

Petals on a Wet Black Bough

Textuality, Collaboration, and the New Essay

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*[W]orking on email—constructing the messages within a pre-
genre that is still being shaped itself—is constructing us, too.*

<kbyancey>

DOUBLECLICK²: MULTIPLICITY MON AMOUR

Gregory Ulmer suggests that there are three general ways of constructing information: narrative, exposition, and pattern. In traditional academic texts,

[M]ultivocal texts are emerging as a new force in composition studies. (Kirsch 192)

exposition has been the privileged mode. But as writers move between print-based alphabetic literacy and electronic literacy, we will see a shift in how we represent what we know.

When you place Ulmer next to Moffett, you begin to apprehend the change that Ulmer is constructing. Moffett's is a universe of print discourse that is univocal; Ulmer's is a universe of electronic discourse that is multi-vocal. The anchors in Moffett's universe—the text, the audience, the author—have disappeared in Ulmer's, almost while no one noticed. The text isn't your mother's text anymore; the audience is some shifting polyglot "out there"; and the author—well, speak to Barthes about the author.

Tornow finds the influence of a fragmented "quantum world view" in the online writing of students, and it's obvious too in many dimensions of popular culture—from body-piercing to beer commercials to the heroin-chic ennui of the fashion world.

In a Station of the Metro³

In Wendy Bishop's "If Winston Weathers Would Just Write to Me on Email," we see the narrative of her responding to her students' work. We see Bishop differ and agree with other scholars—exposition. And right in the middle of the piece we have a poem. Bishop's may be an example of what Gesa Kirsch identifies as a "new force," and what the field may soon want to call the "new essay," a place where multiple ways of knowing are combined, collage-like: a site where alternatives are at least as valuable as single-voiced, hierarchically-argued, master narratives.

The apparition of these faces in the crowd.

I think there *is* a narrative in Bishop's article, but it's subtle, it's multiple—perhaps that's it: it's narratives.

Wittig's fond prophecy of "surrealism triumphant" offers the same opinion from the point of view of the creative writer/artist. We're learning to love the, oh . . .

The intuitive leap?

The juxtaposition.

The unarticulated predication.

Petals on a wet, black bough.

The new essay seems to have its own logic: intuitive, associative, emergent, dialogic, multiple—one grounded in working together and in re/presenting that working together.

At the same time, it offers an aesthetic that gives writers permission to expose and explore the disconnects as they develop the plot of a given piece of writing—and permission to dramatize those disconnects, this process, in the concrete formatting choices they make (e.g., multiple fonts, shifting margins, etc.).

Isn't it possible that the singular state an intent channel flipper falls into is not, as it is often described, evidence of a "short attention span," but, rather, of a new kind of attention? The qualities of this new attention would include irreverence, quick decision making, ability to identify the whole from the fragment, and an exquisite taste for juxtaposition. Not a bad starting list of skills if one happened to be faced, on a daily basis, with an overwhelming onslaught of information. (Wittig, 91)

Even the plots—plural? I think that's part of the point of multi-vocality: when a piece is sufficiently multi-vocal, it invites readers to invent the plots articulated by the voices. Kirsch is making a related point when she criticizes the *semblance* of multi-vocality for its potential to re-enact

"forms of domination and colonization" (199) under the controlling hand of the authors, in spite of themselves. But I think the new essay works toward genuine multi-vocality, which means that the piece will stop, start, branch right and left, resisting a master narrative as it represents narratives.

This is not an argument against The Essay or against "print classic" or conventional logic. It is an argument toward another kind of essay: a text that accommodates narrative and exposition and pattern, all three. It allows for differentiation without exclusion, such that it resists becoming unified in a community of shared final ends, to borrow from Susan Miller. It is an essay of radically different identity politics, of radically different mentality.

It is an essay the academy is learning to write.

DOUBLECLICK: WRINKLES ON THE INTERFACE

It is interesting that so many of those who experiment with form in the academic essay are not only online writers, but are also group writers. Kirsch (rightly, I think) divines that these writers believe the form of their writing to be an expression of the collaborative ethic, as well as of "the interactive, dialogic nature of writing and research processes, . . . [and that they] expose the multiple subject positions writers and readers often occupy" (193). Whether many collaborators simply work online for their own reasons, or online writers simply find it convenient to collaborate, there seems a tacit connection between the two. The emerging e-journals in composition and rhetoric, the experiments in form within established print journals, even stand-alone websites that offer work in progress—it seems a majority of these efforts conceive of the online publication as a place of interaction. The texts usually have multiple authors, they're hyperlinked to other sites, they invite readers to contribute, and so on. Their tacit theory seems to be that the ethos of the net is a "collaborative" one, broadly understood.

So far in these texts, though, not many writers are looking at how such different voices—the ones nominally so important in collaboration of whatever variety—might be represented textually. The assumption seems pretty much conventional and universal: that writing will continue to be writing: the old genres will suffice to contain it. That's part of the problem: the old genres contain it. In other words, it seems pretty obvious that if we want traces and resonances of these collaborative processes—this collective intelligence?—represented textually, we might have to invent new genres that wouldn't contain it, might have to refigure old genres so that they couldn't contain.

Still, I enjoyed Kirsch's critique because it calls to account the writers of multivocal pieces, before we get carried away with ourselves. The truth is

that, as much as we'd like to, we can't afford the stance of those literary writers who (claim to) answer for their sullen craft only to the muse.

Speak for yourself, pal. Kirsch is surely right that we need to be conscious of how we represent ourselves, of the potential to misappropriate other voices, and of the interpretive troubles we may be creating for readers. "Experimental" writing too easily becomes obscure writing. Or: the "old" genres may still offer some usefulness.

Another concern is what to do with this stuff in the classroom. As the editors of this volume asked in their response to a draft of this paper,

in what ways would [new approaches to genre and authorship] force us to re-think the rhetorical advice we currently provide students? How does this new voice (and the new genres it supports) speak to students? <hawisher>

DOUBLECLICK: ASSAYING THE ESSAY

Some will say that our characterization of the essay as a confinement is untenable; that we fail to credit it with the place it offers writers; that the essay is indeed, as John Trimbur put it, wonderfully mobile; that as genre, it in fact does offer exactly the kind of flexibility we are suggesting is absent.

A quick look at the history of the essay does make this complaint seem valid. Kurt Spellmeyer, for instance, locates the historical genesis of the essay with Montaigne, the epistemological genesis of any essay with the self:

The essay serves to dramatize the situation of the writer who moves beyond the familiar to bring language into closer accord with life. Against the systematic impersonality of the scholastic tradition, Montaigne defends the central position of the author-as-speaker, at once subject and object in discourse. . . . For Montaigne, convention was literally con-vention, a "coming together" of dissonant perspectives in order to restore the lived world, at the risk of imprecision and incongruity. (263)

Michael Prince, in "Literacy and Genre: Towards a Pedagogy of Mediation" makes much the same point. Although he too cites the contribution of Montaigne to the essay as a place for tentative reflections, Prince details the role that Shaftsbury, Addison, and Hume played in defining the essay as a mediating genre: a "position between systematic, often technical arguments and the aimless repetition" of gossip and stories (735). Interestingly, Prince makes of Shaftsbury a post-modern hero in this regard:

Shaftesbury urged instructors to remain suspicious of their own authority: by dividing a unified sense of self into a dialogue of oppositional forces, teachers might ensure that they remain both authority and questioner, teacher and student, and thus make not only their knowledge, but also their way of coming about it available to those they instructed

(Internal dialogue, interaction, performance, ex/tensive identity.)

Perhaps more fundamentally, the writing of interactive genres such as the letter affirmed Shaftesbury's view of the social nature of identity. (734)

As described here, the essay seems, at least in part, what we are arguing for when we talk about new/text or new/essay.

Yes. In fact, though I hate to drag my feet, I think there's some truth in the idea that the essay as genre is mobile and flexible enough to accommodate the new influences that electronic writing now offers. Insofar as the traditional essay is a space where exploration of the self as both subject

and object (and the self's interaction with the social, and all the rest) is sanctioned, I would think it offers a great deal of room for the net/essay to move. Virtuality is fascinated with itself as subject and object.

Only if we suspend the rather rigid conventions that often define the "postmodern" academic essay—the ones that call for unity, single voice, and the prevailing view.

But the fact that current convention may have narrowed the essay tradi-

tion, e.g., in regard to how voice or collaboration might be represented, doesn't argue that we must create a newly theorized essay. You're anticipating here, but I do wonder why it isn't fair to say that what we're calling for isn't a *regeneration* of the essay instead of a new essay altogether.

Ironically, both Spellmeyer's and Prince's purpose in reminding us of the essay's history is to restore it to its prior position: as a place for exploration not governed by the scholastic. They are prompted to do so, of course, by what they see as the frozen, non-personal, entirely scholastic nature of the current essay, particularly the essay we academics know best: the academic essay. Its domination of the essay model provides, for Spellmeyer and Prince, the exigence for a return to the past, but for us a move to the future, to new essay.

A call, then, for a new essay that is wonderfully mobile seems legitimate. It may be that we too are asking for a return to once was, though I doubt it. Returning to once was isn't possible, and isn't desirable either. Still, some of the traces and conventions of old essay as defined by Spellmeyer, Prince, and others—especially

those that emphasize “a lowering of high forms through mixture with conversational modes, and the heightening of low forms through the inclusion of elevated intellectual content” (Prince, 736)—are what we hope for in new essay.

But *please*. I don't see a revolution, either. I don't see how the rhetorical project here is essentially any different from Montaigne's. I take especially the congeniality of (if you must) the “old” essay toward “the low,” and “the informal” as evidence that it is a welcoming genre for the impulsive, irreverent, and eclectic tropes of the net.

As important, however, we are talking about more than a re-vitalizing of the old: given multiple authorships, visual or poetic patterns of coherence, new media for creating this essay, multiple literacies, we aren't talking a return to the past.

Low and high are simply registers, and the range here of low to high is fairly restricted: it almost calls the terms “low” and “high” into question.

But Montaigne already called them into question.

We are talking about more than a mix. Plug in Batson: different modes of thinking—modes that surely operated in Montaigne's day but that were not represented in those essays—voices that must have spoken but that didn't find a place in those essays. Like women's voices.

Multiple authorship still implies an Author; shifting ideas about coherence still imply coherence; changing media for writing still imply writing. If we see genre as interpretation of writings (i.e., something the reader does) instead of prescription, I think we're merely asking whether this extant genre, The Essay, can explain the alternatives in writing online.

This isn't just the marginal either, the impulsive, irreverent, and eclectic tropes: this is another way of being, represented textually, one that online seems hospitable to and that could migrate offline to the essay. So different media are involved; and the mix of media seems another key difference.

Well, of course of course of course of course. But the generalizations are so broad that even I can hardly quarrel with them.

All authorship isn't alike; if we thought it were, we wouldn't have gone to the trouble of theorizing kinds of authorship (e.g. “Single Good Mind”). All coherence isn't alike, and in fact difference in forms of coherence often marks differences in genre. Differences in media will produce different kinds of writing and different reading processes—hence hypertext and even the reaction we got to “Postings on a Genre of Email.” At what point does the stretch and strain begin to break?

DOUBLECLICK: I AM LEGION

Middle class composition teachers, ever Emersonian in spirit, stress the importance of self-reliance ('Your work must be your own'), even in nominally collaborative classrooms.

Lynn Z. Bloom

Even for those of us who engage in it regularly. It's like taking on a new identity; issues you hadn't foreseen arise. It's easier not to sail to the new land.

The concept of group solidarity is much stranger in Western cultures than it is elsewhere, and I imagine that our unfamiliarity with it—our cultural reverence is for the individual—accounts for how difficult is our relation to collaboration. Our cultural honor code depends on individuals (students, colleagues, citizens) "doing their own work" when it counts, instead of on a sense of accountability for each other. Americans (and others of the West) have trouble making sense of the radical family/community/collective orientation of other cultures. Fox relates an introduction to this idea from an international development workers' manual.

[In the drawing,] the government census taker in a collectivist culture is asking a group of local people, "How many of you are there?" The villagers are lined up, linked arm in arm: the old man, the child, the man with the hoe, the adolescent, the woman with baby in arms. "We are one," they answer. (32)

This thinking proceeds from a logic that the West usually can't see. Postmodern theory, in one sense, is quintessentially Western; its project is to disintegrate by analysis, to find ever-smaller constituents where once there were wholes. But, ironically, in dismantling the Western self, post-

Dear Editor:

We have a revision to make in the chapter you've accepted. We want to change our names.

Well, not in some ways, perhaps (I'm up for P&T this year).

This is not virtual cross dressing. It's really just an acknowledgment, a formality.

In one sense, this grows out of the conversation you

modern theory at the same time integrates it within a vast network of other (non)selves. And collaboration enhances this effect, since it heightens the sense of connection among collaborators: the individual disintegrates as the writing group integrates, and you begin to see, in small, the large constructivist vision of interconnection.

This is more a problem, if problem it be, for us; my students seem to understand this implicitly.

and we had about "signing" the different sections of the paper to help the reader keep the two voices and arguments as/sign/ed to the "right" one of us.

As you may recall, our trouble with doing this was that we felt we had both contributed to both of the voices. Some of the text we would have assigned to one of us was written by the other, and vice versa.

Assigning authorship to "Writer X" and "Writer Y" didn't fit the spirit of this collaboration. The two voices had become characters in a narrative that was jointly written.

Now. The more we think about this, the clearer it becomes that even the author of that narrative is a joint creation.

The process itself created a collaborated authorial persona, who began to seem a more integrated persona than can be represented by signing two names in the conventional way.

That is, one could say the piece isn't written by two individuals, but by this third persona—this author-created by the process of collaboration.

But don't worry; we're not getting mystical on you. You could say that we are asking for a kind of Emersonian hobgoblin of consistency here: the text, we think, is different, and so, we speculate, was the authorship. We'd

I think students understand disintegration but not re-integration—the flip side of the postmodern coin. This is closer to a non-Western, communitarian self for which we are not culturally prepared, and there, perhaps is some of the difficulty.

Difficulty for whom?

For (American) students—who, by and large, resist collaboration; for teachers—who, largely, under-conceptualize it; even for scholars writing "collaboratively"—who, in the face of institutional resistance, are unable to claim or reveal the real extent of collaboration in their work: the collective identity, the "We are One" or the "I am Legion" effect. Ede and Lunsford make a now-famous remark on this.

We have even considered publishing major projects . . . under coined neologisms, such as Annalisa Edesford . . . Our ultimate recognition of the problems this practice might cause . . . forced us to abandon this plan. (Ede and Lunsford, x)

Susan Miller points out the paradox through which even collaborativist pedagogy "began in, and still ambivalently reproduces, bourgeois visions of individuality" (296). Miller suggests that her students avoided her encouragement to identify as a (writing group) community, and "chose instead to identify themselves as being in [impersonal] secondary relationships" (297) of the sort associated with urban society. One would guess that resistance to collaboration among Americans—whether the

like the attribution to so indicate.
This was interesting to learn, just as a meta-collaborative exercise, but it also seemed important as a stray bit of theory that we hadn't taken into account at first. It is congruent with what is taken for granted in literature, of course: the narrator is never utterly identified with the writer.

Or: whereas Murray says that all writing is autobiographical, one could also say that all writing is pseudonymous.

Literary collaborators acknowledge this kind of thing frequently, but you don't see it among academic writers—even those who study collaboration.

Lunsford and Ede did consider the idea, but decided against it.

They did Singular Texts/Plural Authors. We may be doing pluralistic texts/ collaborated authors.

So here's what we'd like you to do. Take off "Kathleen and Michael." Use "Myka Vielstimmig" instead.

Think of us as a writing group with tee shirts, ballcaps, a mascot—and a team name:

Myka V. The author(s) of this [chapter].

together. As co-writers explore their own processes of collaboration, it may be the our/self that they have to discover and acknowledge, because this collective persona is the dynamic, integrated and reciprocating intelligence that guides the creation of the collaborated work.

Like collaboration: understood this way, the digital venue welcomes collective personae.

unconscious paradoxical sort or the conscious demurral—is related to our cultural discomfort with group solidarity and the shared, decentered self.

I don't know about this. We certainly accept it in certain contexts: think of the jazz quartet. Think of a student fraternity. A cheerleading squad. The resistance to collaboration seems linked to invention. The jazz quartet plays: it doesn't compose. We expect the self to compose. We want the grades we earn ourselves. If this is right, then the project would be to help co-authors see themselves-as-self.

Not just see: invent.

I think co-authors see this, or at least a glimmer of it. (There are examples of co-writers of fiction—"inventive" folks, you'll agree—who publish under a single pseudonym.) But those in academe are resisted within and without by the deep influence of the myth of the individual. Clearly, in the West, whole socioeconomic systems are built on premises of individual property, accountability, and reward.

However, the point here is not political. It's just that a close look at collaboration reveals an "our/self," a collective Authorial identity, that is established in the process of writing

DOUBLECLICK: INTERPRETING OUR/SELF

So, in a sense, collaborative writing widens the distance between Author/narrator and individual writer(s).

We take it for granted in reading a literary work that it is a mistake of naive realism to identify the narrative voice with the “real” voice of the writer. Beware the “I” in a Browning monologue, an O’Connor short story, and so on. Since the authorial voice of a *collaborated* work is even more obviously a constructed one (i.e., of two or more writers), the “I” or “we” of the Author is at an even further remove from the individual writers. Thus, the narrative voice of a collaborated academic essay is an artifice just as much as any narrative persona created by a writer of fiction. We should beware the “we” of Hawisher/Selfe—at least beware the impulse to identify that “we” with the “I” and the “I” of Hawisher and of Selfe. The reader needs to think about this.

I don't buy it. Yes, the persona is personae—or can be. But the twosome (or more) doesn't per sé increase the distance. The reverse, actually, could happen if the reader is able to connect with at least one of the personae, particularly if the personae are specified, as they are in a dialogue/essay. If they don't connect with Voice A, perhaps B will do. I think you are right that the collaborated Author is artifice, but in the same way—within the same parameters—as the single Author is artifice. That is, some writers work pretty hard to shrink the distance between themselves and a reader (I'm thinking of Lynn Bloom here, for instance), while others “portray.” There must be a spectrum, and I think those who portray are more committed to embodying the poetic in their rhetoric, hence the artifice of persona.

But you can connect with Ishmael and never know Melville. I’m just saying that readers need to theorize the Author and Narrator of expository work—especially collaborative work, more especially stylized or “portraying” work—in much the same way they theorize the Author and/or Narrator of literary work.

Yes. Which gets us back to Kirsch and interpretive strategies. Only: if we saw these narrators as on a spectrum, then any reader would always be reading to discern such authors or narrators. Isn’t that what reading is?

I’m with you, if by “discern” you mean “understand the stance and functions of.” But when they come to an expository text, many readers do the equivalent of identifying the narrator Childe Roland with the author Browning. In “Postings,” for example, we formatted the dialogue into two main voices (with interruptions from others). It would be natural by innocent logic for the expository reader to assign the left voice to one of us and the right voice to the other. As many readers did, evidently.

“Natural” is such a misleading word in this context. It might have been an ordinary interpretive strategy, but then we saw in the published responses

(Holdstein, Miller, Sosnoski) that the ordinary did not prevail: neither of the voices was assigned.

They were coached. And don't forget that, in fact, some readers of a late draft suggested even "signing" each segment of the dialogue, precisely in order to clarify *who* was saying *what*. And since publication, each of us has heard "I agreed with *you*, if you were the one saying *x, y, z*."

My concern is that authors of multi-vocal texts will do less interpretive work for readers when they focus on presenting, quoting, and highlighting the voices of

(My concern is how we got *three* others. (Kirsch, 8)
 voices in this one.)

We didn't sign the voices, because we felt this would encourage a false reading of the piece; because the

two voices did not represent pure versions of individual narratives. Instead, they were both creations of a creation: a collaborated Author, an our/self, who projected from itself two characters in a manner not unlike the projection of characters in a fiction. The pragmatic point is we both had a hand in writing both voices. Other collaborators make the same sort of claim (e.g., Ede and Lunsford), *though they may not choose a multivocal style*. On the other hand, some collaborators "take turns" and do sign individual sections of a collaborative work (e.g., Monseau, et al.). Even there, however, what is written grows out of the collective intelligence, and it reflects the dynamic exchange between individual knowledge and shared knowledge. So the naive readerly stance (voice A is you; voice B is me) still neglects an important theoretical dimension of reading as well as of writing.

Well, yes. Collective intelligence and all that. But a different aesthetic, a different rhetoric, methinks.

In any case, assumptions of "she said / he said" are complicated in this kind of work. Of course, this should be no surprise to postmodern readers, should it? I mean, if you're going to declare the Author dead, then why should Whoever's Left make it easy for you? But all writing is artifice; we know this (though it's easy to forget). "New essay" writers call upon this critical awareness constantly, since they do not hide the artifice: they deliberately make constructing and constructed-ness visible. A reader need only turn around to see the authorial hand at work.

DOUBLECLICK: IN/COHERENCE

In some critiques of "experimental" academic works (like this one?), there's a fundamental question about what counts as coherence, cohesion, and other interpretive conventions. I think what's happening in the

field is not that writers are abandoning these, but that they are offering new forms of them.

Yes, but then Kirsch is correct on this point: we need to theorize it. Louise Phelps and Richard Haswell can provide us with a start. Phelps takes the foundational Witte and Faigley distinction between cohesion and coherence one additional step by placing both product and process under a phenomenological umbrella:

Before, "process" referred to the writers' act of composing written thought and "product" to the text encapsulating that meaning. Now, the overarching "process" is the cooperative enterprise whereby writers and readers construct meanings together, through the dialectical tension between their interactive and interdependent processes. The text is the mediating instrument for that joint effort, and the resulting product is the set of meanings so constructed and attributed by readers to a writer and a text. (14)

In "Textual Research and Coherence: Findings, Intuition, Application," Haswell comes to a situated notion of coherence in another way. Like Phelps, he claims that our understanding of coherence is framed and thus limited by handbooks whose admonitions fail to accord with the actual practices we see in writers with varying levels of expertise. Haswell tests his theory by asking adults and students to write essays responding to the same prompt. He then "is startled to find" "results . . . unexpected in terms of the Harbrace precept": the papers scored as superior included "fewer" of the four transitional devices recommended by Harbrace" (308). After considering the significance of this finding, Haswell offers the concept of cohesive efficiency or elegance:

Re-thinking text as multi-pathed and multi-voiced leads us to alternate strategies for finding coherence, or even re-defining coherence. (Batson)

It occurred to me that with such a supply of ways to help discourse flow, better writers may have a lower rate of a certain device simply because they are inclined toward variety. They may be disinclined toward the orthodox devices of pronouns, repeated words, synonyms, and logical transitions because these means are explicit, stated, whereas other means are tacit, operating in invisible chunks around the words and thereby quickening pace and reducing short-term memory load. (309)

In other words, coherence isn't universal, but situated, varying according to the choices and sophistication of the writer, but not in ways suggested by the collected lore of handbooks.

And I want to take this notion of situatedness one additional step: to a rhetoricity of coherence. What I mean by this is that the coherence any reader will create in a piece is, as Phelps suggests, set in motion by an author, but it is re-created by the reader; thus, it is a joint creation. It will vary according to the genre of the text, the authorship, the readership. It is, in a word, rhetorical. In "Postings," where the authorship is multiple, where the reader is presumed to be sophisticated, where the text is iconic, coherence becomes a function of surprise: of the non-fictional plots that structure it; of the voices that develop those plots; of the voices that take issue with the plots; of the multi-logue itself.

I think the text is iconic of process and multiplicity, most of all. But to what purpose does a work foreground multiplicity? Or how do concrete modes like collage/montage hang together? The answer may be that in making the multiplicity of process more visible, authors suggest the role of synthesis in their effort. We shouldn't forget that this is not a random multiplicity; it is an orchestrated or simulated one. Thus we have both part and whole, particle and wave, in a work whose reading recapitulates (a fictionalized version of) its writing.

The coherence here is performative.

DOUBLECLICK: MUTUAL MIGRATIONS

This is a living document . . . I invite those who would like to add to this document to do so by either providing me links to other URLs or by simply sending me email text to link myself. (Kemp)

The interaction between "print classic" and "print digital" is the subject of a number of website convocations. In "Evolving Past the Essay-a-saurus," a Snapshot on *RhetNet*, Beth Baldwin advocates teaching students to write "textual conversations" instead of the traditional academic essay. The online world has changed the classroom, she says, to the extent that the essay has become a dinosaur.

At the same time, we see the influence of online discourse migrating offline into the scholarly journals. It seems rare anymore that an issue goes by without at least one unorthodox "essay." I'm thinking of experiments with dialogues (e.g. Elbow/Yancey); with crots and/or lists (Bishop 1995a); hypertexts (Purves); even prose/dialogue/language-poetry collages (Paley and Jipson). Most of these migrations deliberately carry the traces of online textual treatments to their offline venue.

Well, it's early. Besides, even when multivocality and all the rest become common, they won't necessarily be appropriate for everything published online. (It's too much work, for one thing.)

It is disappointing, though, how much influence is moving the other

direction: that is, too many *online* essays merely reproduce *offline* textual conventions. Although a great deal of academic prose is created and published online, most of it doesn't explore the unique possibilities of online discourse, doesn't acknowledge the multivocal, collaborative subtext of the online world. Most *scholarly* texts online show very little digital panache; textually, they're almost indistinguishable from the print classic academic essay.

It's print uploaded. Which perhaps is to be expected. After all, they're not writing for the screen; they're simply posting it there.

Online discourse varies, no question, and I don't want to argue that all web pages, for instance, have to embody new essay. The purpose of a page like the Alliance for Computers and Writing, for instance, is simply to outline and then link to multiple sources of information, and it's relying on a clean, linear, crisp list. It's useful. Other venues provide other kinds of discourse: Rhetnet with its snapshots and email responses pulls together listserv discussions with print-like text to provide another kind of resource. Again, great.

So why is that "great" so tepid? Because I had hoped to see something online that was more crafted or composed or sympathetic and responsive to the medium, and that's not what I see.

In other words, I think Negroponte is right about there being a logic of the medium itself, and I don't think we explore this as we might. Wasn't this McLuhan's point? Isn't Birkert's point in The Gutenberg Elegies that the logic of the printing press is being displaced by another logic, one that displaces him as well?

There's more of archive than of art about most online publications. With all its expressive potential, the computer serves often only as a workhorse database.

Sometimes, emailed statements are simply linked together in a chronological structure; sometimes a thread from a listserv is compiled and offered as "text." These make interesting reading, indeed, but they're surely not coherent compositions. I get the feeling that we're not distinguishing well between scholarly composition and scholarly conversation.

When I look at online I see lots of discussion about new text, and much of that is framed in dichotomous terms, even when the intent is to create new ground:

Once in print, digital dialogue is little more than paper transcript—the living text destroyed, leaving only skeletal remains. (Salvo)

And even when online discourse is talked about as new discourse, the discussion is too often preoccupied with how to include markers of navigation—where they should be placed and what they should refer to. I don't see text representing/

expressing/articulating the new identities or collaborations alleged to characterize the place.

But we prefer, in this type of writing, as much help as the writer can give so we can navigate the text as well as the argument. Icons, subheads, links, smaller units to fit the screen, transitions, summaries, topical organization. (Gresham and Jackman)

Perhaps that's because we brought with us too much baggage from offline. In online academic discourse, many of the processes that we are using, it turns out, are offline:

Although we also worked alone or corresponded by email, we mostly sat side by side in front of the computer and talked, transcribed, coded, typed, ate, drank and listened to light jazz FM. (Gresham and Jackman)

When we migrate online, maybe we bring so much offline with us that we can't get to online, can't get to that sympathy, are so locked in by our Burkean terministic screens that we can't see the online screen. This is true for non-academics, too, I might add. Take a look at Michael Kinsley's Slate, which is supposed to be one of the hippest zines around since HotWired (hear echoes of Andy Warhol, do you?) The toons are right out of Time magazine and not as good, Time itself is synopsized, and when you are ready for something new, feel free to navigate yourself to the "Back of the Book." If we frame the new so completely in terms of the old, how ever can the new deliver on its promise?

Wait wait wait. What happened to "I don't want to argue that all web pages, for instance, have to embody new essay"? Sounds like that is precisely what you argue. But why should you be disappointed that today's technology is hospitable to yesterday's text? It would be more alarming, one would think, if yesterday's text were *impossible* online.

And since when does the process of creating discourse belong to one or the other? Invention is always virtual, but it always begins in the brain. Even when it reeks of online process, it is equally a work of the *body*.

DOUBLECLICK: THE ROMANTIC POSTMODERN

There's a sense in which, as Hawisher and Selfe, Selfe and Selfe, and others argue, we should see the computer (or whatever technology is used) as a partner in collaboration—more than a recording device. Personally, I would find it a stretch to say that a computer *generates* knowledge, as some suggest (information, yes, but knowledge, I don't know); but there is no denying that the computer plays an important role when it comes to the organization of knowledge in the conceptual artifact we create. For a practical example, the computer's facility with hyperlinking and

multi-tasking has made convenient a more multilinear, associative approach to presenting text—especially online—than has previously convenient heretofore.

But let's remember the larger context, the Burkean context: associative thinking is being valorised elsewhere, so the computer's timing is pretty good. This matters. Otherwise, folks would take the associative off the computer and re-arrange it in a tidy, familiar, linear, hierarchically arranged text whose traces of invention would be lost.

(Which some folks do: there was a discussion to this effect on the online 1996 Computers & Writing Conference where people were arguing for email as invention but not prose. What does that tell you? Many online texts are as chronological as they are associative, and there is no leap to composing them. To: composition.)

But has the computer affected the way we think? Made us more “associative”? I doubt it, substantially, anyway.

Well, maybe it has, but indirectly; that is, the computer does make it easier to work associatively and implicitly, and certain forms of electronic communication behave as though they are situated, with respondents ready to ask for clarification, to print back what was earlier said, to explore—as in an oral situation. What's interesting is that if this mode of thinking makes it to print—to mainstream—then such thinking is represented as legitimate. In the aggregate, efforts like that change thinking.

On the other hand, presumably, it also closes the door to certain other ways of presenting text (and thinking, if you believe that).

But what interests me more is that it has encouraged an aesthetic in composing via computer that approves formatting conventions in text that were not approved before. What has become convention/al now, in turn, has an effect on the course of conceptual development. New understandings occur to us as we perceive new potential links among blocks of knowledge we had thought were independent. It is the facility of the computer in cre-ating and representing links that suggest both

But it's not just that writers can do this now; it's that it makes print. Don't forget this. Without that, we are only authors in our virtual garrets, amusing ourselves, but not to text.

new, unpredictable, conceptual links to us in our own project, and also new ways to represent those links on the page. The expressivity of the medium makes representing the process in the product viable.

And the coherence borrows from aesthetics, from poetry, really, more than from nonfiction prose.

Well, from “pattern,” the visual coherence, a more concrete mode of thinking. *Some* poets write this way; others (Milton, Millay) do not. But yes, more conventional in poetry than in prose.

And a shared appreciation for the concrete and visual capacities of the computer, or what Turkle might call the “aesthetics of simulation,” may be what makes our personal approaches to writing compatible, in spite of frequent differences of opinion. The role of the computer in fostering new essay is central.

Turkle suggests that the rise of the personal computer in the 1980s—one could say the personalizing of the computer—began to encourage users to “experience the computer as an expressive medium” (54, emphasis added). By these late 1990s, this personal/expressive dimension of computer use is well-established, even taken for granted, even pandered to by software makers. I don’t think we have theorized it as such, but the medium’s potential for expressivity is surely encouraging the experimenting in classroom, online, and academic writing that seems to be unfolding geometrically here at century’s end. Turkle connects this expressivity with new acceptance of concrete modes of symbolizing and thinking—modes that traditionally have been out of favor—in both the computer user’s approach to the machine and in the aesthetics of software design.

The new software design aesthetic effectively says that computer users shouldn’t have to work with syntax; they should be able to play with shape, form, color, and sound. . . . [T]hey should be given virtual objects that can be manipulated in as direct a way as possible. . . . [A]s computing shifts away from a culture of calculation, bricolage has been given more room to flourish. (60)

Without rehearsing her complete exposition, we should note those three elements of current “life on the screen”: expressivity, concrete modes of thinking, and aesthetics. And then, in what I nominate as the oxymoron of the age, Turkle says that we now have room for a “romantic postmodern” vision of computer intelligence (63). Hear hear.

I read something recently—on an email I’ve since lost—about writing for the screen. It didn’t add anything more than this phrase, but that’s enough to locate the issue here: new essay involves writing for the screen—the screen of email, the screen of email going to print, the screen of hypertext, the screen of the Web. More to the point, and my most inflated claim: writing for the screen is a new rhetorical act. As Negroponce and Turkle, Lanham and Landow, suggest, the thinking in this rhetoric is associative, expressive, disjunctive, dialogic, often dialectical. It involves multiple kinds of literacy—from that of the page to the screen to the personal. It’s

surprisingly collaborative; when authors compose together, new identities can be formed; new readership is assumed; and new processing, as Fisher and Watkins and Takayoshi demonstrate, is being developed and (only recently) articulated.

DOUBLECLICK: THINKING AS WE MAY

Discussions of net discourse often invoke Vannavar Bush's essay "As We May Think," in which he develops the idea of a machine like a magic microfiche reader (he calls it a "memex") that could store and recover user-designated "associations" and trails among texts that would be impractical for the user to recover alone. Rereading him from the present day, it is tempting to believe, as many seem to do, that Bush envisioned electronic hypertext, if not the World Wide Web, fifty years ahead of its time. What Bush describes was an astonishing scenario in the 1940s, and I don't take his vision lightly, but let's remember that it was a vision of a mechanical device combining dry photography and something like punch cards (remember those?). More important, "association," to Bush, was essentially an Enlightenment concept, a rational and linear sequence of ideas, methodically projected by a knowable mind. As striking as his idea was in its day, to appreciate the exponential difference between the "memex" and the postmodern world of the Web, we need to leap far beyond any mechanical sense of the term "association."

Association you can get in print classic, actually, whereas multi-linear is supposed be in hypertext. Though as you and I have traded notes, we have learned that we read hypertextually—from the dipping into chapters in an edited collection to the locating a source in a reference to reading the last chapter first in a mystery. Hypertextual reading isn't all that new. Our awareness of it, our deliberately structuring text to produce this kind of role: those are.

Most hypertext I have seen is multi-linear, but it is still linear. That is, the hyperlink offers a new branch of exposition that contributes as a tangent to the "main" text.

**At the gateway to the beast⁴
your arms brim with dead leaves.
Words, not fate, put you here.**

So, as long as we can identify a "main" text, we're offline, regardless of megahertz?

And in theory we have two sets—at least—of associations that undergird these choices: we have, on the one hand, those that the writer relied on to create the links, and on the other hand we have those that the reader relies on. Also, the branch often becomes the main text, so that "main" is a bit anachronistic here.

That's fine; I like it. But I mean that in much of scholarly hypertext, the relation between the main and the branch tangent is an *expository* relation—i.e. a linear (deductive, abductive, conjunctive) one. I'd rather distinguish association as an intuitive mode, from exposition,

which is an analytic one. For example, a footnote is a (print) hyperlink; thus, to me, merely hyperlinking a text is not enough to make it associative. What matters is the *kind* of hyperlink.

The *mind* of the hyperlink.

Yes, we agree on this: that the promise of hypertext—to promote and to bring about new discourse—is not being realized. It is linear, migrated to a new medium.

**Sweet breath of the beast wets this fall air.
That wrist of sunlight snagged in the weeds**

The relation represented by an associative hyperlink would be more “poetic,” more like Weathers’s Grammar B crots. You get at the relation between crots in a wholistic and intuitive way: not inductive, deductive, abductive.

But I don’t think associative thinking would conform to an expository convention. If we use Ulmer’s terms, I’d think that multi-linear text is “exposition,” while associational text is “pattern.” I take “associational” to mean something more like poets’ juxtaposition without predication.

**Feel the pulse, yes
the beast feels it, too.**

**Bury your face in the leaves,
breathe;
prepare to teach the beast:
*these.***

Part of my trouble is that I’m not ready to agree that they’re on a continuum. I think of them as different in kind. So the nudge I’d give the discussion would be toward a refinement on this. I’d argue that “true” associational thinking is *very* different from what we’re trained to do in academic life.

It is a kind of coherence that comes not from the mediated ties of Halliday and Hasan, but from inferred ties, if any ties at all—from ties of the reader’s making ultimately. But as in this piece, there are structural signals—making the associations conform in structure to an expository convention, making it interesting to process—a juxtaposition in expository form.

Yes, that’s a good starting place—with predication at one end of the continuum, and juxtaposition down left. But I think those ends end up being circular, with writers *and* readers using one in service of the other.

As thinking processes, yes, I agree: different in kind. But what happens when we move into text—of whatever variety? I think that simply to get associative thinking into published form often requires, particularly in the more prestigious venues, a kind of expository textual packaging, which is what we see in Bishop’s article—and as you say, in the texts we see online. And “true” associational thinking? You mean, as opposed to untrue?

I mean as opposed to the more generic, more Enlightenment, use of the term. As Turkle argues, the computer is now an expressive medium that encourages concrete as well as abstract modes of symbolizing; in its expressive facility, it now rivals the camera, the poem, and the palette (all at once, in fact). Don't we have to see the "associations" of which it is capable in terms of concrete and expressive modes of symbolizing? As you have said somewhere, academics are trained to analyze—which I would spin: to ex/posit or to predicate. Associational thinking may be another, more concrete and synthesizing, intelligence altogether.

Words put you here, not stars.

I'm not sure about this: Gardner notwithstanding, "intelligence" sounds essentialist on a good day, and deterministic on a bad. But yes, there are different ways of knowing, and yes, the visual is different from the verbal from the personal and so on. But they aren't, ultimately, independent constructs or domains: the football player who is kinesthetically inclined is also spatially inclined. So while I think it is important to distinguish between these different ways of knowing—so as to try to identify them, to learn what they have to teach us—I also think that in our lived experience, we bring them together.

Yes, but Gardner doesn't imply that they're exclusive, but clearly individuals don't have equal portions of each. And individuals (and cultures) attend more to some intelligences while others are neglected. Even if you're skeptical of multiple intelligence theory, we can use it as a metaphor for intellectual diversity. Can we view these diverse intellectual strengths as circles in a Venn diagram? The circles are of different sizes and they overlap each other to some degree.

OK: some tentative agreement. A Venn diagram gets at both difference and relationship: the sense that the modes/intelligences have some definition, but that the construct somehow slides into and works with other related constructs.

Listen to its supple flex across the weeds, that cupped palm of sunlight.

What we notice from this vantage is that the traditions of written discourse in academe valorize the modes of intelligence that depend on the verbal and rational and deductive. The facility to ex/posit, one could say. This is not news. But elements like multivocality, association, dis-

. . . volatility, interactivity, easy scaling changes, a self-conscious typography, collage techniques of invention and arrangement (Lanham xiv)

**Words,
not God.**

ruption, the unpredicated assertion, not to mention the graphical high jinks now available to writers, require academic readers to apprehend by a more wholistic, more intuitive logic. They need to draw on something more than the verbal intelligence that is their gift. They need a bit of the visual artist's instinct for pattern, contrast, unity, and balance, and a bit of the poet's ability to posit and to juxta/pose. Wouldn't this explain why, on the one hand, academic readers resist the new essay, and on the other, academic writers *even on the net* produce it so unevenly? We're not naturals at this stuff. Juxtaposition without predication challenges conventional readerly expectations, perhaps especially in academic writing.

But we do enjoy it. While the academy does privilege one, it doesn't entirely ignore the other: most of us were trained also to identify the associations in the work of the other (artist), to link them. If there is a difference between consumption and production, my suggestion is that we are "trained" associatively in consumption—we are trained to read poetry and fiction. Maybe what you also mean by associative is a kind of composing as well as thinking, a holistic way of apprehending, that the writer attempts to reproduce textually?

So it's not like such texts are strange to read. They are strange to write.

Words.

DOUBLECLICK: F2F WITH THE CLASSROOM

In some ways, writing with electronics in the way we're describing became an issue of practice before it became an issue of theory. In 1989 (that is: before the World Wide Web, even before the Internet was much in request), Cynthia Selfe notices this about her students writing on computers:

Using different fonts, font sizes, symbols, highlighting, and graphic elements, [students] have not only adjusted their writing to the conventions of the screen and the computers, but have also reconceptualized the content of their assignments in terms of these conventions. (1989, 13)

Joan Tornow reports that the students she studied in an early networked classroom were prepared for the "link/age" by the intellectual values of youth/pop culture.

[They] grew up with the mature medium of television bringing them amazing windows into world events—and also bringing mind-numbing trivia.

Meanwhile, even as our students are coming of age, a new medium is coming of age along with them—the medium of computer networks. It's no wonder that students think of this medium as theirs—a space where they can bring their own

language and concerns. . . . On computer networks, whether local or wide, students pursue learning on their own terms. (1997, 222)

To some extent, then, *teaching* New (or Net) Essay will be preaching to the choir.

I'm not convinced there is a choir, which is part of the point of this text. Even if a choir exists, it's small, and its musical compositions aren't written yet—much less performed.

The larger task may be to encourage teachers themselves to accommodate the experimentation with multivocality, typography, even with pictures and sound, that will come with the new forms. Which do you suppose comes first: the Will the first-year composition course include a home-page assignment? Will it reward collage and montage techniques of presentation? Will it encourage the synthetic as well as the analytic?

What about the disjunctive: will *this* be valued?

Without an assessment that's congruent with the pedagogy, we give only lip service to new pedagogy. A pretty good example of this we see in collaboration. We require students to work together, then we ask them to parse out who did what (because we don't trust them, and they don't trust each other), and then we ask each student to submit his or her own document. We assign collaboration: we assess individuation. And students know it; no wonder they don't want to collaborate.

So maxim/principle one: the assessment has to fit the pedagogy.

Maxim/principle two: the pedagogy has to fit the textuality.

If what we are going to value is the essay proper—whether it's Bartholomae's or Elbow's—then by all means, let's turn the Internet off. (Let 'em word process; that won't threaten anything.) However, if we are going to embrace the "readymade" as Geoffrey Sirc suggests (in this volume); if we are going to talk about what we value in the readymade and ask students to theorize it in some way—well, then, why sure, let's turn the Internet on. But this is what we are facing: a conception of literacy

Texts in such a class would range from "standard" single-authored print to collaborative online to online composed to web page creation to a rhetorically/poetically based presentation package guiding in-class investigation of readymade. Disjunction among textualities would provide the focal point of the class, as well as points of critique. To exit the class, students answer: "So what? What/how do these textualities/voices/poetic rhetorics mean?" And: "how do they construct us?"

that is democratic in the fullest sense of the word: something we create together. Furthermore, we don't know this textuality, haven't necessarily "done" it ourselves, so we can't very well assume any expertise here.

Insofar as multiplicity (of voice, of content, of genre) becomes an issue in the classroom, I think we do know at least *something* about this textuality. At least some folks have done it in the writing classroom.

In this connection, the novelty of the net is overstated. Multiplicity, multivocality, genre-crossing and how to manage such things in the mainstream classroom was the subject of Winston Weathers's composition textbooks published in the sixties and seventies. Donald Murray has frequently embedded (for example) poetry within academic articles, advocated a permissive teacherly stance toward voice in student compositions. Wendy Bishop explicitly addresses these same issues in both her textbooks and her theorizing; her essay "Teaching 'Grammar for Teachers' Means Teaching Writing as Writers" is a virtuoso performance. Hans Ostrom, Tom Romano, and others take up the same concerns. Even Sirc's interest in Duchamp (this volume) puts the "anything-whatever," the "readymade" of net textuality in an era long before the era of the computer. The commonality here is art, not archive; poetics, not electronics. Therefore, I think it's the creative writers, the postmodern romantics, who can teach us how to approach the expressivity of the computer and the concrete modes it enables.

Suppose we asked students to do *this*: to navigate among all these textualities—not just in print and online, but in talk as well—and in bringing them together, to invoke/create a new readymade based, in part, on what Tornow rightly sees as a kind of readymade intelligence of their own.

Of course, all this is quite apart from the genuine concerns about the impact of such textuality expressed by scholars (of electronic discourse even) like Myron Tuman. Like Ong, he seems to make the argument that mental structures will be shaped by the kind of literacy we value and develop; his concern (put reductively) is that info-bits will produce cognitive bits that don't compose. No one knows if this prediction is true. Still.

I think Sirc is right about new forms of textuality being written and read right behind our eyes; we ought to turn around. And unlike Tuman, we seem to think that there are principles governing these texts—as do Sirc and Wysocki and Johnson-Eilola—that are even-as-we-email being articulated.

In other words, conditions indicate (1) a readiness for a new textuality in the classroom since it's already in motion offschool; (2) we can frame the task—understanding such textuality—using this understanding to inform a new assessment.

Maxim/Principle 3: Can changes in pedagogy not be far behind?

DOUBLECLICK: WRITING FOR THE SCREEN

Is the new essay, then, a kind of Bakhtinian pre-generic phenomenon? That is, it's not a concerted or managed effort, but a number of writers—and editors and publishers—are moving in the same direction—away from single-authored, highly conventionalized prose.

Sooner or later, don't we have to ask what makes a publication "electronic" enough to be a new/essay? If one of the "Snapshots" on *Rhnetnet* isn't, then why not? It does explore some purely online facilities—hyperlinking and reader interaction, primarily. But we're saying that isn't enough.

Once we've allowed ourselves the luxury of many voices in our writing, we just might find it tolerable . . . to accept the many voices in a joint collaborative text, even if these voices seem conflicting, confusing, or chaotic at first. (Batson)

<p>The trouble with many online texts is that they're like home videos: the film is running, but this ain't no movie. You have to exploit (fulfill? master? indwell?) the technology, not just use it. And you're saying something like they don't exploit the technology because they don't know cinematography.</p>	<p>Well, who did before cinematography became <i>cinematography</i>?</p>
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A movie is *composed*. Still, doesn't this put us in the position of saying just "I know it when I see it"? What is the proper number and balance of "new" conventions to cross the line into something truly new? How big does the critical mass have to get?

I want to go back and think in terms of the sensibility that online is alleged to welcome. And then think in terms of whether or not we actually see evidences/traces of this in the text in question. So I'm working from the virtual ground up.

- *Ulmer's relevant points here: the various kinds of discourse—narration, exposition, and pattern—that themselves compose a kind of electronic universe of discourse. Do we see these modes of discourse? Do we see them working cross-genre, which is what we'd expect in a medium that is fluid? More particularly, do we see (much of) the poetic here at all?*
- *Batson connects nicely with the poetic here, since he emphasizes what he calls online ways of knowing that we traditionally have thought of as poetic: e.g., the associative, the multi-vocal. (This entails, imho, distributed authorship.) Do we see evidence of this?*
- *And then I'd be looking for writing for the screen, not for the page. This eliminates print uploaded, for instance. I'd be looking for use of the screen, working off of what we find on the online screen that we don't associate with the page—cutting and pasting, responding and circling back.*

- *Do we see evidences of the processing in the text, as Negroponte and Lanham suggest?*

. . . a new kind of self-consciousness about the “publication” and the “publicity” that lies at the end of expression. (Lanham, xiv)

I can think of print texts that have no apparent connection to online that exhibit some of these features: Miller’s article written with students, Kirsch and Ritchie on the personal. I can think of print texts that were produced online in part and that exhibit some features: the Nedra Reynolds interview, the Elbow / Yancey dialogue. (Even the conclusion for *Voices on Voice* that you and I did.) And I can think of some online texts that, again, embody some of the features listed here: some of what we see in *Kairos*, for instance; some of the CMC pieces.

They’re not uncommon outside the realm of the academic essay. In fact, the tradition is quite long. We can reread *Tristram Shandy* as a hypertext; Blake wrote in crots; Mallarmé in collage; then there’s Pound, Joyce, the

The work of art has always been to demonstrate and celebrate the interconnectedness: not to make everything “one” but to make the “many” authentic.

Snyder (90)

concrete poets, the language poets, mainstreamers like May Swenson and William Gass, even compositionists (wow)—especially those with an interest in creative writing. For creative writers this stuff is well known. And really, why not? Creative writing is always writing virtually.

But writing this way in academic texts is a stylistic choice to represent synthesis and process; it jars the reader away from the analytical habit of Grammar A, the academic custom. Still, that doesn’t make it inarticulate or incoherent—or even unfamiliar. Given its tradition, some would say it isn’t even experimental—it’s alternate.

I’m wondering, given our own history, if there isn’t a move in this direction that one would make. Think about it this way: when we wrote “Concluding the Text” we put it in a format that more or less represented the dialogue we had experienced. We did not move to transform it into another kind of text. But in “Postings” given the substance under discussion, or perhaps because we wanted narration/vignettes, exposition, and poetry, or perhaps because we wanted it to feel online, with all the short circuits and forays and interruptions—we chose to write a text that was different, that spanned the divide between print and online,

Maybe that’s what you were doing . . .

that worked epistemically in both places, that invited even the most technophobic readers to participate.

It seems to me that in new essay (call it what you will) we are arguing for a hybrid textuality that crosses genres in two ways. First, it includes poetic and rhetoric, privileging neither, invoking each that they might

New Essay
 Net Essay
 Alternate Essay
 Digital
 Experimental
 Constructed

Suppose we didn't think rhetoric or poetic. Suppose we thought rhetoric and poetic. Suppose we thought rhetoric and poetic and electronic. Multiple ways of embodying text: multiple textualities.

*t o g e t h e r
 express what
 cannot be
 represented
 without the other.*

Such an essay mixes the conventions governing narrative, exposition, and pattern, in its effort to invite multiple readings: aesthetic ones as well as efferent.

Second, we see a link between online and off; such linkage isn't required, but fruitful. Like the crossing of scripts articulated by Koestler, the crossing of these media invites what Lanham has identified as playfulness, eloquence, and self-dramatization. Such crossings, then, invite another authorial identity.

And especially invite this when the work is done in collaboration, which brings its own identity complications already.

In short, we find ourselves in process, struggling to articulate a process that is articulating us, too. As you always say.

I thought that was you.

DOUBLECLICK: NOTES

1. "Vielstimmig" is German for "many-voiced." There is plenty to say about multi-vocal, collaborated authorship and what it implies for ideas about writer identity; some of that is explored in this chapter, and some in other places by those who theorize collaboration in writing. On occasion, Myka Vielstimmig includes other members, but in this text the group is the ~~Author~~ projected by the electronic writing partnership of Michael Spooner, of Utah State University, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, of the University of North Carolina—Charlotte (in reverse alphabetical order by institution).
2. For the idea of "DoubleClick," we are indebted to Deborah Holdstein, who used a very similar trope to link sections of her keynote address at the 1996 Computers & Writing Conference, and later in the print version of that address.
3. The poem "In a Station of the Metro," by Ezra Pound, was originally published in *Personae*. New York: New Directions Publishing 1928.
4. The poem "Instruction at the Gate," by Bill Ransom, was originally published in *The Single Man Looks at Winter*. Port Townsend: Empty Bowl Press 1983.