CMOK to YOU To: A Correspondence

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Preface
CMOK to YOU To presents in slightly modified form the email correspondence of the Serbian-born poet Nina Živančević and Canadian cultural theorist Marc James Léger from the period February to May 2015. In December of 2014 Léger invited Živančević to contribute a text to the second volume of the book he was editing, The Idea of the Avant Garde – And What It Means Today. Taken with each other’s idiosyncrasies, their correspondence gradually shifted from amiable professional exchanges and the eventual failure to organize a scholarly event to that of collaborating on some kind of writing project, which eventually became CMOK. Several titles were attempted for this book – Marshmallow Muse: The Exact and Irreverent Letters of MJL and NZ, The Orange Jelly Bean, or, I Already Am Eating from the Trash Can All the Time: The Name of This Trash Can Is Ideology, The Secreted Correspondence of Mme Chatelet and Voltaire, and I’m Taken: The E-Pistolary Poetry of Kit le Minx and Cad – but none of these proved to be more telling that CMOK, the Serbian word for kiss, which sums up the authors’ quest for “harmony” in an altogether imperfect world and literary medium.

With regard to the following presentation, some names have been changed in order to protect people who might otherwise be offended by unguarded or absurdist commentary. For the sake of clarity, the emails are presented in their respective email threads. As the daily correspondence becomes more frequent, however, there are at times near-simultaneous responses to different threads. On the whole, the dialogue is more coherent when the individual emails are presented in their respective threads even if on occasion this confuses the real-time chronological sequence. The clock readings refer to Marc James Léger’s Montreal Inbox, North American Eastern Daylight Time, which comes six hours later than the Central European Time Zone in Paris and Belgrade.