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Abstract. While it is quite possible that Un Coup de dés served Huidobro directly as a formal, thematic and linguistic model for Altazor, the essential connection between the two poems lies in a parallel effort to repeat the act of the original Creation. To this end, both rely on basic archetypal patterns, resulting in parallel thematic development. These archetypal patterns are created not only thematically, but also linguistically. The fall, destruction and resurrection of Adam and Orpheus is simultaneously the fall, destruction and resurrection of language. Huidobro has taken up the challenge of Mallarmé to spin out of nothingness the abyss, the primordial sea of potential in which all reality is dissolved, another constellation/poem, which is at once the same and unique, another configuration of the eternal Poem: a parallel Orphic explanation of the earth. Both poems push language to the outer limits in an attempt to return to the original, Edenic language—the language of Adam and of Orpheus. (NBM)

Numa and the Nature of the Fantastic in the Fiction of Juan Benet
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Abstract. Perhaps the most rewarding critical approach to the novels of Juan Benet is one that encompasses the irrational and seeks to reveal the mysterious—one that can be closely identified with the notion of the fantastic. The view of the fantastic developed in the present study is based on a synthetic modification of the precepts of Todorov and Rabkin, and places emphasis on the hesitation of the reader when confronted with a diametric reversal of the laws of the text. Both the literary theory and prose fiction of Benet can be closely linked to the fantastic: the former through Benet’s focus on narrative uncertainty and ambiguity; the latter in a variety of important ways, but most pervasively through the character Numa.

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Numa recurs throughout Benet's fiction as an enigmatic and superhuman figure. He at once conforms to and transgresses the norms of the text, and inspires reader hesitation in the face of the marvelous. Through him Benet reifies many of his theoretical tenets, and also shapes the specific nature of his fantastic world. (DKH)

Writing as a Magician's Game:
The Strange Early World of Christoph Meckel
Heidi M. Rockwood

Abstract. The contemporary German author Christoph Meckel often introduces into his early short stories the metaphor of "playing a game" for creating a literary work. The paper investigates how Meckel uses this metaphor, what types of games he plays with the reader, and what kind of a world he creates through those games. On the basis of four short stories it suggests the conclusion that Meckel often introduces dangerous overtones and consequences, even though he likes to present himself as a happy and harmless storyteller, and that his stories share many characteristics with dreams and nightmares. Nevertheless, such game-playing is an important and positive activity, for it fulfills a definite social purpose. In the longer story "In the Land of the Umbramauts" Meckel describes a society in which the ability to play creatively has been lost. While the Umbramauts are not totally to blame for this situation, theirs is described as a society without hope. Despite the possible dangers inherent in play, Meckel seems to warn us: it is far more dangerous not to play, since it may lead to the loss of our basic humanity. It is a warning that he himself has heeded: his works continue to confront the reader with the elements of play and surprise. (HMR)

Circumscription: Proust's The Captive and the Problem of Other Minds.
Carol de Dobay Rifelj

Abstract. Central to Proust's Remembrance as a whole and to The Captive in particular is Marcel's attempt to discover what other people think and feel. But, as reading the work in the light of modern analytic philosophy shows, his efforts are thwarted by the deceptions of others and by his own irreconcilable views. The other is radically inaccessible, yet the object of our search; the self is a stable entity, yet multiple, changing, and a fiction constituted by language; language is communication, yet the source of error. These are the problems which confront philosophy and literature when they try to come to terms with the otherness of others. (CDR)
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