

Introducing Anthony W. Johnson

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I. Renaissance Man

In 2014 John Carey, sometime Merton Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford, described his own career and relationship with literature under the title *The Unexpected Professor: An Oxford Life in Books*.¹ Without underestimating Carey, it is easy to see that a book reflecting the life of Anthony W. Johnson must have a different sort of title. Johnson, too, is a professor who can spring surprises; he, too, read English at Oxford, and went on to do his doctorate there; and he, too, has spent much of his time with books, books of many different kinds and provenances. But he is not so much an Oxonian as a European, and has embraced, not only literature, but the arts in the broadest possible sense. As a connoisseur of music and poetry of all periods; as himself a recording violinist and guitar-player, a composer, and a promoter and accompanist of folk dance; as a champion – not less pragmatic than enthusiastic – of Irish culture in every aspect, prime mover, indeed, of the annual Irish Festival of Oulu; as himself a librettist and published poet; as an authority on relations between literature and architecture, between Shakespeare and film, and between early modern English theatre and its continental precedents; as a theoretician-cum-explorer of culture, whose hermeneutic circling never grinds to a halt at either the general or the particular; as a scholar who, to whatever he turns, brings a comprehensive grasp of relevant history, even undermining distinctions between history of the arts and history of science; and as the juggler who keeps all these, and other balls in the air at once: he is virtually beyond compare, at least in our own time. The best way to find his like is by returning to the period from which so much of his own thinking takes its impetus, the period admired for creators such as Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson, whose multivalent genii he has done so much to illuminate. A European polymath of his order, though never fully captured by a mere form of words, is nevertheless partly suggested by the phrase “Renaissance

¹ John Carey, *The Unexpected Professor: An Oxford Life in Books* (London: Faber & Faber, 2014).

Man". To draw on his own vocabulary, what we see in him is the Renaissance Man *resurfaced* in a later age.

For some present-day scholar-professionals, the number of different fields in which he has been active may give pause for thought. The twentieth century's institutionalization of literary and cultural studies within universities, publishing networks, career hierarchies, instances of assessment, scholarly associations, research facilities, and conference circuits led to huge improvements in scholarly workmanship, but often at the price of an intense specialization. This in turn resulted in many relatively small expert groupings, between which dialogue could sometimes be hard to initiate and sustain, so that potential linkages and more comprehensive perspectives fell into the shadow, as the pace of cross-fertilization generally slackened. Instead, there was a new trend towards holistic interpretations, such that a cultural artefact was seen as having just a single main significance under which its every feature could be tidily ranked. The New Critics' preoccupation with imaginatively organic wholes was merely one of many approaches in which anything not covered by the particular scholar's specialism was steamrollered out. Johnson, by contrast, has been nothing if not professional, nothing if not a specialist, producing a wealth of scholarship of the very highest standard, yet has been professional within many different specializations at once, which he has juxtaposed in lively conversations.

This way, he has been able to throw light on abundant different forms of human creativity. And the contrast with some other modes of study has been particularly striking in the pleasure he has taken here. Sometimes students of literature and culture have seemed to assume that pleasure and study are mutually exclusive – as if pleasure were personal and private, and scholarship impersonal and public. So while the new historicists and cultural materialists of the 1980s and 1990s presented a timely challenge to the earlier literary formalism, they were in danger of distorting certain kinds of historical reality, by down-playing the way cultural artefacts are created and received by real people, ignoring, in particular, pleasure's constitutive role: the fact that a poem, say, cannot be studied *until* it has been enjoyed, since, prior to that, scholars cannot fully know what they have before them. Compared with paradigms within which pleasure is so subordinate, Johnson's approach feels richer and more meaningful. From his first major publication onwards, although he has obviously dealt with historical and political contexts, his primary focus has been not, or not only, on politics, economics, and power, but on questions of cultural forms and aesthetics, with their full hedonic and even spiritual connotations. His delight in literature and culture is always that of a profoundly thoughtful artist.

In fact he studies and enjoys many different things at once, and for many different reasons. For him there is no one dominant kind of pleasure. The pleasures he pinpoints in a Jacobean masque are on a par with his enjoyment of countless different things as well – for starters, of music, architecture, geology, chemistry, mathematics, digital humanities. To switch for a moment from the early-modern precedent to a Romantic one, his case exactly illustrates what Wordsworth called “the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which ... [man] knows, and feels, and lives, and moves”, the principle which, to continue with Wordsworth, propagates all our sympathies and knowledge. “We have no knowledge, ..., no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone.”² In Johnson, the Renaissance Man’s polymathic knowledge is deeply joyful knowledge, and therein truly human.

His omnivorous, pleasure-driven curiosity has often made him partial to – among the countless other things – a change of scene, but also to memories of scenes, and to scenes revisited. During his Oxford years he was a member of Oriel College, and before that had grown up within the sound of the bells of Canterbury Cathedral, and close to the King’s School, Canterbury as well. In later life, based in Finland, he has often returned to re-assess those English cities and institutions, as their significance for him has continued to grow, partly in step with his own research interests. One of his projects has been an edition of *Fasti Cantuarienses*,³ a long and virtually unheard-of poem celebrating Canterbury Cathedral, written in 1670 by the Cathedral’s Dean, John Boys, who also happened to be patron of the little nearby church in which Johnson himself got married, a circumstance which prompts him to record, perhaps with an echo of Boys’s contemporary Sir Thomas Browne, that “a modicum of research suggested that I had even spoken my marriage vows standing on his [Boys’s] bones.”⁴ He also aims to set up an open-source digital database of the so-called *Orationes* manuscript,⁵ a large and hugely important collection of speeches and plays delivered and performed during the Restoration period by pupils at the King’s School, Canterbury. As for his movements and allegiances within

² William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. with introduction, notes and appendices by R.L. Brett and A.R. Jones (London: Routledge, 1968), 248.

³ John Boys, *The Fasti Cantuarienses of John Boys: A Seventeenth-Century Poetic Guide to the History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. Anthony W. Johnson (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, forthcoming).

⁴ Anthony W. Johnson, “Laudianism and literary communication: The case of John Boys’s *Fasti Cantuarienses* (1670), in *Literary Community-Making; The dialogicality of English texts from the seventeenth century to the present*, ed. Roger D. Sell (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2002), 37-73, esp. 39.

⁵ Lit. MS E41, Canterbury Cathedral Archives.

Finland, where he arrived in 1984, he has kept a base in Åbo, the cradle of civilization on the southwest coast, but has also regularly traversed the distance, both geographical and mental, to the more northerly Oulu and its energetic newness. Correspondingly, whereas for one of his earlier collaborative projects he immersed himself in Nordic traditions of ecclesiastical music going back to the early middle ages,⁶ for his current digital humanities projects he cheerfully throws himself into state-of-the-art high technology, having understood its special potential for opening history up – the *Orationes* project is again a clear example. Or to take another kind of dichotomy, he has very much thrived in Swedish-language environments, but has been just as much at home with Finnish. His experiences of all such locational and civilizational contrasts have clearly helped to fuel his theories of place and time and culture.

Thanks to his versatility in another of its modes, he easily adapted to our own time's career patterns – to contemporary ways of accomplishing the worthwhile things he has had in mind. As an Oxford undergraduate he won both the Bishop Frazer Prize and the Sir Walter Raleigh Essay Prize, and took his bachelor's degree with first class honours. As a doctoral student he knew how to draw on the wisdom of distinguished supervisors such as John Bamborough, Anne Barton, John Creaser, John Pitcher, and Emrys Jones, and his dissertation was eventually published by the prestigious Clarendon Press.⁷ By that time he had already been recruited to Åbo Akademi University, where he was subsequently appointed to a tenured position as Senior Lecturer. During the 1990s the same university called him to further responsibilities, as locum tenens Associate Professor, as Research Leader, and as locum tenens Professor. Then after a year as Senior Researcher with the Academy of Finland, and having been made a Docent by the University of Turku, a title later awarded by both Åbo Akademi University and the University of Oulu as well, in 2003 he was appointed Professor of English Philology at the University of Oulu, where between 2006 and 2009 he served as Head of Department, charged with implementing the Bologna reform of university curricula. After another spell as Senior Researcher with the Academy of Finland, that same body appointed him

⁶ Anthony W. Johnson, "Levity and Gravity: Ben Jonson and the Crisis of the Image," in *Signs of Change: Transformations of Christian Traditions and Their Representations in the Arts, 1000-2000*, ed. Nils Holger Petersen, Claus Clüver and Nicolas Bell (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2004), 51-67; "Alconomy, 'Maria in Sole' and the Fifteenth-Century Imagination," *Transfiguration: Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kunst & Kristendom* 3, no. 2 (2004): 7-25; "Music, Religious Experience and Transcendence in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Beautie*: A Case Study in Collaborative Form," in *Voicing the Ineffable: Musical Representations of Religious Experience*, Interplay: Music in interdisciplinary dialogue, ed. Siglind Bruhn (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995), 71-96.

⁷ A. W. Johnson, *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

Director of the *Orationes* project. Then in 2011, he returned to Åbo Akademi University as J.O.E. Donner Professor of English Language and Literature. In that capacity he has built up a fine record of doctoral supervision, and taken on numerous expert consultancies, plus several leadership roles, for instance as President of the Finnish Society for the Study of English (2010–13), and also of the Nordic Association of English Studies (2010–15). In 2015, he was elected as a Foreign Member of the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters.

II. Scholar

Turning now to his scholarly activities in somewhat more detail, his main preoccupation during the 1990s was with inter-arts approaches to English literature of the early modern period, and particularly to Jacobean and Caroline poetry, drama, and masquing. As was noted by several reviewers, his doctoral thesis, which when published by the Clarendon Press in 1994 had the title *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture*, got him off to a flying start.

In any account of early Stuart literature, the poet, dramatist, and masque-writer Ben Jonson (1572-1637) is bound to be a major figure. But Anthony W. Johnson's book about him offers nothing less than a total re-appraisal, backed up with formidable learning, presented with great tact and elegance. Its focus is on the structures underlying the encomiastic poetry and the early court masques, which it elucidates in terms of Ben Jonson's own affinities with traditional numerological thinking, with Vitruvian architectural principles as championed by Palladio, and with the aesthetic sensibility of the Counter-Reformation, the contribution of which to the ostensibly Protestant ambience of the Stuart court should not be underestimated. Against this background, which the book illustrates with a wealth of detail from classical and European vernacular literatures, from philosophy, and from the history of art, architecture, spectacle, and music, the centred form of Ben Jonson's poems of praise emerges with startling clarity, as also do the precisely calculated proportions of the early masques, here helpfully charted and diagrammed so as to make the number thinking "visible". Granted, the experience of walking through a Palladian building is not exactly the same as that of reading a poem by Ben Jonson, or of witnessing one of his masques, and Anthony W. Johnson is the first to admit this. When it comes to intertextualities that are more out-of-the-way or controversial, similarly, he makes no attempt to bludgeon his own readers into submission. But neither does he need to, since his findings clearly highlight something that, for Ben Jonson's contemporaries, was really *there*, as the language of their comments often revealed. For them, what gave a special weight to

Jonsonian poetic structures was their perceived correspondence with the architectonics of God's created universe. And in opening up that distant thought-world, Anthony W. Johnson is doing much to foster understanding and enjoyment among readers of the present day. At the same time, his final pages also catch the pathos of an era in eclipse. In some ways Alexander Pope, the great English poet of the early eighteenth century, would still belong to the same line as the early and middle Ben Jonson. But whereas Inigo Jones, the "Palladio" of English architecture, and Ben Jonson's great collaborator in masque-making, continued to reinforce both the Palladian aesthetic and his own position at court, Ben Jonson fell out of favour, turned towards Protestantism, and began to struggle with mathematical and cosmological propositions that were new and disconcerting. By the same token, the forms of his writing changed, and in doing so influenced many successors.

Anthony W. Johnson's next book was *Three Volumes Annotated by Inigo Jones: Vasari's Lives (1568), Plutarch's Moralia (1614) and Plato's Republic (1554)*,⁸ in which he further develops some of the themes of *Ben Jonson and Architecture*. Displaying scrupulous palaeographical finesse, he not only transcribes Jones's glosses on the three volumes in question, but also uses some datable changes in Jones's handwriting as an index to his process of self-education. This the book unfolds in a richly detailed introductory essay and extensive commentaries, which make still clearer the nature of the partnership between Jones and Ben Jonson. Despite tensions, for over two decades their cooperation was enormously fruitful. Then they patently did go their separate ways, but even though they had long been travelling through what, in general terms, was the same mental space, their individual trajectories had in truth been different all along. Jones's initiation into Vitruvianism was fundamentally experiential. During his early years in Venice, Vitruvianism was all around him in the most physical sense. It was only considerably later that he reached a deeper understanding through reading and study. Ben Jonson, by contrast, was more bookish from the start, and in his own writing bodied forth an ideal which, for him, had always had a strong theoretical foundation. *Three Volumes Annotated by Inigo Jones*, in expounding both this and other relationships, pays attention to significant minutiae and overall bearings alike, so placing Jones in a Renaissance context of considerable depth. For any serious student of the period's architecture and/or literature, it soon became essential reading.

⁸ A. W. Johnson, *Three Volumes Annotated by Inigo Jones: Vasari's Lives (1568), Plutarch's Moralia (1614) and Plato's Republic (1554)* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi University Press, 1997).

By the end of the twentieth century, Johnson had also started to publish in the form of essays, articles, and review articles, genres which he immediately made his own. Some items gave further scope to his interest in Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, for instance as regards their religious sensibilities and their fellowship or (was it?) rivalry as artists.⁹ Another piece ingeniously took advantage of the English Poetry Database, as a way of exploring both the serious and less serious uses made by Renaissance English poets of images and ideas relating to the game of tennis.¹⁰ Other pieces, however, went back to the Middle Ages, for instance to grapple with an Old English riddle,¹¹ while others moved smoothly on towards the present day. One of these was a pictorially well-illustrated rehabilitation of mediaeval and early modern alchemy, as an approach to human life and the world of nature which was intellectually serious and spiritually satisfying, and which, partly by evoking familiar religious imageries, survived the rise of modern science, to become suggestive for twentieth-century figures such as C. G. Jung and Gaston Bachelard.¹² Another time-travelling exploration finds similar counter-currents to modern reason in the Gothic novels of pre-Romantic and Romantic writers such as Walpole, Lewis, Mary Shelley, and Maturin.¹³

In the new millennium, Johnson has continued his studies of Ben Jonson, taking up texts ranging from the early comedy *The Case Is Altered* of 1598 to *The Masque of Augurs* of 1622,¹⁴ by which time Ben Jonson was achieving his greatest triumphs at court. But as during the 1990s, he has also been interested in other writers as well, some of them from other periods, and now

⁹Anthony W. Johnson, "Inigo Jones, Annotation and Literary Collaboration: An Overview," in *Husse Papers 1995: Proceedings of the Second Conference of HUSSE*, ed. György Novák (Szeged, 1995), 54-77; Johnson, "Music, Religious Experience and Transcendence".

¹⁰Anthony W. Johnson, "Tennis in Early Modern British Poetry," in *Language, Learning, Literature: Studies Presented to Håkan Ringbom*, ed. Martin Gill et al. (Åbo: ÅA English Department Series, 2001), 215-45.

¹¹Anthony W. Johnson, "Unriddling," *Hus* 1 (Åbo: ÅA English Department, 1988): 20-22.

¹²Johnson, "Alconomy".

¹³Anthony W. Johnson, "Gaps and Gothic Sensibility: Walpole, Lewis, Mary Shelley, and Maturin," in *Exhibited by Candlelight: Sources and Developments in the Gothic Tradition*, ed. Valeria Tinkler-Villani and Peter Davidson (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1995), 7-24.

¹⁴Anthony W. Johnson, "Humanized Intertexts: An Iconospheric Approach to Ben Jonson's Comedy, 'The Case is Altered' (1598)," in *Humane Readings: Essays on Literary Mediation and Communication in Honour of Roger D. Sell*, ed. Jason Finch et al.

(Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2009), 31-48; Anthony W. Johnson, "Ben Jonson's Eirenic: The Case of 'The Masque of Augurs' (1622)," in *Religion and Writing in England 1558-1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory*, ed. Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 169-93.

including well-known figures such as Shakespeare,¹⁵ James Shirley,¹⁶ Francis Thompson,¹⁷ Gerard Manley Hopkins,¹⁸ and Paul Muldoon,¹⁹ but also the aforementioned John Boys, whose *Fasti Cantuarienses* he has sought to rescue from total oblivion.²⁰ In addition, much of his time has gone to the *Orationes* project.

Especially noteworthy in all this have been developments of the time-travel modality he had already applied during the 1990s, not only to alchemy and the Gothic novel, but also, in *Ben Jonson and Architecture*, to all the similarities and differences between the historical life- and thought- and art-worlds of Vitruvius, Palladio, and Jonson-&-Jones. Despite his Renaissance Man's formidable variety, what we see here is a basic continuity which runs throughout his scholarly oeuvre, albeit a paradoxical continuity, of course, whose unifying principle is precisely of movement, difference, and change. Over the past twenty years or so, his susceptibility to these dimensions has been his main hallmark as a scholar, leading to a conscious theory and practice that now seem fully-fledged.

What his detailed analyses of English-language authors have steadily put in place is a discipline of cultural imagology based on a notion of iconosphere, an intellectual achievement that is one of his greatest claims to fame, and certainly the one with most potential for studies of literature and culture internationally. Imagology, as the etymology (“*imago* + *logus*”) suggests, is the study of words “about” images and of images “about” words. But whereas the Dutch historian Joep Leerssen and his colleagues have restricted imagological study to examining stereotypes of various countries' national characteristics,²¹ in Johnson's hands imagology is altogether broader and less political in orientation, serving, rather, as a kind of

¹⁵Anthony W. Johnson, “Imagology, Literature, and the Writing of History: Shakespeare's *Tempest* and the Iconospheres of *Prospero's Books*,” in *Imagology and Cross-Cultural Encounters in History* (‘*Studia Historica Septentrionalia*’ 56), ed. Kari Alenius, Olavi K. Fält and Markus Mertaniemi (Rovaniemi, Finland: Pohjois-Suomen historiallinen yhdistys, 2008), 9–24.

¹⁶Anthony W. Johnson, “Contingencies of Time and Place: A *Contention for Honour and Riches*, James Shirley, and the School Community,” in *Community-Making in Early Stuart Theatres*, ed. Roger D. Sell, Anthony W. Johnson and Helen Wilcox (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 363–92.

¹⁷The topic of a recent conference paper, soon to be published.

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¹⁹Anthony W. Johnson, “The Adoration of the Maggot: A Muldonic Coronation,” in *The Crossings of Art in Ireland*, ed. Ruben Moi, Brynhildur Boyce and Charles I. Armstrong (Bern: Peter Lang), 261–93.

²⁰John Boys, *The Fasti Cantuarienses*; Johnson, “Laudianism and literary communication”.

²¹See Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen, *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters: A Critical Survey* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007).

service discipline for the arts, which it contemplates as rooted in society, geography, and history.²² In order to bring such an imagology's multifarious findings into some sort of order, he has taken over the term "iconosphere" from the Polish art historian Jan Białostocki.²³ In Johnson's conceptualization, iconosphere is a kind of convenient hold-all, containing within itself the entire "image world shared by a culture at a particular time: a world of possibilities embodied for us in the pictures, statues, graffiti, music, or texts (in other words, the surviving *realia* of a historical moment or period)," from which writers and other artists "have drawn and shaped their materials."²⁴

Other important terms here are "imagemes", "avatars", and the previously noted "resurfacing". This is where some time travel comes in, since, taken together, these three terms can help discuss what Johnson calls the "afterglow" of a writer's reception over succeeding generations. The term "imageme" is borrowed from Joep Leerssen. But whereas for Leerssen it denotes, in keeping with his general approach to imagology, "the bandwidth of discursively established character attributes" concerning a given *nationality*,²⁵ for Johnson it tends to cover established character attributes of a given *author*, so that, while Leerssen's argumentation typically takes the form "Nation X is a single nation made up of contrasts", Johnson's point is more likely to be that "Author X is a single author made up of contrasts". Then the term "avatar" is his label for any *aspect* of an author's imageme that is fairly stable and seems to operate within the culture more or less independently. As for "resurfacing", it highlights the fact that aspects of a particular cultural epoch, as for instance the imageme or one of the avatars of a particular writer, can reappear during a later epoch. Sometimes the whatever-it-is will seem to pop up of its own accord, so that the verb grammar of "resurface / resurfacing" will be intransitive, perhaps suggesting agency in the whatever-it-is itself. In other cases the grammar will be transitive, perhaps suggesting a certain passivity in a whatever-it-is whose re-emergence has been positively triggered by particular circumstances or factors, which Johnson may want to investigate. And when he himself edits and discusses a writer as utterly passive and forgotten

²² Anthony W. Johnson, "New Methodologies: Imagology, Language, and English Philology", in *Linguistic Topics and Language Teaching*, ed. Harry Anttila, Jolene Gear, A. Heikkinen and Riitta Sallinen (Oulu, Finland: University of Oulu, Language Centre, 2006), 10, 15–16. For a useful survey of imagology, see Johnson's "Notes Towards a New Imagology", *The European English Messenger* 14.1 (2005): 50–58.

²³ Johnson, "Notes Towards a New Imagology".

²⁴ Johnson, "Humanized Intertexts," 31-48, esp. 32.

²⁵ Joep T. Leerssen, "The Rhetoric of National Character: A Programmatic Survey", *Poetics Today* 21 (2000): 267-292, esp. 279.

as John Boys, his own scholarship becomes an agent of transitive resurfacing. His scholarship (*subject*) seeks to resurface (*transitive verb*) Boys (*object*).

Then there are the terms “portability” and “metamorphosis”, which, in Johnson’s hands, again have to do with time-travel. More exactly, they indicate the kind of relationship that arises between a particular text and the particular contexts of temporal, geographical, and cultural contingencies within which it is being read or re-read, performed or re-performed. A text is “portable” when, having been transferred, with no significant revisions, from its original context of first production and reception to some new context, it still communicates fairly adequately. That is to say: despite any inevitable small shifts in evaluation, perception, or emphasis, it can be carried over from the earlier context to the later one without much difficulty. “Metamorphosis”, by contrast, is what happens when a text, in order for it to be unproblematically transferred from an earlier context to a later, has to be radically re-written.

One last term is “chronomorph”, which relates to time travel in a slightly different way. This is Johnson’s label for what comes about when somebody such as the writer of a history play, for instance, actively transfers a web of ideas and relations from one iconosphere to another. When writers, within the iconosphere of their own present, offer representations of earlier iconospheres like this, the past is, to however small an extent, adapted so as to suit new circumstances and intentionalities. The past comes to be seen in a way that it was *not* seen by people at the time.

Thanks, not only to its intrinsic power, but also to the pedagogical skill with which he has explained it for different audiences, Johnson’s theorization and practice of time-travelling cultural imagology has proved seminal, both for other scholars world-wide, including some of those contributing to the present *Festschrift*, and for scholars-in-the-making. On the one hand, the essay on Ben Jonson’s comedy *The Case is Altered* has a level of historical detail and theoretical sophistication that is aimed at established scholars. In Anthony W. Johnson’s reading of the play, no fewer than five different iconospheres become manifest within and around one and the same work. These iconospheres are associated with (1) Plautus, (2) the Italian wars of 1510-1516, (3) the “original” *Case is Altered* of 1597-1598, (4) the revised *Case is Altered* of c. 1603, and (5) the year 1609, when the revised version was printed. And in point of fact, the first and second iconospheres here (the Plautine and the Renaissance Italian) are chronomorphs – representations of those earlier times by Ben Jonson’s play in its own present or, rather, in its successive presents.²⁶ On the other hand, Johnson has also written about

²⁶ Johnson, “Humanized Intertexts”.

imagology in a lucidly popularizing magazine article.”²⁷ In this short piece he pointed the way for a generation of his own doctoral students in Åbo, who have applied imagological thinking to life-writing, to early modern literature, to post-apocalyptic science fiction, and to journalism and politics in contemporary Zimbabwe. How lucky these young people have been to have had a supervisor so purposefully flexible!

Johnson’s thoughts about time-travel have now led to an attempt to create, with the help of lexicographers and information engineers, a “time machine”. When it has been perfected, this ingenious software tool will find and analyse textual traces embedded in iconospheres, pinpointing any given text’s consubstantiality with some precise moment of culture. This it will do by way of mapping fictional representations of history against lemmas in historical dictionaries.²⁸

Another kind of collaboration has been with Roger D. Sell, his predecessor as Senior Lecturer and J.O.E. Donner Professor of English Language and Literature at Åbo Akademi University. In particular, he has made some important contributions to Sell’s project on literary communication,²⁹ co-editing two of the project’s major publications, *Religion and Writing in England, 1558–1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory* (2009) and *Community-Making in Early Stuart Theatres: Stage and Audience* (2017),³⁰ and writing a number of essays in which literary-communicational considerations and his own theory and practice of cultural time-travel are strikingly married.

One essay shows how cultural memories of Ben Jonson have lived on into our own present.³¹ There is still, then, a powerful Ben Jonson image. More exactly, the image is made up of a fair number of different takes on Ben Jonson that have come down to us, some of them more historically based, some more fanciful, but all of them now to a greater or lesser extent culturally stable: Ben Jonson the patriarch, the European, the Londoner, the poet, the playwright, the artisan, the soldier, the duelist, the *bon viveur*, the invalid. There are also, then,

²⁷ Johnson, “Notes Towards a New Imagology”.

²⁸ Anthony Johnson, Ilkka Juuso, Marc Alexander, Tapio Seppänen and Lisa Lena Opas-Hänninen, *Time and Text: Cultural Imagology, “Big” Data and The Scottish Historical Novel* (Roskilde, Denmark: Eyecorner Press, forthcoming).

²⁹ For a selection of the literary communication project’s publications, see p. 000, fn. 00 below.

³⁰ Roger D. Sell and Anthony W. Johnson, eds., *Religion and Writing in England 1558–1689: Studies in Community-Making and Cultural Memory*. (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009); Roger D. Sell, Anthony W. Johnson, and Helen Wilcox, eds., *Community-Making in Early Stuart Theatres: Stage and Audience* (London: Routledge, 2017).

³¹ Anthony W. Johnson, “Ben Jonson and the Jonsonian Afterglow: Images, Avatars, and Literary Reception,” *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 6, no. 2 (2007): 145-72.

these different Jonsonian avatars – different traces of Ben Jonson’s “often gloriously uneven character and output”, which, as it happens, comfortably accord with present-day notions of the fragmented or divided self.³² The essay traces how the different avatars arose in the first place, how they continued to develop over the years, and how at given points of time they interrelate with each other, one or more of them gaining a stronger social currency while others become more secondary, and some of them even contradicting each other. But what the analysis especially highlights is not unbridgeable gaps but continuities, within a large and diverse literary community that sustains its communication – sustains its potential for community-making, in the Sellian-Jonsonian understanding of “communication” – across four centuries.

A second essay is the one about Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Augurs*.³³ This strongly emphasizes the connection between that masque’s artistic and intellectual sophistication and a dense historicity. Both the text and its manner of performance reflected an eirenic mode of thinking which ran from the Emperor Maximilian to Rudolph II, and which also underlay the foreign policy of James I, the masque’s chief addressee. At this particular point in time, James was hoping, against the odds, to avert the threat of war by somehow reconciling his dynastic allegiance to the Protestant Palatinate with the diplomatic necessity of a Catholic alliance. And James’s role in *The Masque of Augurs* as Jove’s “Prince of Peace”, ratified by the auguries of a pre-Christian pantheon before an audience which included both the English court and the Spanish ambassador, was Ben Jonson’s own last-ditch attempt to forge an eirenic sense of community, an ideological effect intended to superimpose itself on the gathering actually present within the masquing hall, and to be achieved through the invocation of a Graeco-Roman poetic “priesthood” and its rituals, as a counterweight to doctrinal differences within the real audience. On the other hand, if this was to have anything like the desired effect, such appeals to shared learning needed to be carefully filtered and channelled. To generalize, the fewer different things literary communicators try to hold in common with their addressees, the larger will be their community-making reach. And vice versa.

A third essay takes its starting-point from Graham Parry’s suggestion that much English poetry, architecture, and music of the mid-seventeenth century reflects the high-Anglican sensibility of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 to 1645. According to Parry, it makes sense to speak of a Laudian aesthetic.³⁴ Among commentators loyal to more

³² Johnson, “Ben Jonson and the Jonsonian Afterglow,” 171.

³³ Sell and Johnson, eds., *Religion and Writing in England*.

³⁴ Johnson, “Laudianism and literary communication”. See Graham Parry, *The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation: Glory, Laud and Honour* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006).

established culture-historical labels, Parry's idea has met with considerable opposition, the main problem being that, even though some sort of Laudian style may have been on the periphery of many artists' repertoires, there was no major poetic, architectural, or musical representative in whom Laudian traits were central. As noted, Johnson's prime exhibit, John Boys's *Fasti Cantuarienses* (1670), has itself remained almost unknown. But what he argues is that a "Laudian" reading of it certainly can open up an extensive, though long since overshadowed mid-seventeenth-century literary community. By exploring the reading history of both Boys himself and his assumed readers, by relating their high-Anglican royalist politics to their particular tastes in classical poetry, antiquarian writings, topographical poetry, and devotional texts, the essay fleshes out the iconosphere of a writer and potential readership who really do corroborate Parry's proposal. And in point of fact, the time-travelling Johnson even finds a resurfacing of the Laudian aesthetic, when, in 1838, a long poem entitled *The Cathedral* was published by the Tractarian Isaac Williams.

A fourth essay deals with *A Contention for Honour and Riches*,³⁵ a brief morality-style interlude by James Shirley, who could have got his pupils to perform it during the period 1621-1633, when he was a schoolmaster in St Albans. Subsequently, a text of the play was included in the *Orationes* manuscript of the King's School, Canterbury, where it could have been performed by pupils during the headmastership of George Lovejoy, for instance in the year 1678. Certainly, portability to 1678 from the 1620s or early 1630s would not have been a problem. On the contrary, in a Restoration grammar school this play would have worked "particularly well ... because the new age (having been ushered in by what for a relatively large number of the population must have felt like a rather unexpected return to monarchy) allowed for the resurfacing of its value systems in a sympathetic setting."³⁶ During the intervening years of the Commonwealth period, by contrast, the same text's portability would have been altogether lower, and Shirley's own response to the then current regime was angry and embittered. So what did he do? By 1658 or 1659 he had metamorphosed *A Contention of Honour and Riches* into a new text entitled *Honoriam and Mammon*. He spoke of this as his last drama for professional performance, and made sure that it registered a strong protest against the Commonwealth establishment. As Johnson puts this, the society it portrayed was "rendered dysfunctional by the uncontrollability of individual desire."³⁷

³⁵ Johnson, "Contingencies of Time and Place".

³⁶ *ibid.*, 388.

³⁷ *ibid.*, 388.

At points like this, commentaries by Johnson derive a valuable balance from his principled refusal to reduce literary activity to politics. His historical knowledge is simultaneously too vast and too intimate to allow such dehumanizing simplification. More typical of *his* historicism is his tactful warning that political distinctions can sometimes be taken too literally – that a dramatist who satirizes powerful audience members, for instance, will not necessarily alienate them, and may even “foster complicity rather than hostility.”³⁸ Obviously, Shirley’s sympathies were Royalist. But all sorts of different people, with all sorts of different experiences of temporal and local contingencies, were Royalist, too. So much so, that Royalism cannot ultimately be studied in the abstract. In a certain setting, literary texts from an earlier period will indeed either have or lack political portability, or can indeed be metamorphosed in response to new political circumstances. But one of Johnson’s key insights is that portability and metamorphosis are processes involving not only history in a general sense but also the personalities and decisions of individual humans

Having reached the age of sixty, he seems more assured in his imagological theory and practice than ever, but also more versatile than ever. One minute, he is forging ahead with his interests in school life and pedagogy during the Restoration period.³⁹ The next minute, he is developing a theory of place and non-place, partly in response to the French anthropologist Marc Augé.⁴⁰ Nor will he ever detract from either of these topics, or from any other topics, by attempting a fusion between them. Rather, he will continue to develop his expertise on topics of all kinds so that, if and when any two topics do enter into dialogue with each other, it will be on an equal footing.

One of his latest essays, for instance, reactivates his long-standing knowledge of Renaissance architectural theory and practice, and of its significance for the masterpieces of Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, but also brings in some of those more recent thoughts about place and non-place. His overall aim here is to gloss what he detects in Shakespeare as a relative abstention from early modern kinds of architectural language and imagery.⁴¹ Pointing to *Othello* and *Julius Caesar*, he shows that Shakespeare actually steered away from the more “realistic”

³⁸ *ibid.*, 371.

³⁹ Most recently Aleksi Mäkilähde, Tommi Alho, Anthony W. Johnson, “Performative Grammars: Genre and Allusion in a Restoration Manuscript,” *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 117, no. 2 (2016): 315–44.

⁴⁰ Anthony W. Johnson, “No Place Like Home. Marc Augé and the Paradox of Transitivity,” in *Non-Place. Representing Placelessness in Literature, Media and Culture*, ed. Mirjam Gebauer et al. (Aalborg: Aalborg University Press, 2015), 69–94.

⁴¹ Anthony W. Johnson, “Shakespeare, Architecture, and the Chorographic Imagination,” *Shakespeare* 13, no. 2 (2017): 114–35.

forms of architectural representation favoured by Ben Jonson.⁴² Deciding against the increased “fixing” of space afforded by new scenographic developments, Shakespeare opted for a more flexible and suggestive *mise-en-scène*, which in its own way made the most of a still fairly bare stage. Basically, his method was to work towards an imaginative agreement with his audience as to what they were actually looking at, by “thickening” a play’s spatialities through writing that was empathetically humanizing. In particular, he saw to it that buildings were perceptible, less in terms of architectural physicality, than of associated memories and emotions. Such clusters of feelings that accrete, and go on accreting, to imagined materialities of brick and stone and mortar help to explain the self-resurfacing down the ages of *Macbeth*, for instance, a play whose humanized buildings have fed into some of those ominous edifices in Gothic novels, and into castle chronotopes elsewhere as well.

In this concluding leap into time travel, the new essay confirms earlier clues, already partly noted, as to the ethical dimension of Johnsonian imagology. The essay’s greatest service is not only to suggest the potential for physical-human oppositions in literary and cultural criticism more generally, but also to illustrate the care with which they need to be applied. There is not the slightest hint in Johnson’s argument that lavish Victorian stagings, with their vast hordes of actors, spectacular pageantry, and realistic mediaevalism, were necessarily degenerate. Nor would he claim that the empty stage of Beckett is *per se* restorative. Instead, he takes every destination to which he time-travels on its own terms, and regards the cultural moment to which he and his own achievements belong, not as an Archimedean point outside of history, not as a Whiggish or Hegelian grand finale, but as one iconosphere among an unending array of others. Although he of course has personal tastes and preferences, he never becomes their advocate, respecting, rather, his own reader’s freedom, and joyfully dialogizing many different forms of human creativity.

An account of his scholarship could almost end here. But throughout his career he has undertaken one particular type of scholarship which calls for special emphasis: the task of textual editing. Early on there was his edition of Jones’s annotations of Vasari, Plutarch, and Plato. Then, for the prestigious Malone Society series, there was an edition of *The Country Captain*, a comedy by Ben Jonson’s friend and patron William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle.⁴³ More recently there has been the edition of John Boys’s *Fasti Cantuarienses*. Currently,

⁴² See also Anthony W. Johnson, “Urban(e) Visualization in Early Modern Drama: Ben Jonson’s ‘Spectral Cities’,” *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 17 (2018): 25-73.

⁴³ A. W. Johnson (ed.), *The Country Captain, by William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle*, Malone Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

Johnson and his colleagues in the *Orationes* project are editing the Restoration school plays from King's School, Canterbury. Looking ahead, he will be contributing to the edition of the complete works of Shirley to be published by Oxford University Press; he has been appointed co-editor of *Love's Cruelty* and overall editor of Shirley's many Grammars.

In all his editing, the standard of palaeographical, bibliographical, and general textual expertise is very high. But the further point to register is that an edition by Johnson not only makes the work in question available in a reliable text, but also is exciting *as an edition*. No less than in everything else he turns his hand to, he takes pleasure in editing, and that pleasure comes across, contributing to the enjoyment of the edition's users. Editing can, of course, be a laborious business. But an edition by Johnson is a labour of love, and this applies both to the more technical aspects of the task, and to his provision of introductions and commentaries. In the superbly detailed discussions of the attribution of *The Country Captain* to Cavendish, and of the choice to be made between the two potential copy-texts, there is a satisfying mix of editorial boldness and discretion, while the commentary on *Fasti Cantuarienses* is that of a meticulous historian who has his own memories of Canterbury Cathedral, who as a child accompanied his mother when she guided groups of tourists around its many tombs and monuments, "prepped to prompt her should she forget her lines",⁴⁴ and who since then has spent much time re-tracing those same steps, and burrowing in the rich cathedral archives.

In short, his editions confirm the general picture. Without exception, across its entire, Renaissance Man's range, his scholarship offers knowledge which, to echo Wordsworth again, has been built, and which exists, by pleasure alone. The personal involvement is unmistakable – well controlled and seldom explicit, but always appreciable. As his own self-conscious wording states the issue here, "an act of [scholarly] self-positioning is clearly a two-edged sword: smacking (on the one side) of the partiality of the 'enthusiast' even though (on the other) it does offer a frank admission of the fact that no scholarly endeavour, however much it strives to be dispassionate, can ever actually be so."⁴⁵ On the one hand, his striving to be dispassionate makes his writing unpretentiously dignified, and its dialogicalities all the more buoyant. On the other hand, his passion is actually inexhaustible, and makes for life and liveliness.

III. Inspiring Colleague

⁴⁴ Johnson, "Laudianism and literary communication," 38-39.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 39.

The essays presented in this volume are the work of colleagues who, in their different ways, have been inspired by his writings, and who also count themselves lucky that his scholarship has not been the fruit of reclusive self-withdrawal. Nobody works harder. But for him, work is indistinguishable from play. He wears his learning lightly, and is a friendly companion, giving and taking enjoyment wherever he goes, usually equipped with fiddle and guitar. The volume, then, is a communal token of heartfelt gratitude, admiration, and affection.

The essays take up topics directly related to his own interests, tastes, and achievements, and are sequenced according to a scheme which replicates the range of his own temporal affiliations. Part I of the book pays tribute to his strong grounding in English literature and culture of the seventeenth century, and to his own profile as Renaissance Man resurfaced. Part II welcomes the opportunities he has opened up for imagological time-travel to other periods as well, not least the Victorian. Part III celebrates his importance, both as scholar and artist, for the present day.

In the first contribution to “Part I: The Seventeenth Century”, Roger D. Sell highlights some particular features of his work, but is mainly responding to its overall ethos. When Anthony W. Johnson meets Ben Jonson, what we see is two Renaissance Men, both of them artists, both of them polymathically learned, and both of them taking pleasure in their own creativity and knowledge – and Anthony W. in the creativity and knowledge of Ben as well. Both of them, too, are exemplars of Humanist conviviality, for whom *symposion* – the coming together with like-minded friends over well-chosen food and drink – is one of the things that makes life worth living. Sell suggests that Ben Jonson’s epigram “Inviting a Friend to Supper” anticipates such salutary delights through the pleasures it offers as a poem, both the formal pleasures of its similarities to, and differences from, poems written earlier within the same cultural tradition, and the explicitly dialogical pleasures arising from Jonson’s ironic handling of the relationship between himself and his learned friend and addressee. One of Sell’s main points is that both the formal and the explicitly dialogical pleasures are *immediate* pleasures, arising as soon as the text is read, and that critics who spurn the kind of literary appreciation once practised by Dr. (Samuel) Johnson, Addison, George Saintsbury, or John Bayley have tended to undervalue them.

The second essay in Part I, by Elizabeth Sandis, meshes with two of Johnson’s main seventeenth-century interests: stage productions of all kinds; and Humanist ideals and practice in the field of education. More precisely, it deals with George Wilde’s play *Eumorphus sive Cupido Adultus*, first performed at Oxford on 5th February, 1635. Sandis not only offers a close reading of Wilde as a writer of Latin, but also explains the value system according to which his

play, and especially its portrayal of the *miles gloriosus* Polymachaeroplacides, would have been judged by the first spectators. Strongly foregrounding the university ambience within which it was written and performed, Sandis sees *Eumorphus* as a prime example of the Oxford and Cambridge “degree play” of this period. As such, it can profitably be compared with other works by university playwrights, whereas early-modern plays produced under different circumstances would not have worked in quite the same way.

The third essay in Part I is by Tommi Alho, a colleague of Johnson’s in the *Orationes* project. Moving on from the time of Ben Jonson and George Wilde, Alho discusses pre-university education and academic drama during the Restoration period. The *Orationes* manuscript is one of the most substantial unpublished sources here, containing speeches and plays in English, Latin, and Greek which were delivered and performed by the pupils of King’s School, Canterbury during the headmastership of George Lovejoy (1665-1684). The plays fall into four sub-genres according to the occasion of performance: Lent, Charles II’s birthday, the anniversary of the Gunpowder plot, and Christmas. And Alho’s most important observation is that many of the texts began life as compositions by the pupils themselves, whose study of classical languages and literature involved a whole regime of written exercises, beginning with letter-writing and themes, and later proceeding to orations, declamations and verse composition. Previous historians’ attempts to describe this kind of curriculum have mostly drawn on printed materials such as educational treatises, school syllabi, teacher’s manuals, and school books. But although such materials certainly offered schoolmasters plenty of advice, they give no clue as to how the advice was actually taken. The *Orationes* manuscript, by contrast, provides one of the very few testimonies to real schoolroom practice. Closely studying the relationship between this grass-roots evidence and early-modern educational theory, Alho lays particular stress on the classroom oration as a way of combining rhetorical training with a grounding in Humanist ethics.

The fourth and final essay in Part I is by Adam Borch, who studies John Sheffield’s *Essay upon Poetry*, a poem written in the spirit of Horace’s *Ars Poetica* and first printed in 1682. Although Sheffield’s potential readership was not mainly in universities and grammar schools, he still had Humanist educational ambitions, being interested in the relationship between learning and classical literature in the public realm more generally. Similar differences of addressivity were of course in Anthony W. Johnson’s mind when he was writing, not only about Shirley’s school play *A Contention for Honours and Riches*, but also about the way Shirley metamorphosed it into a play for an adult theatre audience. As it happens, Sheffield’s poem did not clearly specify its addressee in the manner of many other instructional poems, and

could actually seem to be catering for readers of two different kinds: those who already knew the rules of poetry, and those who did not. On the whole, though, his aim was clearly to entertain *less* knowledgeable readers, and to advise them on where they could look for help and inspiration in the classics, and on how to raise their own general level of cultural literacy. And what particularly interests Borch here is the question of communicational ethics. In a nutshell: was there a risk that the readers Sheffield was trying to enlighten would find him offensively superior? Borch's conclusion is that Sheffield, despite some fairly conventional notions of pedagogy, tried to generate feelings of solidarity and camaraderie – feelings, we may reflect, not unlike those aroused by Ben Jonson's invitation to a Humanist symposium.

“Part II: Time-Travel” opens with an essay by Bo Pettersson. Having first acknowledged his indebtedness to Johnson's studies of word-image relationships in different social, geographical, and historical settings, Pettersson draws particular attention to Johnson's essay on the Old English riddle no. 86 in the Exeter Book. This is his prelude to some time-travelling of his own. What he offers is an imagological discussion of riddles in general, as a mode which goes all the way back to Indo-European literature, and which still crops up within a variety of literary genres even today. His prime exhibits are literary versions of the riddle of the Sphinx from three very different cultural moments: in Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus the King* (c. 429 BC), in Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem “The Sphinx” (1841), and in Adam Roberts's novel *Bête* (2014). It turns out that, in trying to understand the Sphinx's character and her relationship with her interlocutor, the answering of her riddle is merely the first step. In fact the understanding finally arrived at comes about in different ways, and to different effect, from one iconosphere to another. At the opening of *Oedipus the King*, the protagonist has already solved the riddle, and it is the play's own action that then goes on to suggest the insufficiency of this. Emerson's way of exploring what human beings can and should know is to construct a dialogue between the Sphinx and a Poet figure. And Roberts, arranging his novel according to the three phases of the Sphinx's riddle, investigates what it means to be human by bringing in animals and objects that are primed with artificial intelligence. All three texts scrutinize both riddling itself as a phenomenon, and the way its abiding ontological and epistemological fascination plays out within their particular iconospheres.

The second essay in Part II is by Juha-Pekka Alarauhio, who discusses Matthew Arnold's epic poem *Sohrab and Rustum* (1853), so travelling to a mid-Victorian iconosphere. Yet at the same time, Alarauhio's argument strongly recalls Johnson's recent essay on Shakespearian spatiality as an aspect of the early modern iconosphere. As noted above, Johnson's main finding here is that stagings which lacked material realism could nevertheless

be truthful, by investing places and buildings with significant human memories and emotions. In contextualizing Arnold's imitation of Homer, Alarauhio in effect describes a resurfacing of that earlier physical-human opposition, triggered now by an aesthetics of the spectacular that could cope with Victorian advances in the field of visual technology: the magic lantern, the stereoscope, the peepshow, the panorama, the diorama, the Cosmorama, and the Eidophusikon. Spectacular stage productions, illustrated magazines, and photography were all part of the same trend, fuelling a veritable frenzy for the visible. Nor, at the time, was this frenzy thought to be particularly self-indulgent or superficial. On the contrary, realistically accurate visuality was widely thought to offer a serious and faithful representation of the truth, a view endorsed, not least, by poets, as when Arnold famously praised Homer for having composed with his eye on the subject. In trying to heighten the painterly qualities of his own *Sohrab and Rustum*, however, Arnold began to have his doubts. He was no longer really sure that its manifold visual details, its scenes with vast hordes of people, its depictions of grand, exotic landscapes, were ultimately truthful. Tellingly, the poem's own plot revolves around *mistaken* perceptions. Its tragic ending stems from a father's failure to recognise his own son – what he actually sees lets him down. Throughout, the underlying irony seems to be that any objectified vision of truth is in the end barren, unless accompanied by empathy and imagination.

In Part II's last essay Jason Finch, too, travels back to the nineteenth century, in a discussion of *The Nether World* (1889), the last of George Gissing's so-called slum novels. Some earlier critics have described it as naturalistic urban fiction at its most dreary and depressing. Finch, however, admires it for documenting physical aspects of cities which, not accessible through other forms of writing, can best be appreciated by a poly-sensory criticism. Still more to the point, Finch also finds strong elements of comedy. Here, like Pettersson, extending his time-travel back over three millennia, he shows that Gissing resurfaces comic sub-genres whose roots go back to classical antiquity, the middle ages, and the eighteenth century. Especially noteworthy, he suggests, are an element of comic hyperbole, a harsh, even cruel kind of joking, a pervasive black humour, and an overall comic structure. In Finch's view these features, when assessed by readers reading within more recent and, indeed, current iconospheres, entitle Gissing to praise as a "serio-comic" writer, who in this novel offers a good example of the Rabelaisian carnivalesque as resurfaced by Bakhtin.

"Part III: The Present" opens with an essay by Bent Sørensen on the English singer-songwriter Nick Drake. By the time of his death in 1974, Drake had been more or less forgotten. Yet he was a sensitive artist, whose lyrics produced a highly personal image-world out of an otherwise conventional repertoire of rivers, moons, and the natural world in general. More

recently he has been rediscovered – resurfaced – more than once, and his songs are now especially popular with a youngish audience, for whom his enigmatic lyrics are the perfect narcissistic mirror for their existential angst. As a result, several biographies and documentary films have been produced about him, each with its own narrative and interpretation of his life, death, and legacy. And what specially interests Sørensen is that new recordings of his songs have re-situated him and his image-world in our time’s larger iconosphere, the kind of adaptation which Johnson describes as a *chronomorph*, and in which Sørensen himself sees the operation of collaborative icon-work. One case in point is a Volkswagen commercial which uses, and misreads, Drake’s “Pink Moon”. Another is a jazz music video by Till Brönner for his version of Drake’s “River Man”, which adds substantially revised images to Drake’s original ones. Such *chronomorphs* significantly change the way Drake is perceived, adding to his imagological longevity.

The second essay in Part III, by Claus Madsen, is inspired by Johnson’s discussion of Paul Muldoon’s collection *Maggot*, and particularly of Muldoon’s resort to a form of sonnet in combination with an ekphrastic element.⁴⁶ By way of comparison, Madsen takes up the contemporary Scandinavian iconosphere, within which poems in general are tending to get longer again, and, more particularly, the Danish poet and visual artist Morten Søkilde has created his twinned collections *Pan, en fabel & Landskaber* (2007),⁴⁷ the first of them a sonnet corona, and the second a group of modern poems, but both of them brought together by a translucent film and two similarly formed poetry-photography ekphrases. Pointing out some of the main differences from older kinds of long poem, Madsen finds in Søkilde’s work an avant-garde ideal of perfection. This, though, does not involve the kind of text-masses which critics have sometimes labelled as postmodern. Rather, the clearest way to see what is at issue is by submitting *Pan, en fabel & Landskaber* to what, taking a hint from Johnson, Madsen calls a post-Renaissance reading.

In the third essay of Part III, Steen Ledet Christiansen takes up Johnson’s instance that images really make a difference in our lives. His suggestion is that they actually have a kind of agency. To illustrate what he means, he points to Sean S. Baker’s film *Tangerine* (2015), which in telling a story of transgender love relationships both uses and abuses a number of images that are more or less stereotypical. The shooting of the film, however, was entirely done with iPhones, a new media technology which significantly affects the way we see things, offering

⁴⁶ Johnson, “The Adoration of the Maggot”.

⁴⁷ Translatable as “Pan, a fable & landscapes”.

new kinds of sensory clue as to how a story, or life in general, can be read. As a mnemonic for his discussion, Christiansen offers the morpheme “trans”. Images have agent-like *transitivity*. What they do is to *translate* something into something else. And in this particular example, the thing that is imagologically translated is *transgender*, a phenomenon which after *Tangerine* is open to new perceptions.

The book’s final essay, by Stuart McWilliams, brings this introduction full circle to Johnson’s Renaissance Man versatility. Appropriately, McWilliams’s witty “Interlude” addresses him with a friendly warmth reminiscent of Ben Jonson’s epigram. Yet like the other contributors to Part III, McWilliams stresses, too, that Johnson is very much a presence in our current moment. The essay’s starting-point is his extraordinary performances on solo violin and guitar as augmented by self-recording. Here he holds his own with Till Brönner, Morten Søkilde, and Sean S. Baker, forging a new artistic mode that embraces the technological developments of our own time. But then again, his recording apparatus did not arrive as lightning from a clear sky, but has its own place in a long tradition of invention and experiment, accompanied by metaphysical rationalizations which have ranged from the seriously philosophical to spiritualist humbug. In recalling this colourful prehistory, McWilliams appeals to Johnson as an artist who knows precisely where his own contribution makes its impact, and whose constant self-re-enactments release still more creativity. In all of which, it can be noted, there are, characteristically, matters of both head and heart. As Johnson profits from his studies of earlier cultural epochs, his understanding of his own bid to change our iconosphere now is all the more joyous.