numbers 10: 35-36). This particular passage of the Torah is unique in being separated from the surrounding letters by spaces in which have been placed two inverted (backward) *nounim* (the Hebrew letter n). The passage is thus bracketed by letters, which because they are backwards, are not letters. The Rabbinical sages conclude that these marks indicate that the passage in question is a book, and that it has been placed out of order in the Torah. Where does it belong? We don’t know. Its place will be known in the World-to-come. For now, the enclosed passage is marked as out of place, under erasure, but still present, as a trace of itself. Here we can see the source of Derrida’s theory: “The mode of inscription of such a trace in the text of metaphysics is so unthinkable that it must be described as an erasure of the trace itself. The trace is produced as its own erasure. And it belongs to the trace to erase itself, to elude that which might maintain it in presence” (Derrida 65-66). The book is at once written and unwritten, out of place and in its place. Meaning is forever displaced. Of course, as you’ve guessed by now, the passage in question contains 85 letters. It is a book because the text can be moved intact to another place. 85 letters is therefore the minimum number to constitute a book.

Now, the content of that passage. The subject is the Ark of the Covenant, the coffer that contains the Law that Moses brought down from Sinai, the Law that governs all meaning. The

passage stipulates that the Ark must remain at all times mobile, which is why it is flanked by poles of acacia that must never be removed. The mobility of the Ark is a metaphor for the continual movement of meaning. The Law may be written in stone, but the tablets are fragmented, and those shards are always shifting. The meaning, Ouaknin argues, of this passage of 85 letters is that a book generates meaning endlessly. The being of the book is forever becoming.

LM: Are there differences in the ways the visual poetics of the Talmud or of classical Chinese poetry have been acknowledged or appropriated in Western culture? (Perhaps I really mean "in English-language culture.") Is English-language culture as literate about the Talmud as it is (or thinks it is) about Chinese written culture? Are there writers who have brought Jewish written culture to bear on English-language literature and culture in the way that Pound brought Chinese written (and visual) culture to bear on it (see Qian)? Or in ways that Pound *couldn't imagine*, in part because he was never in China and did not learn Chinese (Huang 65). Is this, perhaps, how you locate your intervention in *85*: at the junction or point of confrontation among English, Jewish and Chinese written culture?

RM: The first thing to say about Rabbinical thinking, and the whole Hebrew-Jewish tradition is that it's an integral part of Western civilization and culture(s). In fact, that tradition is at the very origin of the Western alphabets (Proto-sinaiitic writing is at the origin of Phoenician, Greek, Latin and modern Indo-European), Western literature (the Torah) and Western philosophy (Rabbinical thinking in the Talmud, the Sefer Yetzirah, etc.). Of course, it can't be mechanically separated out from the Greek tradition; the two are intertwined. Historically, I think it's possible to say that things start to go horribly wrong with Christianity. In any case, I think there's a marked difference in the methodological approach of Rabbinical thinking (a designation I'm using rather than Jewish to distinguish philosophy from religion) from that of the Greek and Christian tradition. The method of argument in the Talmud and the Kabbalist tradition "uses language to cut through its own structure" (Epstein 76). Talmudic reading pays attention to the surface of language, deploys a range of hermeneutic practices like Gematria that open up meaning. Susan Handelman describes the Rabbinic reading of texts as "metonymical — as retaining differences within identity, stressing relationships of contiguity rather than substitution, preferring multivocal to univocal meanings, the play of *as if* over the assertion of *is*, juxtapositions over equivalencies, concrete images over abstractions. Rabbinic interpretation never dispenses with the particular form in which the idea is enclothed. The text, for the Rabbis, is a continuous generator of meaning, which arises from the innate logic of the divine language, the letter itself, and is not sought in a non-linguistic realm external to the text. Language and the text are . . . the space of differences, and truth . . . is not an instantaneous unveiling of the One, but a continuous sequential process of interpretation. For the Jew, God's presence is inscribed or traced within a text, not a body. Divinity is located in language, not person" (88-89).

I would argue it is the disruptive strain of such thinking that, though it is present from the very start of Western civilization, is continually repressed under the dominant Greco-Christian tradition. I think the fear of this open-endedness, this resistance to closure, this slipperiness (hence the imagery of slime so prevalent in Nazi depictions of the Jew) in the face of categories, is at the heart of anti-Semitism. It explains the burning throughout history of the Jewish books, and the Jews themselves. And yet, because it is at the heart of the entire Occidental trajectory, Rabbinical thinking cannot be extinguished without extinguishing the entire civilization. It

repeatedly and periodically resurfaces and resists oblivion. It returns, whether in Spinoza, Heine, Marx, Kafka, Freud, Benjamin, Celan, Jabès, Lévinas, Derrida, Hélène Cixous, Oauknin, Agamben, to name a few; although Abraham Abulafia or Nahman of Braslav are largely forgotten. As far as English language writers are concerned, I think you're right, there are fewer. Zukovsky, Rosemarie Waldrop, Paul Auster, Marjorie Perloff and Charles Bernstein come to mind. The practice of all these writers is consciously influenced by elements of what Handelman calls the Rabbinic approach to language. I think you can find traces of Rabbinical thinking in writers with Jewish roots like Gertrude Stein and Artaud, and in some non-Jewish writers like James Joyce and Beckett. The digressive, disturbing reasoning of the Jewish thinkers is called variously, picaresque, satirical, absurdist, avant-gardist, dialogic, psychoanalytic or postmodern.

The appropriation of Jewish thought, its Christianization, has been an alternative manner of dealing with it, alternative to burning, I mean. John D. Caputo's reworking of Derrida is one example (see *The Tears and Prayers of Jacques Derrida*). Here a profoundly heretical and radical thinking is turned back into religion and a kind of idolatry. In *Le livre brûlé*, Ouaknin quotes Henri Atlan: "The primary preoccupation of biblical teaching is not the existence of God, theism as contrasted with atheism, but the fight against idolatry. In all theism there is the danger of idolatry. All theism is idolatry, since expression signifies it, thereby freezing it; except if, somehow, its discourse refutes itself and so becomes atheistic. In other words, the paradoxes of language and its meanings are such that the only discourse possible about God which is not idolatrous is an atheistic discourse. Or: in any discourse the only God that is not an idol is a God who is not God" (cited in Ouaknin 65; Atlan 86). In the academy, another way of defanging Rabbinical thinking has been to categorize it under Religious Studies, thus excluding it from Classics departments, which claim to offer a grounding in the foundations of Western thought through Greek and Roman studies. Even within the avant-garde, its Jewish roots, the materialization of language — the Kabbalah in Dada, Sound Poetry, Concrete Poetry — are ignored. I've noted several instances of *Apikoros Sleuth* being dismissed as Jewish mysticism.

One of the elements of the *85* project, has been to make the Jewish element apparent (the inverted *nunim*). The decision to apply the 85-letter constraint to *The Song of Songs* was obvious. Early poetry, very sensual, grounded in the body, and a prime object of kabbalist interpretations. Celan, too, seemed an ideal text, one that represents a crucial moment in modern poetry: his own abrasion and fragmentation of the German language, the language of the Shoa, offers strategic possibilities for dealing with the language of Amerika today. Pierre Joris' excellent translations were instrumental.

All of which brings us to the similarities and differences between Hebrew and Chinese writing. First of all, regardless of similarities and differences, I think it's appropriate to return to the repressed ancient Rabbinical philosophical outlook at the heart and origin of European civilization in order to come face to face with — but without mastering — the Far East in the Chinese poetic tradition. And then, interestingly, both these ancient cultures, the Jewish and Chinese, regard writing as a system autonomous to speech and constitutive of the world around us. Writing precedes speech. The Chinese characters are also viewed as plastic, material. Of course, we have to be careful here not to fall into the sort of easy and romantic simplifications. The criticisms addressed to Pound's work, for example.

CH: Pound's work *after* Chinese works of poetry has been decried by many sinologists, because of its overstatement of the visual importance of Chinese characters. I think the latter is forgivable and the criticism, not totally fair. It's true that, long before the common era, Chinese characters

were already abstracted from their pictographic and ideographic origins and that the look of each character does not play into the selection process of one word rather than another when writing a poem. However, because of the composition of Chinese characters, there remains a key component called the radical, for example grass, which will be contained in words ranging from weeds to flowers to vegetables. Consequently, a poem about flowers blooming will visually carry that key in each of the words, whether it is or not the poet's intention to show visually as well as mean denotatively a hibiscus on the verge of flowering. A person may not be able to read Chinese, but she can certainly see patterns. People who know the Chinese language protect their turf jealously.

Artists can interpret another culture's works in ways that are not always orthodox. When a delegation of American artists, sponsored by Art in America, visited China in the 1970s, the Americans were fascinated not so much by the works of calligraphy shown to them, but by the backsides where black ink had seeped through the paper creating inside out palimpsests. Obviously, they could only see / read what they knew.

Like a work of calligraphy, an *85* is always legible. When the letters are not clearly printed, that sheet is thrown out. That's why the *85*s are visual *and* textual. At first, I opposed Robert's inclusion of Chinese words (such as *konghou*, a musical string instrument) in the translations because of the added difficulty this poses in deciphering the *85*. But he argued that, since the English language does not have a word for this specific instrument, the Chinese word must be retained (transliterated). Robert is right: you cannot call a *konghou* a lute or a *bugu* bird a magpie.

LM: My last couple of questions have been preoccupied with the relationship of English-language culture to the face-to-face between Judaic and Chinese thinking. I am also interested in the terms of the Jewish-Chinese encounter itself. In the context of the *85*s, this is an encounter of cultures of writing. Are there other aspects, other histories of the encounter that provide contexts for reading the poems? Both of these communities are marked by diaspora, in different ways at different historical moments. The research I have been able to look at focuses primarily on Jewish-Chinese relations in China. I did not realize, for example, that Shanghai, home to Jewish trading communities in the nineteenth century, became a refuge to Jews fleeing Imperial Russia, the USSR and Nazi Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. I find provocative the work of London University scholar Zhou Xun on the hoax of the "Kaifeng Jews," the community of Jews thought to have travelled the Silk Road in the Middle Ages and settled in Western China. The image of the Chinese Jews, real and invented, she points out, has served many specific interests, among them: the interests of Jesuit and later Protestant missionaries looking for a possible Kaifeng Jewish Bible, "uncorrupted" by Rabbinical practice, that could be appropriated for Christian purposes (69); the interests of the seventeenth-century Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel who believed that "the coming of the Messiah depended on the Jews being found at all 'ends of the earth'," including the New World and China (69); and the interests of early twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals who appropriated Western constructions of Jews as Oriental to make the argument that Western culture (seen as derived from Jewish culture) had Eastern roots and need not, therefore, be understood within China as threatening (76-77).

RM: It's also interesting to note that many Messianic figures, Shabbatai Zevi (also 17th century) for example, called on the Jews to convert to Islam as a necessary step toward accelerating the coming of the Messianic era. Of course, rabbinical orthodoxy has always regarded this doctrine

as the worst kind of betrayal and heresy; but it is possible to read such a gesture of self-abandonment and surrender as a radical opening to the other. In the Time of the Messiah, after all, all religions, dogmas, etc. are expected to fall away, dissolve. The requirement that Jews be found at all 'ends of the earth,' is thus amended and transformed from a call for conquest into a gesture of radical self-abandonment.

LM: I am wondering about the division of East and West: Chinese thought is considered to be "Eastern"; is Judaic thought considered to be "Eastern" or "Western"? Robert emphasized earlier that Rabbinical thinking, and the whole Hebrew-Jewish tradition, is an integral yet often repressed part of *Western* civilization and culture(s). What is the relationship between the repression (and selective appropriation) of Judaic texts, and the (selective) orientalization of Jewish thought and culture? There is a passage in A.M. Klein's "Diary (1945)" that speaks to—but doesn't resolve—this question. Klein is recounting his lunch with Dr. James, principal of McGill University, in anticipation of taking up a three-year position teaching English poetry. Klein sums up James' views on Palestine, the Jews of Europe and Ibn Saud, first King of Saudi Arabia: "I could gather from the Dr. that he was in love with primitive things. The bloody picturesqueness of the Arabs is our most difficult obstacle in appealing to the English. They prefer natives. They are colourful, and easier to deal with. But the goddam Jews, they're always quoting from the same books as you read, unpleasant occidentals" (96). By shifting the referents of "they" and "you," and by stepping in and out of Dr. James' voice, Klein makes it uncertain who is casting whom as "unpleasant occidentals." He is also, I think, addressing the uneasy, unruly position of the Jews in relation to orientalizing discourses and in relation to the (Arabic) Orient. This excerpt from Klein's diary anticipates a couple of points made by Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek Penslar in their introduction to the collection *Orientalism and the Jews*, notably that Jews have been constructed by the West as Occidental *and* Oriental, and that orientalism is a specifically Christian project aimed at managing relations with both Judaism and Islam. Kalmar and Penslar also discuss the mechanisms of "internal orientalism" whereby, at specific moments in history, some Jews are considered to be Western and others Eastern.

"Orientalism," as it surfaced earlier in our conversation, referred to a discursive formation wherein the East is discussed as fundamentally different, and as ultimately inferior to the West even when it is depicted as morally superior. The "East" is something of a shifter in the sense that it can refer to the cultural space of Asians or Muslims or Jews or a specific group of Jews. In what ways does the "Eastern-ness" of Chinese culture differ from that of Judaic culture? What does it mean to bring together, in the context of *85*, two of the cultures that the West has long conceptualized as Other? How does East-West uncertainty mark the project?

RM: In a sense, the Jew is a category that deconstructs the opposition of Orient / Occident. Kalmar and Penslar's discussion about the orientalization of Jews demonstrates not only the way the Jew is alternately cast out as Oriental or subordinated as Judeo-Christian, but the degree to which Jew is a category that doesn't fit into any classification or grid. The Jew undermines the boundary between East and West. Or I should say the Semite does, because the Islamic role in the foundations of so-called Western culture is equally troubling to the Greek-Christian construct. I'm thinking of the way the established histories of Western philosophy describe the Arab or Islamic era in the Medieval period as one of carrying Greek thought over to *Us* across this dark era (a sort of empty vessel). As though translation were a transparent medium. As though Islamic and Arab thought hadn't shaped any subsequent reading of Plato and Aristotle.

Europe has always had leaky borders. Hence, the relationship of Catholic Spain to its Arab past, to the Inquisition. The Jews, because of their homelessness, are especially slippery. Something like slime, a favoured metaphor of the Nazis to describe the Jews, a viscosity that gradually undermines the foundations of the edifice. If you think of the history of Jews and Jewish languages, the Sephardic, Marranos, Ladino, Yiddish; even the boundaries between languages are rendered fluid. The edifice of the nation-state begins to crumble when you accept the Jew within it. The most difficult thing to recognize is that Jewish thought is at the heart of Western civilization, so the latter becomes Oriental.

I guess, if we want to talk about Jews in China, we ought to begin by acknowledging their role during the colonial period, as merchants and bankers who moved in with the European powers and did very well in Shanghai. Sir Jacob Sassoon is as emblematic a figure of Jewish history in China as the later refugees from Germany, or the White Russians whose escapes led them through China. It seems that there is no face-to-face of Jewish and Chinese that isn't always already bound up in some way with the Western Christian. More of a triangle than a one-on-one. But that's more a characteristic of the ambiguous relationship of Judaism and the West. The Jew, even in Israel, which in the Zionist discourse was supposed to be a separate homeland, is always at least in part a Western identity.

Chinese cultural and philosophical history, like its language, remains relatively separate and outside Western history. In that sense, China is less of an ambiguous figure than the Arabic Orient described by Said. China (and the Chinese Empire) has its own philosophical, cultural history up until the 17th century. Which makes it a different sort of Other for the West, entirely outside and alien. The Chinese Diaspora resembles the Jewish one in many ways, but there are marked differences: skin colour, a large homeland with an enormous population. Racist stereotypes of the Chinese tend to stress the external threat and fear of numbers: hence, the Yellow Peril, the image of a horde overrunning the West.

LM: The Jewish-Chinese encounter also has a specifically Montreal context for me. (It must have many Montreal contexts, including Rue de la Gauchetière, site of the present-day Chinatown and trace of the old downtown Jewish district [Baker 45; Anctil, *Tur Malka* 67]). I have been reading some poems by Jacob Isaac Segal alongside those of A.M. Klein, specifically their poems about Montreal. Segal, who came to Montreal around 1911 in his late teens, writes in Yiddish so my access to his work is through the French-language translations of Pierre Anctil. Here again English is the odd one out. The face-to-face takes place on every page of the translation (Yiddish on the left using Hebrew, not Roman characters; French on the right) and the book is bound and paginated from right to left. I don't know how many times my eyes moved from bottom left to top right to read the same thing I had read a few minutes earlier before I became conscious of the act and adjusted *the way* I was reading.

One of Segal's poems written in the 1930s, "Alt Montreal" or "Vieux Montréal," begins with the old city, the streets "in disrepair," "each one a country in itself, a new face." The speaker compares his own neighbourhood around St-Urbain and Dorchester (René-Levesque) to "Meshbush" in Podolie, Ukraine (Anctil, "Glossaire" 150); and he likens the old women that pass him on their way to market to "illuminated *tkhines*," prayer books in Yiddish for women or those with less access to Hebrew (Anctil, "Glossaire" 152). Then the focus shifts to the Chinese quarter immediately "to the left" and to a young woman, "a piece of Peking," sorting goods in a store: tiny golden shoes for geishas, porcelain, jewelled birds, a bronze Buddha with a book on its knee — a book with a gold letter on its cover. For the speaker, Chinatown may be located "on

the grey edges of such a city as our Montreal" but it is a place that "opens to him." In the final stanza, church bells are ringing throughout the city "except in *this place* where another faith expresses itself"; the bells "pass over the rooftops of *this neighbourhood* like a flight of wild birds in a grey sky" (my emphases). Throughout the poem, Segal's speaker refers to the Chinese quarter in terms that could also apply to the Jewish quarter — to the point of describing the Chinese community as "a lost tribe." This slippage is facilitated by the contiguity of the neighbourhoods. This is not to say that the communities are interchangeable: in religious and cultural terms, they remain distinct; and the Chinese quarter, more than the Jewish quarter, is romanticized, apprehended through a list of exotic goods. But the emphasis of the poem is on parallels and similarities: both are characterized by women engaged in trade; both represent "old cultures" where the written word plays an important role; both are a long way from home (Meshbush; Peking) and, significantly, both differ from the Christian majority.

There are dramatic differences between Segal's poetics and those of the *85*s but I'm struck by the Montreal connection, by the sense of contiguity between Jewish and Chinese cultures, and by the focus on scripture and script. On first reading, I found it curious that Segal's poem, at the same time that it weaves a sense of *shared* religious difference, also orientalizes China, especially Chinese women. I associate the latter gesture with a process of othering — often, a process of othering that cannot acknowledge itself. Then I began to wonder if Segal's poem was not also signalling the Eastern-ness of his own community through the references to Meshbush, to Yiddish prayer books and to signs that the community is observant — the grey foreheads of the women, perhaps. (I'm unsure how to read the checked shawls of the women going to market — or, more generally, what to make of the construction of women in both neighbourhoods as objects or goods.) Perhaps Segal's poem participates in the idealization in the early twentieth-century of the *Ostjuden*, what Noah Isenberg characterizes as the construction of East European Jews as simple, virtuous and, especially in their manner of prayer, authentic, closer to their roots in the Orient.

We began our conversation with the question of reading aloud and, here, I find myself puzzling, in a different way, over *how to read* this poem. I'd be very interested in your sense of Segal's poem and of some of its stakes.

RM: The first thing that strikes me reading Segal's poem is the extensive orientalist discourse, golden shoes for tiny feet, exotic birds, calm Buddha, opium fumes, etc... And this, as you've pointed out, bound up with the objectification of women. On the other hand, it's interesting to see how Segal uses this Chinoiserie as a kind of metaphor for his own and his people's isolation in a predominantly Catholic city. Chinatown is a tiny brilliant corner on the edge of the grey robed city. So what is being deployed is not so much a face-to-face of the Jew and Chinatown, as the triangle of the Jew, the Chinese and the Christian community. Segal finds comfort in noting that the church bells don't penetrate the neighbourhood; they fly over like savage birds in a grey sky. So the Jew here sees in the Chinese ghetto a reflection of his own isolation. In spite of the exploitative nature of that gesture, there's also at least the ability to identify with the other's condition. I suppose there's a similar impulse behind my interest in China. And then there's the book in Buddha's lap and the golden letter slumbering there. In those three lines in the middle of the poem, there's the recognition of a common relationship to the written word, which is also at the heart of the *85* project. This poem is an excellent illustration of the difficulties of working in the intertext of the Jewish, Chinese and Western. A difficulty I feel strongly in the translation procedural performance of the *85*s.

LM: Finally, I'd like to go back to questions raised by Melina Baum-Singer and Lily Cho in their call for papers: about the relationship between the performance of poetry and the written text, and about the politics of the poetry reading as part of the public sphere. By placing the written text front and centre, in our face, *85* makes it difficult for us to conceive of the performance of poetry, the poetry reading, as something distinct from — or more immediate / alive than — the written text. Each of you is familiar with the poems and could read them in a fluid way, could render them orally / aurally in something called a performance. But this is not, if I have understood, the point of *85*. An *85*, whether it is installed in a museum or a shop window or on a page on a work table, draws attention to the performativity of reading. Reading is, in part, a process of recognizing and repeating relations, distinctions, protocols, conventions and so forth. In recognizing and repeating them, we give them the weight of naturalness — and we give ourselves the impression of *knowing how to read*.

I'm curious: how do you understand the politics of poetry reading as part of the public sphere? What does it mean, for example, to put Tang Dynasty Chinese based *85*s in storefronts in the Chinatown area and elsewhere in Calgary?

CH: We haven't moved yet to that very public of public spheres. We have just finished a one-day show of some of our ghost papers and larger paper works in the university's art museum. Such a venue is a far cry from a storefront downtown. And the people who came to our noon talk were profs, students and a few friends, some Chinese, some not. Even though many of them had never been to this particular museum and most are not I think avid museum-goers (no more so than myself), they are still not ordinary folks who shy away from contemporary poetry or visual art. The big test will be when the *85*s are experienced, for lack of a better word, by people other than our peers. For example, will people stop to decipher an *85* or two, or will they just glance at their visual construction?

Showing them hanging on walls has taught me a few things: first, that size and medium matter. In order to get people to read them, the *85*s have to be in a large format, at least as big as our paper ones which are 102cm x 41cm. I noticed that people waiting for the presentation to begin were attempting to read them. The ghost papers, on the other hand, looked beautiful hanging in a long row but are too small (15.7cm x14cm): people just walked by and glanced at them. I think the *85*s on ghost papers become works to be read only when they are held in the hand, or assembled in a book. They're more for private, individualized readings. I would therefore say that if we want to show the *85*s in a public space and have people play with them, then they must be in big font. Like dazibao.

I also think that hanging *85*s without projecting the video "Poets read *85*s" limits the chances of people interacting with the works. Once a person views the "poets" attempting to read an *85*, then she is more willing to try too because none of the poets are fluent, most of them laugh at the mistaken words they make (for example, "alas" instead of "a last"). If that's what being a poet reading is all about, then it's not so intimidating or boring. Anyone can be a poet like the child, the student or the recognized poet.

RM: In the case of the *85* project, the public reading is a matter of the public reading. The convention of the authority of the author reading, which is so pervasive is undone. Even the possibility of falling back on the translator as medium, bridge to an originary author is denied. The work, the poem, becomes a relation, a collective encounter between numerous participants.

For an audience listening to such a reading, the experience of language being deployed, the hesitations, enjambements, repetitions all serve to materialize the medium.

By hanging the *85*s in public places not specifically marked as art sites, we hope to escape the elitist stench of the museum, where the viewer expects to encounter works of complexity and originality. In the street, outside a storefront, we do not expect to speak art. At most, we expect advertising. Of course, we run the risk of the passersby ignoring the *85*, refusing to perform it, but that seems to me a fairer, more democratic relationship between art and consumer.

Our main reason for wanting to hang the *85*s in Calgary is simply because we find ourselves living here now. But it's also a city where the idea of art is particularly bourgeois. Now that the city has come of age, thanks to the flow of petrodollars, there's a sense that people feel a need to buy some culture, to fill a void and make Calgary complete. For the most part, this means importing prestigious art that sells well. I think a modest integrated project like the *85*s runs counter to the consumer art Calgary craves. I'm also curious to see how the works will be received and read differently in Chinatown and in other areas of Calgary. Chinese passers by can read the Chinese poem on their way to work. In a sense they can recognize the poem as theirs. The translation into 85 letters into English is like the difficulty of their encounter with the Western world. But the presentation of the unbroken words in columns introduces some familiarity. Perhaps readers of Chinese will be more critical of the translations, more demanding semantically. That would be interesting. For visitors of Chinatown, the hanging *85*s might, at first, be mistaken for Chinese decorations, calligraphy, or scrolls. But a second glance reveals a familiar alphabet, and might tempt a reading. The difficulty of reading the *85* becomes an enactment of the shift, the effect of Chinatown on the Calgarian's city. Outside Chinatown, the strangeness of the *85* would probably be immediately evident. It might be more easily identified as art. Still, art out of place. An event that draws attention. I hope we'll have the opportunity to test and explore these questions in practice.

CH: Yes, I've been thinking how wonderful it would be if we could hang the *85*s in large public places, like cafeterias and waiting rooms. Or trains and buses where all kinds of people hang out, have lots of time on their hands and not lots to do. In their humble little way, the *85*s are ludic. A game a little bit like anagrams or even spelling bees (the sound of someone working out the words). It's fun and serious and accessible to anyone who can read. And it demystifies (de-poeticizes) poetry. Of course, we realize it will be difficult to access such public places because, like galleries and museums, they are institutions that jealously guard their power of accreditation. You must have your *artiste* credentials before administrators and authorities will consider exhibiting your work, even in a public space; and then once the authorities have decided the *85*s may be suitable material say for a bus terminal, then very quickly you can be sure Robert and myself, would be superseded by artists with the correct pedigree to exhibit. Remember the poems in a bus experience? As I recall, the experiment was stopped because of arguments over how to decide who should be visible / legible, and for how long, and in what order. In fact the problem of selection in art galleries and museums has been largely reproduced in public spaces and even artist-run galleries.

I think, because the *85*s are not simply a public reading but also a visual exhibition, they run up against the problem of "public art," which is a well-guarded fortress. Still, we're moving in that direction, and into those choppy waters.

Claire Huot is a sinologis, author and novelist. A professor of Chinese language and culture, and Comparative Literature, she served as the Cultural Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy to the People's Republic of China in Beijing and is presently teaching Chinese Film at the University of Calgary. She is the author of *China's New Cultural Scene: A Handbook of Changes* (Duke University Press, 2000), and the novel *The Prison Tangram* (The Mercury Press, 2007).

Robert Majzels is a novelist, playwright, poet and translator, born in Montréal. His most recent books are the novels *Apikoros Sleuth* and *The Humbugs Diet* (The Mercury Press, 2007). He won Canada's Governor General's Award for translation in 2000, and has translated, with Erin Mouré, three books of poetry by Nicole Brossard. He is an Associate Professor in the English Department of the University of Calgary.

Lianne Moyes is Associate Professor of English at Université de Montréal where she specializes in Canadian and Quebec literature. She is editor of *Gail Scott: Essays on Her Works*, co-editor of *Adjacencies: Minority Writing in Canada* and, from 1993 to 2003, was co-editor of the bilingual, feminist journal *Tessera.* Her work on Anglo-Montreal writing has appeared recently in *Voix et images*, *Canadian Literature* and *Quebec Studies* as well as in the collections *Un certain genre malgré tout. Pour une réflexion sur la différence sexuelle à l'oeuvre dans l'écriture* (Nota Bene), *Language Acts: Anglo-Québec Poetry, 1976 to the 21st Century* (Véhicule) and *Trans.Can.Lit: Resituating Canadian Literature* (Wilfred Laurier UP).

WORKS CITED

Anctil, Pierre. "Glossaire." *Poèmes Yiddish*. By Jacob Isaac Segal. Trans. Anctil. Montreal : Noroît, 1992. 149-153.

---. *Tur Malka: Flâneries sur les cimes de l'histoire juive montréalaise*. Sillery QC: Septentrion, 1997.

Atlan, Henri. "Niveaux de signification et athéisme de l'écriture." *La Bible au present*. Ed. Jean Halpérin and Georges Levitte. Paris: Gallimard, 1982. 55-88.

Baker, Zachary M. "Montreal of Yesterday: A Snapshot of Jewish Life in Montreal During the Era of mass Immigration." *An Everyday Miracle: Yiddish Culture in Montreal*. Ed. Ira Robinson, Pierre Anctil and Mervin Butovsky. Montreal: Véhicule, 1990. 39-52.

Billeter, Jean François. *L'Art chinois de l'écriture*. Genève: Skira, 1989.

Caputo, John D. *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida.* Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1997.

Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass. *Marges de la philosophie*. 1972. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982.

Epstein, Perle. *Kabbalah. The Way of the Jewish Mystic.* Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1978.

Friedman, Shari Cooper. *J.I. Segal: Between Two Worlds*. M.A. Thesis. Department of Jewish Studies, McGill University, 1988.

Handelman, Susan A. *The Slayers of Moses*, *The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory*. Albany NY: State U of New York P, 1982.

Huang, Yunte. *Ethnography, Translation, and Transpacific Displacement: Intertextual Travel in Twentieth-Century American Literature*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: U of California P, 2002.

Huot, Claire. "Spinning Chinese Characters, Hebrew Letters, and Plain English: Robert Majzels's *85* Project." *Yishu—Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 5.2 (Summer / June 2006): 65-74.

Isenberg, Noah. "To Pray like a Dervish: Orientalist Discourse in Arnold Zweig's The Face of East European Jewry." *Orientalism and the Jews*. Ed. Ian Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar. Waltham MA: Brandeis UP; Hanover NH: UP of New England, 2005. 94-108.

Kalmar, Ian Davidson and Derek J. Penslar. Introduction. *Orientalism and the Jews*. Waltham MA: Brandeis UP; Hanover NH: UP of New England, 2005. xiii-xl.

Klein, A.M. "Diary (1945)." *Notebooks: Selections from the A.M. Klein Papers*." Ed. Zailig Pollock and Usher Caplan. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994. 95-98.

Majzels, Robert and Huot, Claire. *85,* unpublished manuscript, 2007.

Majzels, Robert. "Books from the Burning Building." *NO: A Journal of the Arts* 5 (Summer 2006): 46-56.

Majzels, Robert, and Huot, Claire. Five poems after Bada Shanren: "The Poet as Misshapen Melon, Painting Pliant Bamboo, How Did He End Up in the Land of Qin, Working the Plow, The Mushroom Withdraws Among the Roots." *Sleeping Fish* 0.875 (Summer 2006): page(s).

Majzels, Robert, and Huot, Claire. "After Du Fu, Lodging at the Magistrate's," "After Wang Wei, Deer Fence," and "After Li Bai, Knitting Socks." *fillingStation* 38 (Winter 2007): 7-9.

Majzels, Robert, with Claire Huot. "After Li He, Li Ping plays the Kong Hou." *Cipher* (Summer 2007). http://www.cipherjournal.com/html/majzels.html

Ouaknin, Marc-Alain. *The Burnt Book: Reading the Talmud*. Trans Llewellyn Brown. *Le livre brulé: Lire le Talmud*. 1986. Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1995.

Qian, Zhaoming. *The Modernist Response to Chinese Art: Pound, Moore, Stevens*. Charlottesville; London: U of Virginia P, 2003.

---. *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams*. Durham; London: Duke UP, 1995.

---, ed. *Ezra Pound and China*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2003.

Segal, Jacob Isaac. "Vieux-Montréal." *Poèmes Yiddish*. Trans. Pierre Anctil. "Alt Montreal." *Di drite sude*. 1937. 46-47. Montréal: Noroît, 1992. 120-123.

Zhou, Xun. "'The Kaifeng Jew' Hoax: Constructing the 'Chinese Jew'." *Orientalism and the Jews*. Ed. Ian Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar. Waltham, MA: Brandeis UP; Hanover: UP of New England, 2005. 68-79.

---

[i] For a description of the *85* project as well as for analysis of a number of *85*s, see Huot.
[ii] *Blends & Bridges* group Exhibition, curated by Bob Grumman, John Byrum and Wendy Collin Sorin, at Gallery 324, Cleveland, Ohio, USA, April 1-30, 2006