

Les traducteurs parlent aux lecteurs

**Ateliers « Traduire la contrainte »**



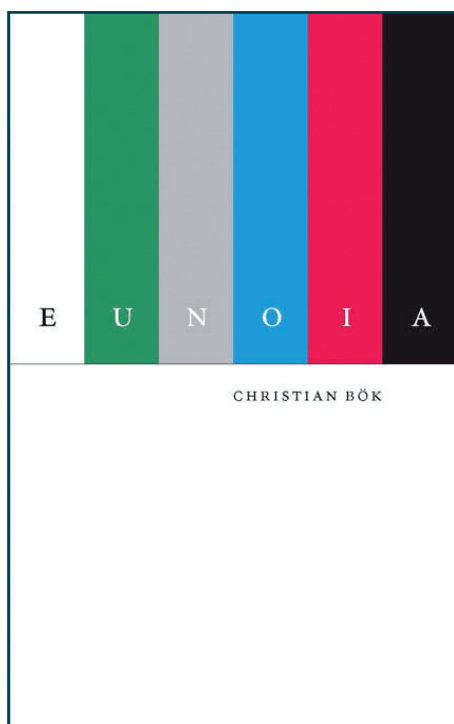
« Eunoia »

de Christian Bök (Coach House Book, 2001)

★ avec Antoine Cazé / Samedi 10 juin de 10h à 12h

SGDL- Hôtel de Massa

38, rue du Faubourg Saint-Jacques - 75014 Paris



## Chapter E To René Crevel

Enfettered, these sentences repress free speech. The text deletes selected letters. We see the revered exegete reject metred verse: the sestet, the tercet — even les scènes élevées en grec. He rebels. He sets new precedents. He lets cleverness exceed decent levels. He eschews the esteemed genres, the expected themes — even les belles lettres en vers. He prefers the perverse French esthetes: Verne, Péret, Genet, Perec — hence, he pens fervent screeds, then enters the street, where he sells these letterpress newsletters, three cents per sheet. He engenders perfect newness wherever we need fresh terms.

Relentless, the rebel peddles these theses, even when vexed peers deem the new precepts ‘mere dreck’. The plebes resent newer verse; nevertheless, the rebel perseveres, never deterred, never dejected, heedless, even when hecklers heckle the vehement speeches. We feel perplexed whenever we see these excerpted sentences. We sneer when we detect the clever scheme — the emergent repetend: the letter E. We jeer; we jest. We express resentment. We detest these depthless pretenses — these present-tense verbs, expressed pell-mell. We prefer genteel speech, where sense redeems senselessness.

Westerners revere the Greek legends. Versemen retell the represented events, the resplendent scenes, where, hellbent, the Greek freemen seek revenge whenever Helen, the new-wed empress, weeps. Restless, she deserts her fleece bed where, detested, her wedded regent sleeps. When she remembers Greece, her seceded demesne, she feels wretched, left here, bereft, her needs never met. She needs rest; nevertheless, her demented fevers render her sleepless (her sleeplessness enfeebles her). She needs help; nevertheless, her stressed nerves render her cheerless (her cheerlessness enfetters her).

Whenever Helen feels these stresses, she trembles. She frets. Her helplessness vexes her. She feels depressed (even when her cleverest beekeepers fetch her the freshest sweets). She feels neglected (even when her shrewdest gemseekers fetch her the greenest jewels). She regrets her wretchedness, her dejectedness; nevertheless, she keeps her deepest regrets secret. She never lets herself express her echt Weltschmerz. She never vents her spleen. She feels tense whenever she keeps her vehemence repressed; hence, she seeks lewd revelment (les fêtes de ses rêves), where revelers lend her cheer.

Whenever Helen dresses herself en fête, her sewn vestments reflect her resplendence. Whenever she needs new ensembles, her sempstresses sew her ten velveteen dresses, then hem her red checkered sleeves. Her jewelers bevel gems, then bejewel her scepter (l'emblème des régence célestes). Her eldest helpers preen her tresses; then her effete servers serve her dessert. The empress prefers sweetened preserves; hence, her serfs get her the best gels ever jelled: les pêches gelées — blended sherbet, served fresh. The scented dessert smells even sweeter when served ere the sweetness melts.