

A Note on Process

I began to delete words from Kurt Waldheim's memoirs in the autumn of 2003, hoping, for reasons beyond me, to discover something like poetry hidden within his book.

About two years later – (and after several false starts) – I had gleaned the sequence of propositions that make up “Book One” of *Voyager*.

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The following winter, I decided to selectively erase a fresh copy of Waldheim's book, from beginning to end.

This time I unearthed the prose narrative of “Book Two.”

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Late in the summer of 2007, I began this process once again.

The allegorical journey of “Book Three” was completed two years later.

For lack of a better word, I think of each book of *Voyager* as an “erasure” of Waldheim’s memoirs:

Step One

I would read ahead through Waldheim’s text, underlining or circling words that might be worth preserving for my poem.

Step Two

I then deleted language from the book, like a government censor blacking out words in a letter from an internal dissident.

I did not allow myself to insert any of my own language into the poem, and I have not altered the original order of Waldheim’s words.

Step Three

But I did cover my tracks, closing up the spaces between Waldheim’s unerased words – (except in Chapter 15 of “Book Three,” where I left the lacunae visible) – and introducing both punctuation and lineation to make the poetry legible.

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The accompanying documents will provide an illustration of this process for anybody who might find such matters to be of interest.