



Over the years, I'd developed an overall structure. It would take the form of an initial body being gradually dismembered to nothing.

THE FIRST would construct the themes, archetypes, subjects, style, and atmosphere of the whole. **THE FIRST** would be the body, and the succeeding could only consist of its material.

Each succeeding one's form would reflect the damage caused by the violence of the previous. The damage would destroy some material in the previous and make it unavailable for use. It would also shuffle the material, bringing certain material to the foreground and relegating other material to the background.

Parallel to this dismemberment in stages, structure would be a mirrored structure where the first would seem to gradually move through a mirror and eventually, over the course, become a backwards reflection of itself. This would create the effect of a kind of magic trick, which would lend it a mystical, charismatic quality, as well providing a very strict, formal structure.

This strict structure combined with the more instinctive, chaotic dismemberment structure, would give it the dual qualities of excessive form and improvisational looseness. Each would employ these dual structural principles within its own form. These contradictory structuring principles would reflect and elucidate the central contradiction in the work, and in my own psyche.

George would be the central character, but, because of the effect of the mirroring structure, he would mutate, subdivide, and shift from one identity to another to suit each novel's central purpose, then gradually reformulate into George by the final one, while always retaining his general appearance and emotional/psychological make up.

With that premise of five in mind, I'd decided that each of the middle three would concentrate on one of the ways in which I viewed my subjects.

THE SECOND would prioritize the libidinal, sexual, erotic appeal.

THE THIRD would prioritize my emotional response.

THE FOURTH would prioritize the cerebral, intellectual, and analytical.

THE FIFTH would present what remained after all of the examination, trickery, and damage of the central three novels, creating the first's decimated, resolved twin.

So the task of writing the first was to both realize all these predetermined notions while creating a body with enough material within it to sustain what would follow. Just before I started writing the first one, I became very ill. I assumed it was merely fall out from all the drugs I had been doing, but as I started writing, I felt worse and worse. I could barely move. I really thought I was dying. I was massively sick and literally could not get out of bed for weeks. I lay there and worked day and night. After a few weeks I could stand up and take a few steps, but it was another month before I was able to do more than walk a block or two without becoming completely exhausted. I wrote all the time and I finished after about six months of nonstop, intensive work. I had completed the first part of a project that I had dreamed of writing since I was a teenager, and I had set my course as a writer for the next eleven years of my life.

I always thought of it as being a series and I always thought of it as being one work. The whole is structured as one being slowly dismembered down to nothing.

I had a sense of them structurally, but I didn't have a sense of what each would be about. I knew that everything I had to use had to be in **THE FIRST** in some way and that this one would be the body of the work and that was what I would use for the rest of the series.

Each is a stripping away, until you get down to the last one and there's nothing left but this skeletal thing.

I had this idea that the form of each would reflect the damage caused or the activities specifically that had gone on in the one before. So each one determined the one that followed it. All have exactly the same structure, which is this kind of mirror.

There's a lot of violence in **THE FIRST**, so **THE SECOND** to me was a very damaged, maimed body. I was thinking of it as a body and as a dismembered body. It was a version of that severely damaged or maimed body. In pieces.

THE THIRD was kind of an attempt to take it and let it have a normal life. It was this attempt to let it find love and give it a chance or give it some hope. And then **THE FOURTH**, again, reflected the damage in **THE THIRD**.

In **THE FOURTH** there's almost nothing left of the body by that point. It's this really fucked up sparse body and then there's the mind desperately overcompensating for the fact that there's not much there physically. That's why **THE FOURTH** has so much analysis and digressions and thinking trying to hold it together into something that's whole by connecting it through all these justifications and analyses.

The last one, **THE FIFTH** follows and there's nothing, just a skeleton or a zombie left because there's so much damage done to it by that point. It is structured like a maze or a house of mirrors. There are these illusions of worlds that are created, with secret passages and spaces.

Everything is a reflection of everything else and ultimately makes everything else disappear. Everything is just a reflection of a reflection and there's nothing really there except maybe this kid who committed suicide and some writer who can't get over that.

When **THE FOURTH** came out I accidentally found out George killed himself even before I started writing them. So that dictated the last one for me.

At the end of all this, there's this guy who killed himself, who's the most important person I'd ever known, and then I didn't even know who he was anymore because he was so lost to me.

That's why I think the last one has a weird, sad hollowness to it. The person I was speaking to isn't there, so maybe that's why its attempt to communicate is so hampered by form. I think that's why it communicates in such a peculiar way. It doesn't know who it's talking to anymore. That's why it is barely there at all.

I said it makes itself disappear. Maybe that's why it's a suicide note.

Dennis Cooper was fifteen when he met George Miles, the twelve-year-old brother of a friend. They immediately became very close and maintained their deep love and friendship after George developed a severe bipolar disorder in his early teens and went through periods of serious depressions, manic episodes, suicide attempts, and occasional institutionalizations.

In the early 80s, when they had been out of touch for two years, Dennis Cooper began to write a cycle of novels in tribute to George, known as the *George Miles Cycle* and consisting of the novels *Closer* (1989), *Frisk* (1991), *Try* (1994), *Guide* (1997), and *Period* (2000).

Cooper hoped George was aware of his project and believed he would eventually try to get in touch with him to tell him what he thought. But in 1997, after publishing the fourth novel in the cycle, he found out that George had committed suicide ten years before. The fifth novel, *Period*, therefore was written with the awareness that George

was no longer alive and would never read the cycle attributed to him. The first time I became aware of the cycle was through an article in *Artforum* on the sculptor Patrick Hill, written by Bruce Hainley. He wrote:

“From the last decade, the most demanding critique on sculpture is Dennis Cooper’s *Period* (2000). Dedicated to Vincent Fecteau, the novel becomes a meditation on form in the face of death, which is also to say, on the form of the face of death—facing beyond’s effacements. An older artist figure, Bob (like the text, which ends by returning to its start, disappearing Möbius-ly into itself, his name is palindromic), has reconstructed an ‘average, citified house . . . in a completely impractical spot,’ and painted the inside ‘wild black’—‘zip, inkiness’—so that shadow swallows any hole, corner, or corridor. Bob’s unhomely sculpture, a memorial for a lost beauty, is a portal to the unspeakable—or not: Bob tells one of the look-alikes he fucks: ‘It’s just a house painted black inside .

. . . but as far as you’re concerned it’s art.’ In the novel’s remains, Cooper spatializes desire and mourning, positing absence (the ‘meaning’ to keep watch over) as a viable dimensional form with which to struggle against the unknown.”

Dennis Cooper has given numerous interviews throughout the years, many of which can be found on the Internet. In the interviews Cooper speaks about his personal experiences with love, drugs, literature, and writing, often coming back to George Miles. He speaks about how he combines a desire to reflect his personal struggles and obsessions with a formalist approach, resulting in novels with a highly constructed language and structure, often dealing with violence, sex, drugs, love, and teenage boys.

“So in my work you have this very simple kind of prose that’s been toyed with until it hopefully conveys a more complex relationship to what it’s describing than it has the right and/or ability to con-

tain. [...] My sentences tend to be very plain and clear and, at the same time, kind of compacted with this weird aspiration to fulfill the requirements placed upon them by emotions and ideas that they’re incapable of transmitting.”

(DC in an interview with Robert Glück, *Narrativity*, Issue 3: http://www.sfsu.edu/~poetry/narrativity/issue_three/gluck.html)

The texts on the posters are two cut-ups/adaptations of a text from, and an interview with Dennis Cooper about the five books in his *George Miles Cycle*.

The original text “DC on the George Miles Cycle” can be found on Dennis Cooper’s website: <http://www.denniscooper.net/georgemiles/dcongmc.htm>

The interview seems to have been removed from the Internet.

Falke Pisano

This Paper is based on two posters by Falke Pisano, focusing on Dennis Cooper's implosive pentalogy of infinitely layered and painstakingly schematic novels, the *George Miles Cycle* (1989-2000). By juxtaposing two adapted text fragments by Cooper, Pisano subtly emphasizes their parallels and differences in order to examine the ways in which the artist attempts to articulate the intricacies of his own work.

Falke Pisano, *George*, 2008

Falke Pisano, "Postscript"

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Published by

PRAXES Center for Contemporary Art

www.praxes.de