ecliptical

Hazel Smith

Ecliptical

Ecliptical is a collection of poetry that fuses the personal and political and addresses many ethical, psychological and philosophical issues relevant to contemporary life. These range from surveillance, fake news, racial discrimination, environmental degradation and homelessness to family secrets and tensions, the role of private and public creativity and the enigma of time. The volume evokes iconic topics such as the Berlin Wall, Covid 19, Trump and Brexit.

Ecliptical continues Hazel Smith's long-standing interest in formal experimentation, computational text strategies and intermedia. It includes different types of prose poems and poetic prose; discontinuous poems; poems built on synaesthetic effects and linguistic play; 'bullet point' poems in which each line brings a different observation or insight; dialogue poems and poems with two columns; poems that take material from the internet and sometimes employ google 'cut and paste' strategies, and poems with documentary elements. One of the unusual features of the volume is the inclusion of some computer-assisted poems and computer-generated texts that were made in collaboration with Roger Dean using 'deep learning' (machine learning) techniques. These techniques create, at their most extreme, a form of posthuman language. Throughout, the poems explore different kinds of voice and sometimes aspects of performance. The Notes section of the book includes URLs to associated audio and multimedia collaborations; these URLs take the form of interactive links in the e-book.

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Ecliptical is divided into six sections. These sections are diverse stylistically but are broadly thematically organised. They also overlap because most of the pieces are multi-thematic. The first section, 'is my microphone on?', contains many poems that allude to the act of writing or the appreciation of poetry, from the problem of 'fake' writing or forgery to a satirical questionnaire that treats the poem as an easily assessable commodity. These poems also link writing to the fragility of subjectivity. The second section 'not for the delicate' is more overtly orientated towards social and political problems. It includes poems that address the ethics of violence when used to political ends, truth-telling in the Trump Era, the problematics of democracy, the environmental damage caused by bushfires and the plight of the homeless. Section 3, 'Elliptical Orbit', investigates different kinds of relationship from personal relationships –and the doubts, misinformation and ambiguities they bring with them – to the virtual relationship between author and reader. Section 4, 'passport without destiny', centres mainly on cultural difference and cultural values. It visits the locations of Argentina, Turkey, Kenya and Canada, includes texts about migration, racial discrimination, surveillance, and also includes poems about the Covid-19 pandemic. Section 5, 'an ear, not a mouth' is mainly about women, creativity and age. In Section 6, 'time unzipped', many of the poems allude to different perspectives on time and the passage of time. Sometimes time is linked to sonics, such as in the sounds that bombard us chaotically throughout the day and knocks of foreboding on the door.

Hazel Smith is a poet, performer and new media artist. She has published five volumes of poetry including *The Erotics of Geography: poetry, performance texts, new media works*, Tinfish Press, 2008 (with accompanying CD Rom); *Word Migrants*, Giramondo, 2016 and *Ecliptical*, Spineless Wonders, 2022. She has also published two CDs of poetry and performance work and numerous collaborative multimedia works, including *motions* – with Will Luers and Roger Dean – selected in 2016 for the *Electronic Literature Organisation Collection 3*. She is a member of austraLYSIS, the sound and intermedia arts group; has performed and presented her work extensively internationally; has been commissioned by the ABC to write several works for radio and has been co-recipient of numerous Australia Council for the Arts grants. In 1992 the ABC nominated her collaboration with Roger Dean, *Poet without Language*, for the prestigious Prix Italia award. In 2017, her multimedia collaboration with Will Luers and Roger Dean, *novelling*, was shortlisted for the Turn on Literature Prize, an initiative of the Creative Europe Program of the European Union. In 2018 *novelling* was awarded First Prize in the Electronic Literature Organisation's international Robert Coover Award.

From 2007 to 2017 Hazel was a Research Professor in the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University where she is now an Emeritus Professor. She is the author of several academic and pedagogical books including *Hyperscapes in the Poetry of Frank O'Hara, difference, homosexuality, topography*, Liverpool University Press, 2000; *The Writing Experiment: strategies for innovative creative writing*, Allen and Unwin, 2005 and *The Contemporary Literature-Music Relationship: intermedia, voice, technology, cross-cultural exchange*, Routledge, 2016. With Roger Dean she co-authored *Improvisation, Hypermedia and the Arts since 1945*, Routledge, 1997 and co-edited *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009. She is a co-editor with Roger Dean of the creative arts journal of online sound, text and image, *soundsRite*, based at Western Sydney University. Hazel previously pursued a career as a professional violinist. Her website is at http://www.austraLYSIS.com