

NETWORKED AUTHORSHIP: A COMMUNITY OF  
CREATORS IN BORN-DIGITAL LITERATURE

by

TRICIA JOST DUPEW

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

December 2012

Copyright © by Tricia Dupew 2012

All Rights Reserved

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a great deal of gratitude to a great many people for their invaluable assistance in the research and writing of this text. My supervising committee, Dr. Cedrick May, Dr. Penelope Ingram, and Dr. Timothy Richardson, generous in their advice and with their time, gave me invaluable help as I navigated the perilous waters of a major work for the first time in my academic career. I would like to offer special thanks to Dr. May in particular, for his encouragement and for his patience with me and suggestions for improvement as the process moved forward. To Dr. Carolyn Guertin, thanks are due for many enlightening conversations, a great deal of study, much encouragement, and most importantly a constant challenge to do better, to think more critically, and to see and experience texts across media for more than what they seemed to be upon first glance. Without her mentorship, this study would not have been possible.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their support and patience in the months leading up to the completion of this thesis. My husband Clint and my two children, Patrick and Cynthia, were unwavering in their faith in me as well as in their willingness to give me the time I needed to complete this project and were generous with their support and cheerful words.

November 26, 2012

ABSTRACT

NETWORKED AUTHORSHIP: A COMMUNITY OF  
CREATORS IN BORN-DIGITAL LITERATURE

Tricia Jost Dupew, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2012

Supervising Professor: Cedrick May

Authorship of born-digital literature exists in a state referent to but decidedly apart from authorship of more traditional printed texts. Ranging far from the idea that the author exists in a state of solitary genius, authorship in born-digital literature is a collective endeavor which both reacts to and anticipates an ongoing cultural shift from material goods produced in an industrial setting to immaterial goods produced in the networked environment of the cultural collective. By examining the creation of born-digital texts, the placement of the reader within the textual and multimedia experience itself, and the influence of the intelligent machine in both production and consumption of born-digital texts, we are able to replace the traditionally-credited textual author with a network of author-creators not limited to intentional collaborators in a digital work.

The authorship network is less of a changing of textual authority in born-digital literature than it is a dispersal of authority. As digital media allows workers, creators, and consumers to interact in a networked setting rather than in a hierarchical industrial setting, societal expectations change to accommodate the new social paradigm. Consumers of born-digital

literature and, increasingly, of literature in general no longer expect a passively engaging, solitary experience; rather, the expectation is increasingly for interaction and is moving towards participation in the literary creation process itself. Author-creators, in recognizing this and in working together to create increasingly complex and multimedia texts using digital media technology, are no longer able to consider themselves as solitary authorities with sole responsibility for their products: just as society is moving towards a social paradigm which will subvert our currently-held hierarchies of authority, literary creation is moving towards a networked model of authorship less concerned with material property and privilege and more concerned with collaboration and collectivity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	viii
Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Print, Digital, and Born-Digital Literature .....	2
1.2 Authorship Theory and Born-Digital Texts .....	4
2. A NETWORKED PARADIGM IN DIGITAL MEDIA CREATION.....	11
2.1 Culture and the Network.....	11
2.2 Creation and the Network.....	16
3. THE READER AS CREATOR.....	27
3.1 Reader Interaction in Born-Digital Literature .....	27
3.2 The Reader as Author-Creator.....	35
4. TOMASULA'S <i>TOC</i> : NETWORKS OF CREATION .....	40
4.1 Authorship Questions in Multimedia Work: Chronos and an Analysis of Attribution .....	43
4.2 Logos, Narrative Control, and the Author-Creator.....	54
5. JACKSON'S <i>PATCHWORK GIRL</i> : AN EARLY LOOK AT HYPERTEXT FICTION ....	60
5.1 Hypertext and Narrative Collage .....	60
5.2 Jackson and the Authorship Network.....	65
5.3 The Media, the Interface, and the Message.....	70
6. CONCLUSIONS .....	75
REFERENCES.....	80

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ..... 85

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
2-1 A freely-licensed graphic offered by blog Dangerous Minds in an attempt to allow their users to protest against Facebook's new Promotion fees for individual and business posts .....	15
2-2 Two Google employees work in one of many non-traditional spaces on Google's main campus in Mountain View, California.....	19
4-1 During the voice-over explanation of Chrono's personality, additional textual explanation is scrolled across the screen both in readable form inside the bell jar and in a larger though unreadable form outside the main image .....	47
4-2 Screenshot of TOC's Table of Contents screen, shown just after the expository title screen .....	49
4-3 A screenshot from the Chronos sequence in <i>TOC</i> , part of an animated sequence that includes background music, a moving collage of images, and text directly quoted from voice-over artist Michelle Grabner .....	50
4-4 The main screen of the Logos segment of <i>TOC</i> offers a music-box graphic .....	55
4-5 A scene from the Logos segment of <i>TOC</i> in which the reader is presented with a non-textual sequence of animations, video, and images .....	57
5-1 The main story map of <i>Patchwork Girl</i> , presented to the reader upon opening the hypertext program .....	63
5-2 The "her" image, presented at the beginning of <i>Patchwork Girl</i> as well as at the top of the main story map, indicates collage not only in the body of the narrator but in the image itself .....	68



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The question of literary authorship, studied intently since before the advent of the printed book, has continually been fraught with one burning question: what is an author, and what is the author's exact role in the creation of literary texts? From the idea of the solitary, inspired genius of Romanticism to Roland Barthes's assertion that the author is dead<sup>1</sup>, the placement of the author of a literary text within the various theoretical frameworks has been answered in at least as many ways as it has been posed. To examine authorship in born-digital literature, one must examine the placement of the author within a framework of both creation and consumption of the text; herein lies the principle difference and the principle question that must be answered: where is the author within this framework, and how does the creation process of a born-digital text differ from that of a printed text?

When placed within historical and cultural context, all authorship theories depend upon paradigmatic assumptions of individual versus collective versus theological achievement and responsibility; whether the theorist accepts or refutes these assumptions notwithstanding, such theories are built upon common understandings of generation and culture.

Within the current digital culture, previously unheard-of levels of communication are being practiced every day. Simply stated, it is possible to contact and communicate with anyone, anywhere in the world for little or no cost via social networking, instant messaging, and email. While this obviously changes the scope and scale of the ability of people to network and work together on any manner of project, it is only the very beginning of the changes occurring to our social structures and schema as we make the shift from industry to information. On a

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Death of the Author," 1967.

<sup>2</sup> *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Hartling uses the term *dispotif* to refer to the structure and analysis of the internet as a media

deeper level, however, the ease of global communication is a rather minor consideration in the question of authorship. More prescient are issues of expertise, of text and of encoding that text, of reader responsibility and interactivity, of copying and remix, and of a networked, cultural ownership of information itself.

Existing theories of authorship lay an indispensable groundwork for further study of the authorship question, but within a culture "going digital" and making increased use of multimedia platforms for reading, socializing, networking, business, and entertainment, a new paradigm is emerging. Away from what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri identify as an industrial paradigm<sup>2</sup>, our culture is in the process of shifting into a networked paradigm in which global communication and access to information creates not only a new societal structure, but an updated way of considering the interactions of people with one another and of the consumption and analysis of information.

With that in mind, the problem that emerges with regards to literature in general and born-digital literature in particular is how to identify and place the author within the framework of creation *and* consumption of a text. The author of such a born-digital text is unable to take full responsibility for the created content of the text, and because of this dependence upon the creative network he or she significantly participates in the consumption of the text as well.

### 1.1 Print, Digital, and Born-Digital Literature

Literature in the digital age exists in a space of variance and categorization. In addition to ongoing scholarly debate about what distinguishes a literary text from other texts, a debate now exists regarding whether or not born-digital literature falls into the literary canon at all. Certainly, some born-digital literature (Steve Tomasula's *TOC*, one of the two born-digital works I will analyze in this thesis, fits into this category) more closely resembles films or games than traditional, printed books. With the differences of born-digital text from mainstream literature

---

<sup>2</sup> *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, 2004.

firmly in mind, it becomes important when analyzing born-digital literature to clearly define the terms used to describe and compare such texts to their printed counterparts.

Born-digital literature, simply stated, is the term I will use to refer to literature created for and intended to be consumed upon digital devices. For exclusionary purposes, born-digital literature is not a work first published in print and then digitized for consumption on a mimetic e-reader device such as an Amazon Kindle or a Barnes and Noble Nook. Though the significance of this conversion is not to be lost when considering the state of digital literature and humanities as a whole, for the purposes of this study, mimetic digital creations will not be considered as distinct from the print tradition with regards to authorship and consumption. Born-digital literature can only exist upon digital devices; the born-digital work is dependent upon the multimedia and interactive possibilities of the device for which it was created. A truly born-digital work cannot be reverse engineered, so to speak, back into a printed tome, and if such a reverse conversion is attempted, significant meaning is lost and consumption is no longer what it was originally intended to be by its author/creators.

The author him- or herself is of utmost importance when considering the creation of any literary work. The term “author” in the traditional sense is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “one who sets forth written statements; the composer or writer of a treatise or book” (*OED Online*). Written statements, otherwise defined as the straightforward textual elements which help give born-digital text its place in the critique of modern literature, make up a significant portion of many born-digital texts but are purposefully designed to be dependent upon the other elements in the piece to retain their meaning. Because of this, a study of authorship of born-digital literature must place equal importance upon the creators of these other elements, who are often not the same person as the textual author him- or herself. For the purposes of born-digital literature with its vastly different modes of creation and consumption, I will refer to these central figures as author-creators in deference to the idea that

multiple knowledge sets are required in the creation of a born-digital work and that each mode of creation must be equally and reliably accounted for.

Collectively considered, author-creators of born-digital literature are on the cutting-edge of literary authorship theory in that, intentionally or otherwise, they are unable to exist in a solitary vacuum of textual “genius”. In the next section I will discuss the anticipation of modern literary theorists of this very phenomenon. The textual, multimedia, and paratextual elements in a born-digital text require a broader definition of authorship, one which takes into account the vastly intertextual and culturally connected nature of digital work in general, the intentionally collaborative relationship of the author-creators of such works, and the presence of machine code which, even without consideration of artificial intelligence as an entity, alters meaning and connectivity of the textual and multimedia elements.

Networked authorship as a theoretical framework for consideration of modern literary texts, both born-digital and otherwise, takes into consideration all of the elements involved in the creation of a born-digital text while acknowledging that the era of the solitary genius is well behind us in all literary work. Culturally, the age of digital media and rampant social connectivity no longer allows a single author-creator to work in a vacuum of his or her own making. Collaborative authorship, defined as two or more author-creators intentionally working together on a single project, is only one facet of the new authorship network; along with the work of the author-creators, networked authorship acknowledges the necessity of considering unintentional contributions of cultural material, intentional instances of derivative use and remix, machine code, and reader interaction and contribution to meaning.

### 1.2 Authorship Theory and Born-Digital Texts

In his section introduction “The Twentieth Century Controversy” in *Authorship: A Reader*, Sean Burke summarizes the “four cardinal intersections” of the twentieth-century authorship debate as

1. The relation of the author to tradition, understood as literary history, literary language, conventions, genres, textual systems, etc.;
2. A suspicion of expressivist notions of literature combined with a general rejection of biographicist criticism;
3. Concern with the relevance or irrelevance to evaluation and/or interpretation;
4. A subordination of the question of authorship to that of reading in such a way that the former is refracted through the latter. (65)

In the digital medium, especially in consideration of narratives specifically designed to be interactive, these intersections address and anticipate many of the questions raised by digital authorship in general. What, for example, is the relationship of the digital author/creator to the print tradition? May we safely consider digital and electronic literature to simply be extensions of their print predecessors and apply existing critical theory to them without due consideration to the change of media?

Digital texts essentially exist in three forms: those that intentionally mimic their printed predecessors, those which use a combination of technological processes to present a narrative in a fashion that makes a more complete use of the capabilities of its new medium, and those which attempt to bridge the gap by adapting existing texts, leaving the source text as it was originally published but adding to it with extratextual digital and/or interactive “extras similar to those presented in a DVD’s bonus materials. Narratives either created for or transferred from print to dedicated e-readers such as Amazon’s Kindle and Barnes and Noble’s Nook fall squarely within the first form; every attempt is made within these platforms to mimic the reading experience of the print medium, from digital ink or e-ink technology that eschews backlighting and color graphics, to the lack of any extra- or paratextual features that could not have been found in their paper counterparts. On the other side of the spectrum, however, exist e-books such as Steve Tomasula’s *TOC*, published by The University of Alabama press in 2009 and so

complex in its scope and interactive capabilities that it is unable to exist on mimetic platforms such as the Nook or the Kindle. Spanning the gap between these two forms of digital texts are what we might consider hybrid e-books such as the Penguin Amplified Edition of Ken Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth* (2010), which preset the original text of the print version of the novel in a form similar to that of the mimetic, dedicated e-book readers, but which also offers extra- and paratextual information accessible only from a space outside of the text itself in the main menu of the application.

Because the digitization process of texts published on the dedicated e-reader platforms such as the Kindle or the Nook does not usually involve the addition of materials not originally presented in print format, authors of these texts may easily be considered within the framework of twentieth-century authorship theory. Their authority over the text is not usually shared; the digitization process is similar to the print publication process in that it is a simple transposition of text from one form (a Word document, for example) to another (a print or digital copy of the completed text). These editions have more in common with their printed predecessors than with the modern digital forms of narrative that they claim to be. Though the act of being able to carry an entire digital library in a small space and the ability to buy books wirelessly without having to enter a brick and mortar bookshop are certainly conditions that did not exist prior to the advent of the digital e-reader, the reading experience (and consequently the experience of authorship) is largely unchanged from its previous role.

Within born-digital texts like Steve Tomasula's *TOC*, the same relationship to the print edition cannot be assumed to hold true. When T.S. Eliot wrote in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone" (74), he referred to the fact that all new art (and I would argue that this applies to new media as well) is criticized and its merits judged by the way in which it interacts not only with itself, its artists, and its contemporaries, but with its historical past and artistic predecessors. While dedicated e-readers offer only a digitization of texts written in the print tradition, the authors of interactive and hybrid

texts must interact with the print tradition while experimenting with and creating new generic paradigms that make full use of the digital medium. In order to satisfy this need, however, the author of such a text has little choice but to share the creative process with other creative agents, and the more digitally interactive the text is intended to be, the more author/creators must be involved in its creation. In other words, the individual author of the text is no longer able to take sole responsibility for its contents.

Florian Hartling writes that “collaborative writing projects not only make use of the Internet *dispositif*<sup>3</sup>, as Hartling (borrowing from Michel Foucault) names it, is an integral and indispensable part of the creation of the content. This dependence upon new technology and the changes in our literary critical practices it suggests speak to the balance of preserving (in some form) the storytelling and authorial practices of the print culture while acknowledging and using them within the new forms possible in digital media.

In his influential 1967 essay “The Death of the Author”, Roland Barthes writes that “a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the message of the Author-God), but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings blend and clash” (128). Though Barthes refers here to the intertextual and linguistic space that, he argues, takes the place of any consciousness or intention by an author in the process of writing, this statement is apt within the context of discussion of digital media as well. In consideration of the complicated creation of born-digital narratives, it is no longer possible to see, even if we desired to do so, the presence of a single “Author-God.” Because everything that is digital is already a copy and because the elements of the born-digital text are no longer purely textual, the function of the author is necessarily overshadowed not only by the text itself, as Barthes suggests, but by the presence of other authorities occupying visual and interactive spaces previously unknown in print culture.

---

<sup>3</sup> Hartling uses the term *dispositif* to refer to the structure and analysis of the internet as a media *dispositif*, or apparatus (290).

In the context of Burke's third and fourth cardinal intersections, which are concerned with the relevance of author intention and an acknowledgement of the precedence of the reader over the author in finding meaning within a text, application of twentieth-century authorship theory to digital interactive narrative offers a lens through which critics may understand the function of digital authorship as existing in a space of collaboration, multiplicity, and unprecedented intertextuality. Michel Foucault writes in "What is an Author" that

The 'author-function' is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine and articulate the realm of discourse; it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses at all times, and in any given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy. (239-240)

By disrupting the traditional structures of the institutional systems referred to by Foucault, born-digital literature problematizes even the legal definition of authorship. If, for example, a born-digital text is created by four people, each fulfilling a different role within the text, to whom is given the status of copyright holder? To whom is the text ultimately attributed (and, consequently, who is responsible for it)? Foucault's analysis predicts and addresses these problems in a general, predictive way: if it is not necessary for the author-function to be tied to an individual, then collaborative creation, especially in consideration of the multimedia production of born-digital literature, calls for the author-function to be fulfilled not by a plurality of egos originating with one writer, but with a plurality of egos originating within the work of multiple creators.

In order to move forward with a theoretical framework of networked authorship in born-digital text it is necessary to look closely at the modes of collaboration embarked upon by authors within the digital medium as well as at the implications of collaborative authorship in



general. After pointing out that the *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the first use of the word “collaborator” in 1802, Andrew Bennett surmises that the idea of authorial collaboration only became significant within “what Jack Stillinger calls the Romantic ‘myth of the solitary genius’” (Stillinger 201, quoted in Bennett 94). Because authors were arguably not considered to be autonomous nor their works original before this time, the need to use a word like collaboration to describe situations in which more than one author (or authority) had a claim on the content of a text was basically not present. Simply stated, Bennett argues that prior to Romanticism it was assumed that works drew upon other works and that authors collaborated and used one another’s works and words freely, mixing them to form new texts from the old or to add meaning and relevance to their particular audiences. The idea of a single author’s responsibility for and rights to a text, then, is a relatively recent one – and one that the era of networked authorship may very well turn back onto its head.

Though “Stillinger suggests [in *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*] that ‘multiple authorship’, far from being a freak of nature, an exception to the rule, is in fact a ‘frequently occurring phenomenon’ and that it has been, despite the romantic myth, ‘one of the routine ways of producing literature all along’”, Bennett disagrees with Stillinger’s identification of all forms of intertextuality and plagiarism as forms of multiple authorship (Bennett 95), instead focusing on instances of collaborative authorship in which the text was knowingly co-authored by two or more individuals in collaboration with one another. In this form of collaborative authorship, categorized by “executive authorship” by Harold Love (220), that offers an insight into the nature of collaborative authorship within the digital medium. In order to create a text that exists within the digital medium (as opposed to a text that is simply presented digitally in an imitation of its print form), intentional collaborative authorship is often necessary. This does not take the same form as print versions of intentionally co-authored texts such as

*Black House*, written collaboratively by Steven King and Peter Straub<sup>4</sup>. Rather than two or more textual authors collaborating to create one traditional novel, born-digital literature requires collaboration by several different forms of creators. The writer of the text, much like the screenwriter of a film or the scriptwriter of an online narrative game, may or may not receive a privileged position of such narratives as they become more prominent in the literary market.

This lack of privileged position of a textual author is to be the focus of this study. As the literary market becomes more and more digitally-based and moves away from the print tradition in a more definite way, the network of author-creators involved in the creation of born-digital text will become a prominent part of literary critical analysis. Networked authorship, in short, defines the new paradigm of digital literary creation.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Black House: A Novel*, Random House Publishing, 2001

## CHAPTER 2

### A NETWORKED PARADIGM IN DIGITAL MEDIA CREATION

#### 2.1 Culture and the Network

Intrinsic to the shift in authorship of born-digital works from an individual or intentionally collaborative nature to a more networked environment is a similar shift in cultural mores and expectations. Simply stated, through the networked nature of digital media the very fabric of society has changed in a way that has altered not only our means of communication, but the balance of power between global citizens and the various authorities who have set the patterns of cultural behavior and change in the past. The most obvious example of this phenomenon is apparent within the very nature of social media, which allows millions of citizens to share news, opinions, and pictures instantaneously and virtually free of (monetary) charge. This indicates an important shift: though the major media sources and indeed even the online platforms by which people share their opinions are still owned by corporations attempting to continue within their traditional positions of the heads of a public body, the public has a mode of access unprecedented in recorded history. Citizens may, in short, share and react to events of which they may not have previously even had access to knowledge, and they may do this without having to consult with the "head" of the body politic. The body has become an entity in and of itself, and has less need of moneyed, sovereign rulers in the guise of governments or corporations to make decisions for it.

In *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, Hardt and Negri point out that "the concept of sovereignty dominates the tradition of political philosophy, and serves as the foundation for all that is political precisely because it requires that one must always rule and decide" (329). Using examples of the three main European political frameworks (aristocracy, monarchy, and democracy) that regardless of whom is giving the task of ruling, it must always

be one. This speaks back to the body politic, which assumes that every political body, like every human body, must have a head to make its decision. Hardt and Negri's idea of the networked multitude, however, will never be conceived in that way because it is not based upon the idea of the public converging into any kind of unity, but rather of singular subjects acting autonomously but in constant communication and collaboration with one another. The multitude will never be sovereign, and therefore if major political or economic change is desired, a political conception that does not include the idea of a sovereign head is necessary.

Though Hardt and Negri's theory speaks very closely to the idea of a networked population working together in both intentional and unintentional ways to create and control its own media and culture in general, my concern here is not so much to examine the political or economic ramifications of a cultural shift from an industrial paradigm to a networked one, but to examine the shifts in society's expectations of various authorities across areas. What is most interesting here is the idea of a body politic that does not depend as much on a sense of unity of the body, but of cooperation between various parts of the citizenry that *formerly* made up that body. The new networked framework of society, then, relies less upon unity and the idea of sovereign authority (in any form, even collective) than it does upon communication and collaboration. Digital media has brought, for the first time in human history, a means to conduct these two essential processes on a worldwide level rather than at a local level only.

Hardt and Negri are quick to point out that what this truly represents is a challenge to the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Within the more limited scope of previous forms of sovereignty, any one dissenting or revolting group of the population could be made unnecessary and disposable as long as the sovereign power retained a relationship with the general population. Within the biopolitical system of what Hardt and Negri refer to as the global Empire, however, the empire "creates and rules over a truly global society that becomes ever more autonomous while Empire relies on it ever more heavily" (335). The balance between sovereign and ruled as well as the balance between capital and labor naturally tips to favor the

global population. The ruled can still be exploited, but they can no longer be excluded; this lack of ability to cast out dissenting parties coupled with the paradigm of immaterial production and its basis in communication and collaboration leads to the possibility of economic and social self-management and self-organization in the absence of any form of sovereignty.

It is important to note that this is not a statement of the way things *are*; rather, it is a statement of belief in the way things are *headed* within our society and culture. As Hardt and Negri themselves pointed out in "Excursus 1" of *Multitude*, what modern theorists must keep in mind is what they referred to as Marx's method of tendency. Marx, they point out, wrote his original theory of industrial production and capitalism at a time when the agricultural industry was still the main form of production in his historical era. What he analyzed, then, was not the current dominant mode of production at the time, but the new form he saw emerging from it or the tendency of a new paradigm to shift our thoughts, actions, and beliefs about the world around us (Hardt 142).

In order to analyze an emerging mode of networked communication, we must keep our eyes open to this tendency. The argument is not, then, that we have reached a form of networked communication and collaboration that makes our current forms of sovereignty, in the guise of corporations and most methods of nation- or worldwide government, obsolete. The argument is that the tendency towards this kind of networked collaboration is moving us to a place in which such a future is possible. The study of social and born-digital media in this case is telling in that it allows us a glimpse of our first baby steps as a society into this networked paradigm.

One example of these tenuous baby steps lies in the vast amount of influence social media carries in decisions that, not so long ago, would have remained behind the closed doors of the corporation. In "Facebook: I Want My Friends Back," Richard Metzger uses his popular blog *Dangerous Minds* to address a new policy by social behemoth Facebook to require paid promotions of posts for individuals and businesses alike to address their entire list of friends or

customers at one time. If this promotion fee is not paid, Metzger alleges, posts reach only a meager 15% of the customers who have already opted in (by pressing the "Like" button) to a business's Facebook page. The same holds true for non-business pages. Individuals used to sharing their thoughts, pictures, and other media with large body of "friends" are now faced with a twofold problem: do they want to pay for what was previously a free conversation with a large group, and if so, do they want their post to appear with a "sponsored" label on their friends' news feeds?

The concept of sponsored individual posts on Facebook or other previously free social media outlets exemplifies the current struggle between corporate and governmental authority and citizens taking part in what is becoming a global network. By paying for a post to be broadcast to their entire friends' list (a service which was previously free), an individual unwittingly becomes a direct part of the economic structure and, by having the "sponsored" tag added to their post, advertises that fact to all who are on their lists. At present, however, if those on Facebook's massive user database opt not to pay to promote their posts, they run the risk of the posts being seen by less than a quarter of their list. Facebook, in making this monetary decision on behalf of their users, attempts to bring the content of their users under a sort of control that undermines the idea of a networked citizenry: similarly to print publication, Facebook users are now invited to send their posts through a monetary (and, Metzger alleges, an editorial) "gatekeeper" in order to offer their creative thoughts for public consumption.

Though the new policy in itself is interesting in terms of social media and culture, far more telling is the reaction of *Dangerous Minds* as well as several other highly-regarded Facebook users: not only did the blog release an article berating Mark Zuckerman and the Facebook stockholders for this decision, but it purposely used Facebook's new policy to subvert the policy's intent:

Ironic, isn't it, that the one time we're willing to pay Facebook's insane rates, is also likely to be the last time we use Promote. We're even willing to pay them to reduce our

dependence on Facebook—how else to regain what they took from us save for a stunt like this one—and so it finally seems that this relationship has gone properly toxic. (1) The blog, then, attempts to use the new promotion feature they have so vehemently opposed in order to draw their traffic away from Facebook and towards other social media outlets which remain free to the user, drawing their profits solely from advertisements. In addition to his statements, Metzger also offers his readers another method of dissent for Facebook’s new policies: a freely licensed graphic that allows users to loudly state their desires to Facebook itself (see below).

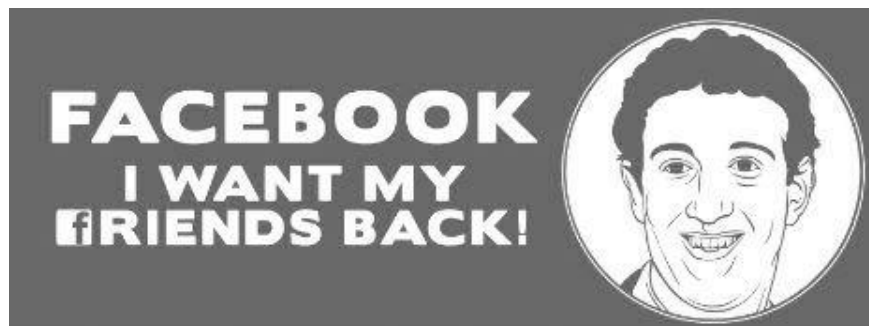


Figure 2-1 A freely licensed graphic offered by blog *Dangerous Minds* in an attempt to allow their users to protest against Facebook’s new Promotion fees for individual and business posts.

In this one example of user-generated dissent, we see the beginnings of what Hardt and Negri discussed as the dwindling dependence of the social citizenry on the capitalist authorities and, in reverse, the rising dependence of the authorities upon the citizenry itself. Though protest and dissent are by no means new phenomena, the two things that set actions such as this apart are scale and reach of a relatively small entity (Metzger and *Dangerous Minds* reached roughly 1.7 million users by promoting their post) and the fact that this scale is able to be reached without going through previous channels of publication in order to reach such an audience.

Social media, then, is already being used in order to subvert traditional systems of publication and communication. Though on its surface the global village created by Facebook

and other digital sharing sites simply offers a chance for individuals to share life events, day-to-day opinions, and photographs of cats in various and often perilous situations<sup>5</sup>, the depth of communication offered by these sites has gone far beyond what, perhaps, their original charters intended. Though I would once again caution against an acceptance of the complete subversion of traditional sovereign authority, clearly the global population is readying itself to create a world in which the political body itself, acting not in a sense of sovereign unity but in a sense of individuals collaborating with one another via global communication networks to shift the mantle of authority from the sovereign head of the body politic to the individual members of the population itself.

## 2.2 Creation and the Network

Digital creation has been and remains to be one of the most telling aspects of the shift in social paradigms I discussed above. As Carolyn Guertin writes in her book *Digital Prohibition: Piracy and Authorship in New Media Art*:

Authorship itself, by definition, is a declaration of property and an economic claim. Digital work, on the other hand, occupies space of what is defined as "free culture": not a space without property, but a space of the free play of ideas. In cyberspace everyone is potentially an author, and, in fact, in a user-generated culture, arts exist not at the site of the iconic author-genius laboring in isolation, but at a social interstice that might provide a collective model - a model that evades or attempts to evade the pitfalls of consumer culture, commodified objects, and monetary exchange. (1)

As Guertin points out, the "free culture" of the Internet is, if you would, the getaway car driving the social changes and the very definitions of authorship in a digital world. Prior to the advent of the Internet, and even more so, prior to the advent of the World Wide Web and Web 2.0, potential authors were required to go through one of two channels in order to publish their

---

<sup>5</sup> See <http://icanhas.cheezburger.com> for one example of the viral cat pictures that have inundated Facebook and other social media sites almost since their inception.



creative works. The first was, of course, traditional print publication in which works went through an extensive review, selection, and eventually editorial process before a publishing company manufactured the print copies of the work. The second option was an expensive self-publication process in which the author or creator had to pay for the manufacturing process itself, often at a rate of thousands of dollars, and attempt to monetize his or her work without the benefit of a big publishing house's marketing and sales teams. The first option prohibitively selective and the second prohibitively expensive, authors in the industrial age were often at the mercy of the industrial system.

The networked age is quickly changing the paradigms and expectations of the publication process as well as those of authorship itself. In order to "evade the pitfalls of consumer culture" (Guertin 1), the public quickly embraced the freedom of a cost-free (or at least relatively inexpensive) World Wide Web and began creating their own content...and this was no accidental occurrence. As Peter Lunenfeld writes in his introduction to *The Secret War Between Downloading and Uploading: Tales of the Computer as Culture Machine*:

The second half of the twentieth century saw a collection of geniuses, warriors, pacifists, cranks, visionaries, entrepreneurs, great successes, and miserable failures labor to manufacture a dream machine that could function as a typewriter and printing press, studio and theater, paintbrush and gallery, piano and radio, the mail as well as the mail carrier. Not only did they develop just such a device but by the turn of the millennium they also managed to embed it in a worldwide system accessed by billions of people a day. (xiii)

Lunenfeld's point here is well-made because it does not, as many explanations of the advent of the computer and the digital age do, dismiss the idea that the computer was not just created to be a machine of production but one of publication, not just a machine of creation but one of distribution, not just a machine of communication but one of dissemination. Though N. Katherine Hayles goes into great detail in her descriptions of the signification differences

between the characters produced by a typewriter and those produced by a computer<sup>6</sup>, for now consider this simple fact: the computer was never intended to be a modernized typewriter, nor even a typewriter which automatically stores the work of the author-creator for later use or modification. The computer was created specifically for the purpose of the dissemination of information and creative works, and it has taken the leaders of the digital age nearly a half-century to hone it into what it is today: the culture machine headlining the transition between an industrial age to a networked one.

The question during this transition is not completely centered upon what the computer and the digital network is capable of doing, but how our culture has responded to this in terms of creativity and the addition of immaterial value to the cultural common. Hardt and Negri write that one of the chief differences between our previous era of the material (industrial) paradigm of production and into the age of immaterial production into which we are transitioning is that the “regular rhythms of factory production and its clear divisions of work time and non-work time tend to decline” (Hardt loc. 2566). It’s simple to imagine, really, several ways how this blurring of the lines between work and non-work signifies our shift between material and immaterial production and all it portends for our future as a culture. It is not unusual, for example, to hear of centers of immaterial production (think about software companies and the like in which the production of ideas is the order of the day, rather than the production of materials) providing a more home-like atmosphere for their workers and a schedule which is flexible and often offers the opportunity for production to take place outside the walls of the company campus (see below). For companies such as Google, this method allows for greater production of ideas and immaterial value, and for our purposes exemplifies the cutting edge of the transition between an industrial and a networked paradigm. While the network provides instantaneous communication and collaboration between working parties and when production is not tied to material

---

<sup>6</sup> See N. Katherine Hayles “Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers” (*October 66*, Fall 1993) and Chapter 5 of this study for a more in-depth look at signification as it applies to and changes within digital media as compared to print media.

processes (as it is inside of a car manufacturing company, for example) new modes of working become possible.



Figure 2-2 Two Google employees work in one of many non-traditional spaces on Google's main campus in Mountain View, California. Photo credit: <http://funworth.blogspot.com>.

Aside from an obvious shift at workplaces such as Google from a strictly hierarchical and industrial workplace setting to what appears to be a more relaxed and less linear one, this blurring of the lines between workplace and home environments signals the very difference between those who work within the new paradigm of immaterial production to those which still take part in the material production of physical goods. This gestures to all forms of digital production in that the very companies responsible for much of the availability of digital creation to the cultural public embrace the freedoms allowed within that venue.

The blurring of the lines between home and work, both in space and in time, is not only mirrored in the corporate policies of some of the largest innovators in the technological industry, but in the publication practices of some of the largest firms in the world. As I mentioned above, prior to the onset of user-friendly digital media creation, content creators were oftentimes restricted by corporate policy or prohibitively high costs of self-publication. Just as companies

such as Google have embraced the communication and collaborative abilities of the World Wide Web and the Internet itself, so have companies such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble extended their own publication practices in the form of digital self-publication, allowing author-creators to bypass traditional means and publish their own works for little to no out-of-pocket monetary expense. Using Amazon's Digital Publishing Platform, author-creators are now able to electronically create their own books via a relatively user-friendly (and free of charge) graphical user interface (or GUI) and add them to the Amazon Kindle marketplace. Though one of the downfalls to this is the lack of a free-of-charge formal editorial process (though the World Wide Web and Amazon itself offers several paid options for author-creators to hire copy editors), leaving the market open to hundreds or thousands of low-quality works, some success stories have already begun to surface.

One of these success stories is that of Amanda Hocking, the self-published author of *The Trylle Trilogy*, a series of three urban fantasy novels for young adults, as well as *My Blood Approves*, a four-book vampire series, and *Hollowland*, which features zombies as heroes and heroines. Hocking digitally published each novel of the trilogy, eventually selling over 185,000 copies via the Amazon Kindle digital marketplace between releasing her first novel in April 2010 and January of 2011, an unprecedented success for a self-published author. According to Tonya Plank's 2011 interview with Hocking in *The Huffington Post*, Hocking had tried for over eight years to publish her books via traditional print channels before meeting with success on Amazon's digital platform (Plank 1) and Wikipedia's article on Hocking estimates her up-to-date sales at over one million copies.

Hocking is a representative of our current transition in many ways. Most obviously, her initial success was achieved via the digital medium, and though she has since been picked up by a traditional publishing house the majority of her sales have been through Amazon's and Barnes and Noble's digital platforms on the Kindle and the Nook, respectively. More than that, however, Hocking is an example of an author who initially eschewed traditional publication and

used the collaborative power of the World Wide Web both to publish and market her books. As Hocking herself admitted when asked about her marketing strategy in her interview with Plank:

I think one of the advantages I have is that stuff considered marketing is stuff that I do a lot anyway. I've been active on social networks and blogs for years. I also send ARCs [advance review copies] out to book bloggers. Book bloggers are a really amazing community, and they've been tremendously supportive. They've definitely been a major force that got my books on the map. When I first published, I did do a bit of promoting on the Amazon forums, but they're not really open to that, so I haven't really interacted there much at all in months. I hang out Goodreads, Kindleboards, Facebook, Twitter, and I blog. And that's about it. (1)

Each of the marketing strategies Hocking mentions here is completely dependent upon the social nature of the World Wide Web and virtually independent of the paid corporate services of traditional print publishers. The key word, however, is “interact”: as an active member of several social networks, Hocking availed herself of the opportunity to interact with her reading audience even before she published her initial book. Hocking subverted tradition by taking the digital route in publication and marketing, but more importantly she allowed herself to become part of the digital network and thus divorced herself in a small but significant way from the role of the solitary genius. The action and results both gesture towards the future of publication of works that might have been traditionally presented in print, but also remain transitional in nature because of the very mimetic quality of Hocking's texts: though she published, marketed, and commodified her work via various digital media platforms, her texts still take the form of their traditionally published print predecessors.

Mimetic digital works such as these, created on the computer but able to be consumed in either print or digital form, mark a sort of stalemate between the traditional print industry and the growing e-book industry. Consequently, these mimetic works also offer us a glimpse of the very stalemate between material and immaterial production and offer readers both a glance

forward into the future of born-digital literature and a nostalgic nod backward to a past in which the material production of books and various other texts was seen as the ultimate expression of high culture. Books consumed on a digital e-reader, especially one which is intended solely for the purposes of being a mimetic reading device (such as the pre-Fire versions of the Amazon Kindle and the original Barnes and Noble Nook), intentionally resemble their print predecessors to the point where a special technology was even worked out for the screens, e-ink that so closely resembles the newsprint texture of words on a printed page that a reader might actually be fooled into believing he or she is reading a printed book rather than a series of pixels on an electronic device. By bridging the divide between the print and digital reading experiences, these devices and the author-creators and companies who publish upon them attempt to maintain the illusion of a materially-produced book while advancing the conveniences of the electronic form.

Examining the very phenomena indicative of a change in social paradigms as well as those of production, Kathleen Fitzpatrick examines in her 2006 book *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television* the effects of loudly declaring something (namely, the high-brow printed novel) obsolete or marginalized, and one of the observations she makes is that this is not only an attempt to call attention to the thing itself but to identify and protect that thing as part of a high-culture not easily accessible to the masses. In other words, as one technology replaces another, something of a cultural threat is generally perceived by both the creators and consumers of the outmoded form. Fitzpatrick argues:

The ways we speak and write about new media – and particularly the means by which we express our concerns about the world that new media forms are eroding or leaving behind – may reveal more about our own entrenched cultural ideologies than they do about the media themselves. (9)

Writing in 2006, Fitzpatrick focuses more upon the incursion television and gaming as new-media disruptions to the more traditional form of the American novel than upon e-books which

began their astronomical rise in 2007 with the first Amazon Kindle. Bibliophiles and new-media critics did – and still do – focus upon these mediums as not requiring thought or intelligence in their consumption, and therefore as somehow sucking the intelligence and the ability of higher-order thinking away from consumers. As a result, cries of the death of the novel simultaneously vilified new media and brought attention back to the printed word as the epitome of high culture.

A novelist within the new technological culture, Fitzpatrick asserts, and amid the cries of the genre's death may have to choose "between being a marginalized cultural figure and contributing to the novel's marginality" (22), but the rise of the e-book currently provides a cultural safe place for the novel as a medium. An author, then, has a bridge between the two mediums in the dedicated, mimetic e-book – the work remains the same and the composition and consumption similar to the way it was within the print tradition. Digitally published authors such as Amanda Hocking and many others have found a way to exist within this middle space, as have publishers who adapt works that are no longer protected under copyright law into low-cost e-books. The print industry, through this space, is moving (mostly on its own terms, though with some subversive authors choosing to bypass traditional channels altogether) towards what might be called a merger with new technology rather than staying, as some critics would have it, engaged in a battle with it.

If mimetic e-books and readers signal a kind of compromise between material and immaterial production, a work of born-digital literature or any sort of art or performance both created for and consumed via digital means almost completely eschews material production and traditional publication practices in favor of networked creation and immaterial production. The qualification there is that, of course, these programs, media creations, and born-digital texts require material goods in order to operate. Just as printed texts require material media in order to exist, so too do digital texts. The difference here, then, is not in the material versus immaterial production of the means of consumption, but the material versus immaterial creation

or the texts, the participation of the author-creators within the network of their peers and predecessors, and the mode of distribution to consumers.

Literary texts do not, of course, occupy the entire space of born-digital creation. On the contrary, born-digital literary texts occupy but a small space within the larger network, and mimetic e-books offer a glimpse at the tendency to transition from the material to the immaterial. As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Four of this study, born-digital texts avail themselves of opportunities impossible to achieve in the print tradition: opportunities to make use of visual art, videography, sound and music, and computer code to enhance and create new experiences for readers. The prospect of a born-digital text for rich intertextuality, then, is multiplied by at least the number of various media and methods that go into its creation.

Henry Jenkins addresses this phenomenon in his 2010 book chapter “Multiculturalism, Appropriation, and New Media Literacies” in Sonvilla-Weiss’s *Mashup Cultures* by noting that “Just as authors are increasingly seen as sampling and remixing earlier works in their same tradition, creative expression, critical engagement, and intellectual argument is understood as part of an exchange that involves multiple minds” (100). Digital author-creators, becoming a part of the digital network as they create texts that could not exist in print form, engage with each other collaboratively as they work to form a cohesive text out of multiple media, but more so than that, each author-creator also engages with both traditional and new-media predecessors and even uses digital samples of previous materials in the creation of the new media object. Sampling, remixing, and mashup are, while not unique to digital media, becoming more and more prominent in digital creative works across media as author-creators are able to do what was nearly impossible within a print tradition: rather than simply attempting to mimic a predecessor’s style or work, author-creators are now able to take actual pieces of the digital whole to use in new ways, and are able to do so without harm to the original text itself.

In “The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism Mosaic,” Jonathan Lethem eloquently states that “appropriation, mimicry, quotation, allusion, and sublimated collaboration consist of a kind



of *sine qua non* of the creative act, cutting across all forms and genres in the realm of cultural production” (29). Digital artists and author-creators, both those by profession and those in the general public, have seemingly taken this to heart and unashamedly use bits and pieces of other works in the creation of new ones, at times seeming to be either blissfully ignorant or downright scornful of copyright laws struggling to keep up with a culture of immaterial production and digital property.

In the October 2012 merger between two film giants, the Walt Disney Corporation and Lucasfilm, the corporate creators of some of the most successful film franchises in history, everyday users immediately took to social media to express their opinions on the merger of two companies who have records of some of the most stringent copyright enforcement in the industry. Ranging from disgusted to amused to apathetic, Disney/Lucasfilm mashup images flooded the World Wide Web within minutes of the announcement along with hundreds of tweets under the hashtag #DisneyStarWars on microblogging site Twitter. One Twitter user, @Nickbaumann, offered several suggestions of new possibilities for Disney/Lucasfilm mashups including “Snow White and the 7 Droids” (Baumann 1). Other users reacted similarly, not only suggesting titles for mashup films between the two franchises, but also posting images of Princess Leia alongside the Disney Princesses, R2D2 with Mickey Mouse ears, and the suns of Tatooine forming the iconic three-circle Mickey head image while Luke Skywalker looks on in wonder.

Tweets such as Baumann’s and images such as the ones I mentioned above underscore the digital culture’s tendency to appropriate, mix, and mashup in order to express new thoughts or opinions. In this particular situation, users freely borrowed from several film franchises images under stringent copyright protection, and in doing so created digital “texts” that spoke to the participatory nature of the web itself. The \$4 billion buyout between two corporate giants became a matter for the public to analyze and participate in because the film franchises owned by each of the corporations had become so much a part of the cultural fabric

of the digital generation that mashing up the materials themselves in reaction to the news was an immediate reaction by thousands of users.

Appropriation in all forms is intrinsic to and unavoidable in digital media creation just as it has been in all modes of creation prior to the rise of digital culture. The difference we see as we make the transition from material to immaterial, industrial to networked, is very simply this: cultural material has become part of a global public, rather than a localized one. Global communication and collaboration are at an unprecedented high, and the very act of creation, distribution, and consumption of creative works shows the shift of our society between an old era of material production to a new one of immaterial value.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE READER AS CREATOR

#### 3.1 Reader Interaction and Born-Digital Literature

Though collaboration between authors, actors, and other digital creators is necessary in order to create an interactive, born-digital text, that very interactivity begs another question. What happens to the reader when the credited author becomes one of the many creators of a text, and when the digital text itself becomes available for markup, manipulation, interactivity, and response? As Roland Barthes infamously proposed, “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (130), but within the digital medium this hardline, either/or situation is no longer necessary (if it ever was). Indeed, in the face of the reader’s new ability to collaborate with and even communicate with the authors of the texts he or she reads, he or she has been placed in a privileged position heretofore unknown. Within the print culture, most reader interactivity takes place on an individual basis. Most critics will not argue that a print text is completely non-interactive; readers enjoy relating to a text on an individual level simply by reading and calling to mind associations and expectations based both upon the act of reading itself and upon the text. Acknowledging one level of reader interaction with a text, the expectation of repetition of previously known ideas, Umberto Eco writes in “Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-Modern Aesthetics”

The attraction of a book, the sense of repose, of psychological extensions which it is capable of conferring, lies in the fact that, plopped in an easy chair or in the seat of a train compartment, the readers continuously recover, point by point, what they already know, and what they want to know again: this is why they have purchased the book.  
(164)

Within the digital medium, the kind of repetition Eco refers to occurs just as often as it does within the print tradition, but in a very different form, or, perhaps, in the same form multiplied many times. Just as the multimedia nature of born-digital literature invites a wide variety of intertextuality, so it also invites a widely ranging opportunity for the kind of repetition that Eco believes readers find attractive in the print novel. Changing cultural expectations, however, may change readers' expectations of born-digital literature. Eco relates the modern expectation of repetition to our "contemporary *industrial* society" and continues that "the social change, the continuous rise of new behavioral standards, the dissolution of tradition, require a narrative based upon redundancy" (Eco 165, my emphasis). Prior to this, however, Eco pointed out that the pre-industrial culture of the eighteenth century romantic *feuilleton* met different expectations:

the *feuilleton*, founded on the triumph of information, represented the preferred fare of a society that lived in the midst of messages loaded with redundancy; the sense of tradition, the norms of social life, moral principles, the rules of a proper comportment in the framework of a bourgeois society designed a system of foreseeable messages that the social system provided for its members, and which allowed life to flow smoothly without unexpected jolts. (165)

The light reading fare of people in this period, then, was marked by a character moving inexorably towards his or her death, but whose life was characterized with unpredictable and often fantastic adventures.

If eighteenth-century readers preferred stories with unexpected occurrences and contemporary society thrives upon repetition in its entertainment, what will be the expectations of a networked culture in a globally communicative society? By examining born-digital literature as well as user-created media in a digital environment, the answer seems simple: our networked culture expects *interaction*. More to the point, the readers in a networked culture, becoming used to instantaneous collaboration and communication, expect and will continue to expect to take on at least part of the formerly-solitary authorship role themselves.

Within the print culture a reader's inability to meaningfully interact with the text itself precludes anything that could be called more than a silent collaboration with the author. Within the digital medium, however, it is impossible to consider the concept of authorship without considering the place of the new reader within the network of author-creators. This takes many forms: the reader may interact with the text itself, as in Tomasula's *TOC* or other born-digital texts; the reader may use interactive or collaborative tools on the made available on the World Wide Web to manipulate, respond to, and sometimes even rewrite the original text to suit their own purposes; and the reader may use social media to communicate and collaborate with the original author-creators of the texts, providing response and feedback on an unprecedented level. As this ability to interact with the texts and with the attributed author-creators of the text expands throughout the transition from an industrial to a networked paradigm, it is important to note that this expansion mirrors the expansion of the non-sovereign authority of the multitude as theorized by Hardt and Negri and discussed in Chapter Two of this study. As the author-creator's authority decreases in the face of the rise of the modern, interactive reader's authority, it is important to note that though these two nodes of the authorship network indeed work collaboratively and collectively, they each remain autonomous from the other – both individually (as on the level of one author-creator or one reader) and when considered as disparate groups (author-creators and readers). By adding in the influence and even a sort of pseudo-authority of intelligent technology to the network, as is necessary when considering born-digital creations in particular, this idea of autonomous but sovereign former subjects collectively ruling themselves becomes even more prescient as it applies to the varying degrees of authority present in the production and consumption of literature.

Though novels such as *TOC* clearly exceed the technological limitations faced by 1990s hypertext fictions such as *Patchwork Girl*, such narratives spawned a branch of theory based upon the ability of the computer to radically change the way the reader experiences a

text. In “The Codex Unbound: The (Failed?) Promise of the Hypertext Novel,” Julian Pinder identifies the promise of hypertext fiction as potentially fulfilling

The promise held out by Barthes (and also Michel Foucault) of the ‘death of the author’, as the text, freed from the materiality of the bound codex, is revealed to be ‘not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the message of the Author-God), but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.’ (43, quoting Barthes’s “The Death of the Author”)

Though Pinder refers here to examples of hypertext fiction predating the advent of Penguin’s “book apps” or graphically rich new media novels like *TOC*, the emphasis on the freedom obtained by the text (and consequently the reader) once it has been transposed from the bound codex to the computer is highly relevant to discussions of reader interaction in born-digital narratives like *TOC*. The very nature of the interactivity in hypertext fiction is made possible by the same process that allows readers to navigate through and outside of the narrative in both of the texts the study examines: the choices made by the reader are made possible by a rich and complex system of links within the text.

Hypertext links, created by a very simple stream of code within various versions of hypertext markup language, or HTML, have a seemingly simple purpose in web-based applications and born-digital literature. By clicking on a hypertext link, a reader is immediately taken to either another location entirely (a site or article outside of the text they are currently reading) or to another location within the same text. The question of authorial versus reader narrative control in this instance depends much upon which of these functions the link fulfills. If the link is entirely extratextual in nature, by clicking it the reader exits from the original text and thus leaves the confines of the author’s creation altogether – the author-creator, then, has ceded all but a tenuous amount of control both to the reader, who may choose at his or her own will when and whether to return to the original narrative, and to other author-creators in the digital network. Though the author-creator has obviously chosen the locations to which he or

she directs the reader and thus retains a small amount of control, he or she has also made a conscious choice to allow the reader to have some ability to dictate his or her own experience.

When, as is more common in born-digital literature, the author-creators have provided links to other locations within a story, the question of reader-versus-author narrative control becomes more complex. In one respect, the decision to click a link or not to click a link is a binary, yes-or-no decision which merely gives the reader the illusion of choice: the narrative outcomes are, of course, limited by the author-creator and the reader has little real control. When, though, you consider texts such as Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* and Stuart Mouthrop's *Victory Garden*, both of which rely heavily on hypertext links for story navigation in the absence of the e-readers mimetic page-turning or an interactive game's scrolling screen. Joyce, in the instructions for reading *afternoon, a story*, gives his own explanation for and description of his links:

I haven't indicated what words yield, but they are usually ones which have texture, as well as character names and pronouns.

There are more such words early on in the story, but there are almost always options in any sequence of texts.

The lack of clear signals isn't an attempt to vex you, rather an invitation to read either inquisitively or playfully and also at depth. Click on words that interest or invite you.

Respond to questions using the Yes/No buttons below or by typing. Note that you can also type some words—and occasional one-word questions—in the text entry box to the right of the buttons below. (Joyce 'read at depth' screen)

Joyce, simply by explaining how the links work in his hypertext narrative, also underscores the fact that the reader, far from being presented with only a series of binary choices, may choose how to read his text, how to respond to it, and how to interact with it. Though Joyce, as the credited textual author and (to borrow the filmic designation used in the credits of Tomasula's

*TOC*) director of the text, and *Storyspace*, as the digital creation tool used to create it, exert a great deal of control over the reading experience, the sheer number of options and the lack of clear directional instruction (most of the links are invisible, and the reader must hover the mouse over them in order to discover whether they will yield results or not) nearly guarantee a different experience for each reader who interacts with the text and even for the same reader who reads the text more than once. In born-digital hypertext fictions, then, the reader becomes an integral part of the authorship network and, if you would, the final authority on meaning and even narrative structure.

When considering reader interaction through direct manipulation of textual elements or through extratextual interactivity, the relationship between the reader and the author becomes even more clouded. When a reader manipulates a text along paths created by an author (or a collaborative group of author-creators) or interacts with the text outside of the text itself via hypertext links or other extratextual content, he or she collaborates with the author in a one-sided manner. Though the reader unarguably influences the text, author's responses to this interaction are nearly impossible to quantify. Though the source text's influence on the participatory reader is fairly easily measured, the reader's influence upon the author-creator(s) of the source text is less so. In general, the author-creators have essentially stepped aside, having carefully manipulated the choices put before the reader of the born-digital narrative, and leaves the reader to navigate and make what meaning he or she will of the text. This is true in literature across traditions: once the author-creator has placed his or her work in a place for public consumption, it becomes his or her duty to stand back and watch the consumption as well as the reactions of the public to the text.

One form, and perhaps the currently most prevalent, of authorial/reader collaboration expanded within the digital medium is less concerned with the text itself and more concerned with personal interaction between producer and consumer. Through the use of social networking sites, personal websites, blogs, and other forms of digital interaction, published



authors willingly open a dialogue with their readers. In its simplest form, this is usually done for no higher reason than marketing: in the world of viral videos, celebrity Tweeters, and constant connectivity, publishing houses are aware that potential consumers expect to be able to make a connection, however tenuous, with the media they choose to buy; they are also aware that through the use of social media and even through invitations for readers to preview and perhaps influence a new text, they gain relatively low-cost access to a very large portion of the consuming market. Amanda Hocking, as I mentioned in a previous chapter, is an author who has built her commercial success upon such tactics.

Some authors, though, have begun the process of actually inviting reader response to their texts through the digital medium. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, a digital humanities scholar and author, offered free online access to her book *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* prior to its actual release in print format and, even after the printed text (and mimetic e-book) were released for sale, continues to offer this access<sup>7</sup>. What is most interesting about this, however, is that not only has she made this text available without cost online, but has done so in a fashion that encourages reader response and collaboration if not outright manipulation of her text. Recognizing that a text's meaning "will shift and change depending on the ways that other writers interact with it, as links to and from other texts, past and future, will expand the text's connection with the network" (24), Fitzpatrick intentionally invites this interaction. When the reader reaches the e-book from the digital humanities blog Media Commons, he or she is presented not only with Fitzpatrick's text itself, but with references to comments made by other readers and a space (almost as large on the screen as the original text itself) to leave comments and notations for others as well. By inviting this level of interactivity and potential collaboration with the reader, Fitzpatrick exemplifies the model she sees as the future of the digital text, a future in which interaction and collaboration is both

---

<sup>7</sup>*Planned Obsolescence*, as well as a vast amount of content relating to digital humanities and digital media, can be found at <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org>.

mediated and encouraged by the Internet's capability for communication between writers and their readers.

It is telling, however, that Fitzpatrick does not invite her readers to manipulate the text at the level of the text itself – at least in a direct way. Retaining her authorial control over the text, she has barred readers from an intensely personal experience that might otherwise be obtained by reworking, highlighting, interacting with, or experiencing her text in any way other than how she intended. Though the book itself in its online incarnation is viewed on a computer screen, it cannot entirely be considered a born-digital work because in the main it is able to exist outside of digital media in print form, as was proven upon the book's print release a year after its digital debut on Media Commons. In this manner, however, a reader might consider these to be two different reading experiences. Though, as I mentioned above, Fitzpatrick does not allow for direct interaction with the text, the comments are worked in a way in which the reader, in addition to seeing them sharing screen space with the text, are also able to click links to comments at the level of each paragraph of the text. Since comments on the text are unmodified, this provides a hint of the linked para- and extratextuality of the born-digital text, and also highlights the difference between such texts and those published within the print tradition: by buying a copy of *Planned Obsolescence*, a reader makes the choice to eschew outside commentary and to experience the text in the way that Fitzpatrick, and Fitzpatrick alone, intended. Authorship inside and outside of the network, then, is highlighted in this case in one book published two ways.

In interactive fictions such as *TOC*, the hypertext narratives of the 1990s such as Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, and even, to a lesser extent, the Penguin Amplified Editions of Follett's *The Pillars of the Earth* and other texts that previously existed only in print form, the reader is invited to take an active role in shaping the direction of the narrative. Though in this form it is not yet possible for the reader to deviate from the paths created by the author-creator, authorial control is still surrendered in a fashion as the author has given up control over

Freytag's traditional narrative structure<sup>8</sup>. Though, as I discussed at length in the introduction to this study, collaborative authorship of born-digital texts looks somewhat more like the authorship of a film than a novel, the loss of control to the consumer is unique to this form of literary creation.

Speaking of 1990s hypertext fiction, Jessica Laccetti writes that "books are usually clearly delineated by their covers, as cinematic films are by the conventional positions of spectators opposite the screen...web-based fictions, on the other hand, often do not have definite divisions (at least from readers' perspectives) between chapters or sections" (180). Freed of those limitations as well as from the Freytag's narrative arc, the reader is able to experience the text in a way that may or may not have been intended by its author-creators and has unprecedented control over the temporal aspects of it including the order in which he or she chooses to navigate its pages or sections. Just as Barthes and Foucault predicted, the author is then relegated to the mere compiler of a larger textual message that the reader must actively engage with in order to create meaning. Put another way, "authors of interactive fiction are akin to playwrights: they create the initial conditions for later performance" (Pinder 42). Though the reader of an interactive fiction may not have the ability to actually change the conditions of the narrative itself, simply by manipulating the order and the temporal space in which he or she experiences the text, the reader is ensured a more personalized and unique experience of it than he or she would be in the case of the printed text.

### 3.2 The Reader as Author-Creator

In addition to the reader's freedom to interact within a text, the digital medium allows readers to manipulate, change, and respond to a text from the outside of it on a level unparalleled in print culture. Prior to the introduction and mass adoption of the World Wide Web as an informational and collaborative tool, a reader's interaction with text mostly took place

---

<sup>8</sup> Freytag's narrative structure divides a story into five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement.

either on an individual level or in a relatively localized space of like-minded friends or colleagues. Though I certainly do not argue that public reaction to or performance of existing texts did not happen prior to the advent of born-digital literature, the collaborative tools offered to the public within the digital medium allow for this response to not only be available to an infinitely wider audience, but for it to be more than simply response or oral performance: using the World Wide Web as a platform for both creation and distribution of responses ranging from simple statements to derivative and transformative works based upon the original text.

One example of the phenomenon of public reader interaction with a text is fan fiction, or the creation of derivative works by a reader of a particular source text. Though most critics do not afford fan fiction a place in the ranks of original literary creation, some denounce it as nothing more than blatant plagiarism, and most fan fiction is restricted from sale (and in some cases from public distribution in any forms) by copyrights held by the authors of the source texts upon which they were based, fan fiction has been somewhat neglected as a form of reader response and critique of an author's work. Through the use of fan fiction, readers are able to move past reading and even traditional critique of an author's work and interact with the text itself, using elements of the source text's style, plot, or characterization but subtracting and adding at will to create new texts altogether. Because of the aforementioned copyright restrictions, fan fiction authors are not eligible to receive any sort of monetary compensation for their work, nor are they able to publish their works in a commercial digital marketplace like Amazon's Kindle Store. In short, they are given no sort of legal recognition of authorship. Even within these restrictions, however, avid readers of popular (often mass market) fiction spend hours writing and publishing their derivative texts online.

Though the origins of fan fiction can be traced back to the trade show fanzines of the 1960s and 1970s<sup>9</sup>, the critical form did not reach any but the most die-hard fans until the World

---

<sup>9</sup>A Star Trek fanzine called *Spockanalia*, first published in 1967, contained the first recognizable example of modern fan fiction.

Wide Web made online publication of these works possible. Most commonly using bulletin board software or a platform known as eFiction<sup>10</sup>, fan fiction sites either based around the practice of fan fiction itself or around one particular fandom provide readers a free place to share their work and receive feedback from other readers. The implications of this practice are clear: fan fiction writers are not generally recognized by the authors of their source texts, but by creating works based upon the original text and by adding, subtracting, and manipulating the source material, readers in the digital medium actively collaborate with the authors of the published source, just as those authors actively collaborated with both acknowledged and unacknowledged literary and cultural source texts in order to produce their work. What is most interesting here, however, is that this practice is centered mainly on texts that exist only in the traditional print form or in the mimetic form adopted by the more popular e-reading platforms; by moving the text from print (or the imitation thereof) to a truly digital, interactive environment, readers take control of the text and call themselves authors, using the computer as their medium.

The largest fan fiction site on the World Wide Web, FanFiction.Net, currently houses millions of fan fictions from hundreds of thousands of registered users in thousands of fandoms. In addition to simply archiving these works, however, FanFiction.Net branches out to offer many of the services necessary for the networked fan fiction author-creator and provides an exemplar for such archival sites by providing user forums, archival services, messaging, blogging, commenting and search. In many ways, fan fiction sites such as these exemplify the network formed by and for author-creators of born-digital literature by bringing together the disparate elements of digital creation into one relatively user-friendly site: author-creators, readers, computer code, and various opportunities for communication and collaboration between the various nodes in the network.

---

<sup>10</sup>See <http://www.efiction.org>

Textual fan fiction is not the only method by which readers collaborate with traditionally published authors, nor is it the most dependent upon the digital medium for its survival. Another form a reader interaction and collaboration with traditionally published texts is through graphic and video compilation software and websites such as YouTube or Vimeo that allow for free publication of such creations. Moving beyond the printed or even digitally rendered text, readers appropriate the roles of coders, graphic designers, remix artists and videographers as well as of authors in order to fill in the gap left by plain text in the context of the interactive digital medium. In the age of social networking, blogging, and other forms of instant and media-saturated information gathering and distribution, to be satisfied with a text that requires a largely interior mode of interaction is almost a foreign concept. Though readers still consume the printed and the mimetic digital text in large quantities, the sheer volume of reader creativity and authorship evidenced by fan videos and other multimedia works shows clearly that today's reader not only wants to interact with the written text, but expects to do so and derives as much pleasure (or more) from the act of derivative creation, transformative use, or parody of the source as he or she did from the reading of the source itself.

Henry Jenkins writes in "Multiculturalism, Appropriation, and the New Media Literacies: Remixing Moby Dick" that

the borders between reader and writer, consumer and producer, are starting to blur...Fan fiction writers use existing media texts – including novels like the *Harry Potter* books – as springboards for creative explorations, writing short stories or full-length novels which extend beyond the narrative or refocalize the story around secondary characters. Bloggers absorb and respond to ideas in circulation around them, claiming for themselves the right to participate actively in the central conversations of their culture...again turning the act of reading into the first step in a process of cultural participation. (99)

Giving tacit recognition to the blurring of the lines between creation and consumption of cultural material, Jenkins acknowledges the crucial position of the reader, particularly the young reader, in the networked environment.

The reader is no longer simply responsible for – or has the expectation of – being a passive consumer of text. By interacting with born-digital literature, by controlling in many ways the outcome of a narrative by their own choices and temporal explorations of the text, by becoming a participant in direct communication with author-creators, and by using the digital medium as a springboard to offer their own creative expressions to the public, readers must now be given their due and their full positions in the network that is twenty-first century authorship.

## CHAPTER 4

### TOMASULA'S *TOC*: NETWORKS OF CREATION

*TOC: a new media novel*, released in 2009 by Steve Tomasula, seems at first glance to be a beautiful mishmash of text, animation, visual art, voice-over and original music. Upon a cursory glance, the reader may find him- or herself lost in a non-linear narrative with textual and multimedia pieces that seem, at times, only tangentially connected. As the reader progresses through the story, however, the many pieces come together and *TOC* acquits itself beautifully as a streamlined work of digital media art as full and as satisfying as the most wonderfully-written traditional novel. As Scott Rettburg points out in "Time and the Machine: Steve Tomasula and Stephen Ferrell's *TOC*":

*TOC* is a sort of *gesamtkunstwerk* in that every aspect of the work, ranging from Tomasula's texts, to Ferrell's design, to the animations designed by Matt Lavoy and Christian Jara, to Maria Tomasula's lavish surrealist paintings that illustrate part of the text and the soundtrack including original music by a number of contributors, is beautifully produced and well integrated into the whole. All told some fifteen different artists contributed in some way to the production of *TOC*. (1)

*Gesamtkunstwerk*, a German term referring to a work of art that is made up of many different forms to create a universal whole, is a particularly apt term in the description of *TOC* as well as in that of born-digital literature in general. The intentional collaboration of many author-creators intrinsic in such a work is staggering in and of itself, but what becomes even a more prescient question with regards to born-digital works like *TOC* is how the authorship of such a text may be defined given the interaction of the reader, the network, previously published texts, and machine code with each individual element and with each individual author-creator.

Before even beginning the consumption of *TOC*, the reader realizes that not only does



it stand apart from its traditional print predecessors, but also from other born-digital works. The 2009 publication of *TOC* differs greatly from that of other born-digital texts in that instead of publication via the personal website, online anthology, or social media outlet, *TOC* was released as a DVD-Rom. Though the use of physical media like a DVD-Rom would seem to suggest more difference than similarity to its print predecessors, the departure from what has become the accepted and expected form of publication for digital media literature suggests a stronger relationship with the past print tradition than with the current digital media publication expectations. The choice to put a digital work in a physical form links it more strongly to the predecessors from which it draws: by providing a cover that is able to open and close, and is able to be sold from a shelf in a store (though *TOC* is more easily found via online retailers such as Amazon.com), *TOC* reminds its readers of its relationship with the traditional novel, and by allowing access in DVD-Rom form, with both computer and filmic tradition as well.

In a concession to web publishing, the cover of the novel directs the reader to the *TOC* homepage at <http://www.tocthenovel.com>. Offering the same sorts of paratextual materials as similar websites built around books in the print tradition, the website proclaims that *TOC* “reimagines what the book is and can be. Produced as a DVD for playback on personal computers (both Macs and PCs), *TOC* retains the intimate, one-on-one experience that a reader can have with a book as it draws on the power of other art forms to immerse readers in an altogether new multimedia story” (*TOC* Home Page//Story). In this proclamation, the author-creators attempt to establish *TOC* firmly within the genre of the literary novel by calling upon the traditional reading experience and implying that the experience with *TOC* is altered mainly by additions of other art forms to the textual narrative. This sort of argument is telling in that it speaks to the author-creators’ desire to make a generic claim, but also to entrap the reader within their traditional role as a passive consumer of literature. As I will prove in the following analysis and have already touched upon in a previous chapter of this study, however,

the digital media reader is no longer a passive consumer of information, and authors are no longer able to rely on them as such.

With its multiple forms, its wide network of author-creators (both credited, cultural, and machine), and both its similarities and departures from established publication methods, *TOC* offers a rich field by which to study the role of networked authorship in born-digital media. This chapter will endeavor to examine each of these facets in order to find the role of each of the individual author-creators as well as the networked whole in *TOC*. In addition to this, however, *TOC* exemplifies, both in its creation and in the content itself, the changing relationship between the rulers and the ruled, and the shift in production from material to immaterial. By allowing the reader to interact with the text as well as to actually become an actor within the text in several areas, *TOC*'s author-creators invite a diminishing view of their own authority in favor of the authority of the consumers of the text itself.

Because of the digital nature of its creation and consumption, *TOC*, like all born-digital literature, eschews the vast majority of the physical processes required for print production, depending upon its digital presence to take the place of the materiality of the printed tome. Though, as I mentioned above, the author-creators of *TOC* endeavor to assure their readers that the experience of reading this born-digital work will mimic the interior experience of reading a printed novel, the reality of the specific method of textual and multimedia consumption here denies the reader that sort of passive experience even as it tries to convince him or her of its similarities to its print predecessors.

Like Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, which will be discussed in a later chapter of this study, *TOC* uses a variety of methods to ensure interaction with the text both within and outside of it. Through the use of linked text and graphics, admittedly more sophisticated than those of earlier hypertext fictions, the invitation to the reader to become an actor in the story by casting their vote as a citizen of the fictional world of X, and the dependence upon encoded logic to relate the reader's narrative decisions from analogue presentation, to coded process, and back

to analogue presentation<sup>11</sup>, *TOC* mirrors the shifting relationship of the rulers to the ruled by allowing the text itself as well as its (no longer passive) consumers to control the various outcomes and experiences made available by the author-creators. In this way, *TOC* is truly a networked text, inconceivable prior to the advent of the digital tools that made it possible and a reading public that expects interaction rather than passivity.

#### 4.1 Authorship Questions in Multimedia Work: Chronos and an Analysis of Attribution

*TOC*'s challenge to traditional authorship is obvious before a reader even removes it from the bookstore's (or, more likely, the software chain's or online retailer's) shelf: instead of prominently featuring one proper name on its cover, four proper names are given: Steve Tomasula, who created the textual narrative as well as taking part in the direction and design of the novel; Stephen Ferrell, who collaborated with Tomasula in the direction and design; Christian Jara, who worked with programming and animation; and Matt Lovey, who provided much of the animation. These four names, each given the prominence of the author's on a print novel to varying degrees, underscore the importance of collaboration in digital media and challenge the role of the solitary author within the new born-digital genre of literature. Interestingly, none of the names are listed with their roles in production, as I listed above. Rather, each name is given the authority of the author-creator.

The names of Tomasula and Ferrell are listed in bold print on the front cover, indicating a greater directorial responsibility for the novel than that of Lavoy and Jara: the similarities to film attribution and the privileging of the director as the overarching creator are striking. In this way, the cover of *TOC* suggests the authorship role in digital media as that of a directorial *auteur*, supervising and contributing to the work of many specialized creators. The credited list of author-creators lends support to the idea of a multimedia *gesamtkunstwerk* overseen by the master creator, in this case attributed, directorial author-creator Steve Tomasula.

---

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter Five for further explanation about the varying layers present in born-digital interactive literature.

Emphasizing the collective work of many author-creators automatically establishes one node of the authorship network in the creation (as well as the consumption) of *TOC* as a born-digital narrative. Even independent of the rest of the network (comprised of the readers, the influence of previous texts and media, and the encoded processes), the sheer volume and varied talents of the list of authorial contributors suggests a collective creation experience rather than merely a collaborative one. Though Steve Tomasula may well be considered the head to the rest of the network's body, the head, rather than the overarching, authoritative, decision-making organ, in this case becomes simply another organ working with the others both autonomously and collectively. Crediting Tomasula with as the main author-creator could therefore be seen as a throwback to the print tradition: he created the textual narrative, and therefore he must be considered the author.

Inside the front cover of the DVD-Rom, a far more extensive list of creative contributors includes attribution for the multimedia components of the born-digital novel: music, voice-over narration, animation, and videography. Below the title, in the privileged position and in the largest text, the four names from the front cover are repeated but include the roles they played in the creation of the text. Significantly, the place of the traditional, textual author of the story is placed first with the attribution "Story by Steve Tomasula" (*TOC*, DVD-Rom cover). Following that are directorial and design attributions for Tomasula and Ferrell, and programming, animation, and sound design by Christian Jara. Aside from privileging the story authorship as the first attribution, what is also interesting here is the listing of attributions by role rather than by name. As opposed, for example, to listing Tomasula's name followed by his roles as textual story author and director, Tomasula's name is listed twice following the aspects of the text for which he was responsible. The same is true for Farrell and Jara, both in the privileged top credits and in the smaller-text individual credits below. This choice by the cover designers is indicative of the importance of multimedia expertise in born-digital literature design: more so

than the author-creators themselves, the many forms and modes of creation are given a certain degree of responsibility for the text in and of themselves.

Below the initial credits, the text is split into two columns, one representing the Chronos “TOC” Film and the other representing the Logos section, which consists of a completely separate narrative arc. As will be discussed later in this chapter, these are the main divisions of the novel and the first choice a reader must make as he or she begins to experience the novel is which of the narrative paths to follow in the beginning of the novel. By the division of the two sections into separate attribution columns, if you will, the cover invites the reader to make the same choice while placing the same importance on the contributions of the Logos creators with those of the Chronos team.

Similarly to the initial credits, the columned credits of the Chronos and Logos attribution sections follow a more filmic tradition by listing the roles of the various author-creators before their names, even when this causes names to be repeated several times over the course of the credits. Here, the reader begins to understand the full scope of the creative forces behind this born-digital work: in addition to repeating the names in the initial credits, several other new names are added including Matt Lavoy, the only author-creator attributed on the front cover but not in the initial credits at the top of the inside page. As Rettberg pointed out in his review, there are fifteen names listed inside the front cover. These represent the intentional collaborators on this project: the textual author, the designers, the songwriters, narrators, and visual artists.

Through the format of the novel and its cover along with the attribution of several creative forces rather than one, *TOC* immediately proclaims its difference from novels in the print tradition: the reader is immediately aware not to expect the same quiet, interior experience of reading a printed book simply due to the fact that within the collected attribution of many author-creators are statements of work that would never and could never be included within a printed tome.

After installation, *TOC* immediately and automatically transitions the computer from windowed into full-screen mode and presents readers with an obvious deviation from the expected introduction to a narrative. Rather than offering readers a title page similar to what might be found in print as is done in more mimetic digital works such as those adapted for use on e-readers, the reader's computer screen immediately begins an animated sequence of images of an expanding galaxy and a quick, almost invisible, succession of numbers reminiscent of the countdowns in old films. Eventually, the screen displays an epigraph from St. Augustine that both conveys one of the main themes of the book and emphasizes the collaborative nature of creation itself by featuring yet another author from the very beginning: "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know" (*TOC* title screen). Referring to the questions of temporal manipulation that characterize both the novel's plot and the visual representations through which the reader navigates, the quotation along with the visceral sensation of getting closer and closer to the galactic formation of stars on the screen serves to draw the reader into the reading experience. The title screen, then, serves as much as an expository textual passage as it does a proclamation of the work's title.

As the visual galaxy of stars "flies" inward to coalesce into a barren-looking planet, Steve Tomasula's voice narrates an expository passage explaining the births of Chronos and Logos, twins born an hour apart and, due to being born within different time zones, on different days. Setting the stage for a story both thematically concerned with time and viscerally skipping through time, the voice-over narration by the textual author of the story adds another layer to the authorship question for *TOC*: Tomasula, in a sense, takes on two roles, as is evidenced by the credits inside the cover as well as his roles as creator and performer within the narrative itself.

During the beginning narration, the animation alternately depends upon the voice-over for explanation and provides scrolling text in addition to it – never the same, but always

supporting what Tomasula narrates (see below). Indicative of both the multimedia nature and the complicated authorship questions of *TOC*, this compilation of voice, text, and graphic animation underscores the many differences of born-digital literature from previous forms. While the scrolling text in some ways mimics the print tradition in that, in the absence of Tomasula's voice actually reading the text on the screen, the reader uses the same skill set as he or she might use when reading a traditional book. This is where the similarity ends, however. The layers which characterize both the authorship and the form of born-digital media are immediately apparent in the different modes of consumption being utilized simultaneously in the opening sequence as well as in the rest of the book.

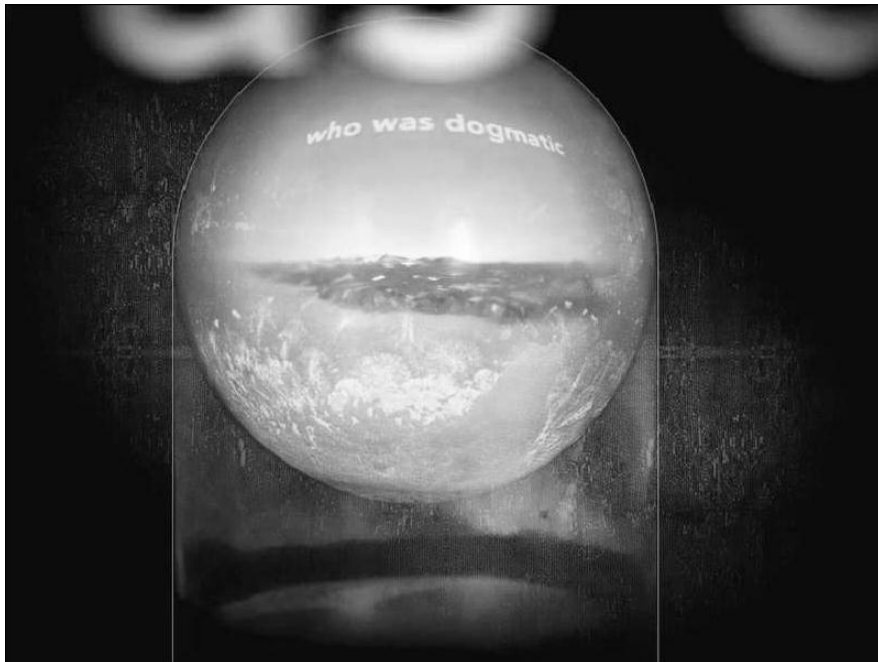


Figure 4-1 During the voice-over explanation of Chronos's personality, additional textual explanation is scrolled across the screen both in readable form inside the bell jar and in a larger though unreadable form outside the main image (see top of photo).

Replacing the print novel's traditional table of contents is *TOC*'s first screen, offering the reader's first interactive experience and, consequently, the first choice for a reader to make. Placing the reader firmly into the authorship network establishes the reader as a collaborator

within the narrative itself: though the choices presented to the reader were ultimately under Tomasula's and the other author-creators' control, the reader shapes the narrative in a way that cannot be entirely predicted. Unlike a traditional linear narrative, *TOC's* table of contents makes no assumptions about the order of consumption of a text; there is no first or last chapter, no defined beginning or end of the narrative. When presented with the initial table of contents, the reader makes a binary choice between the Chronos section, represented by a sandbox graphic, and the Logos section, represented by a water-box graphic, both of which allow the reader to choose (to varying degrees) narrative paths based upon the notes of the music (see below). Interestingly, though, the reader's vote itself becomes a part of the narrative: in the opening narration, Tomasula describes a struggle for power between Chronos and Logos for the right to rule the kingdom and indicates that citizens would occasionally stop their everyday lives and cast a vote for one ruler or another by casting a stone into one of two boxes (*TOC* Opening Narration). By inviting the reader to choose his or her narrative arc by casting a small, digital stone into the box for one or the other brother, the reader virtually becomes a citizen of Tomasula's created world and takes his or her first step into the collective network that is the responsibility of authorship in *TOC*.



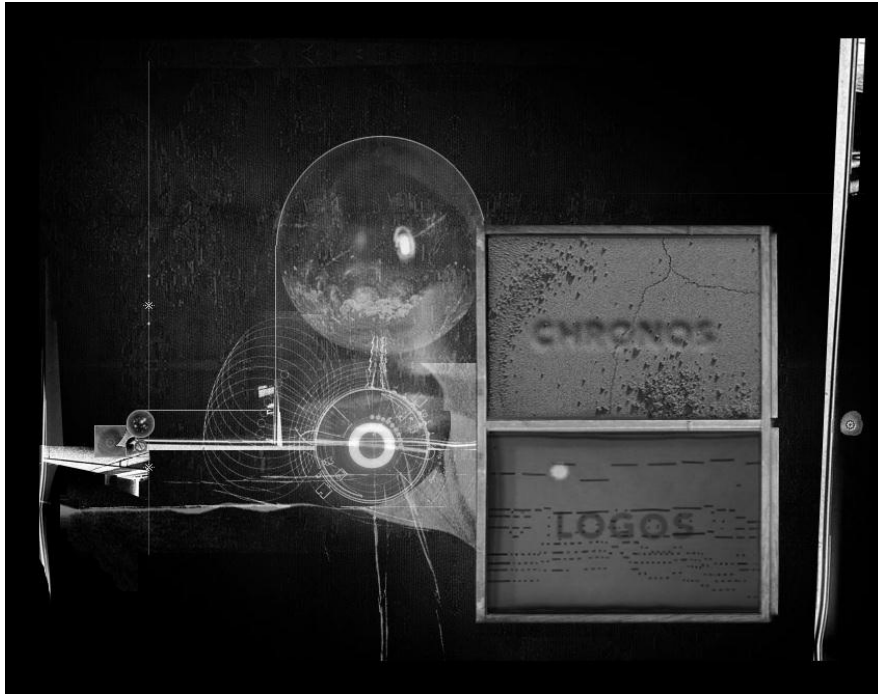


Figure 4-2 Screenshot of TOC's Table of Contents screen, shown just after the expository title screen. The reader is invited to cast a pebble (far right) into one of two boxes, thus making a binary but non-binding decision between two initial narrative paths.

The reader casts a vote for Chronos by dropping a pebble into the sandbox bearing that brother's name, and in that decision, he or she is immediately is launched into an experience combining voice-over narration by Maria Tomasula, Michelle Grabner, Christian Jara, and Steve Tomasula, textual scrolling (reached by clicking on the glass bulb above the sandbox) of text by Steve Tomasula, background music by Chris Pielak, and animations Matt Lavoy. During this sequence, the reader's choices are limited but still present: the reader may choose at any time to skip to different parts of the narrative by moving an old-fashioned clock-hand graphic along the Chronos music box (as it is revealed to be after the sand is emptied), may choose to exit the narration altogether by clicking the small glass ball on the left of the screen, or may choose to view textual scrolling and animations full-screen by clicking the larger bulb. It is in this mode that I believe the reader experiences the Chronos segment the way the author-creators

intended it to be consumed: as a full-scale animation containing samples of each multimedia element contained throughout *TOC* (see below).



Figure 4-3 A screenshot from the Chronos sequence in *TOC*, part of an animated sequence that includes background music, a moving collage of images, and text directly quoted from voice-over artist Michelle Grabner.

It is perhaps in this segment that *TOC* most closely resembles the interior, one-on-one reading experience that *TOC*'s website promises its users: if the reader so desires, this segment may be consumed all in one piece, without interruption, and is perhaps the most linear of the various story arcs presented in the story. No interaction is strictly necessary here, though it is certainly possible just as it is in other segments. Lasting approximately thirty minutes, the dizzying array of voice-over speech, text, animation, and music presents the story of a Vogue model within the somewhat textually ill-defined universe of *X*. Taken separately, the story of the model progresses much as a traditional novel: the reader is invited to share the model's pain as her husband is left in a coma by a "night of revelry" (*TOC* Chronos segment) and she is left to

decide his fate while dealing with complex emotions and situations relating to her brother's solicitude during her hard time.

Prior to the beginning of this narrative, however, and at the beginning of the half-hour Chronos animation sequence, Maria Tomasula's voice begins the narrative with a very clear admonition to the reader that this story is separate from his or her own experience:

Upon a time, in a tense that marked the reader's comfortable distance from it, a calamity befell the good people of X. It was as if the one in a google chance of all the ebbs, throbs, arrhythmic rhythms, and other contradictions of the heart had, according to the laws of probability, hit a single beat in unison. That is to say, the present had come to pass. (Chronos segment)

The phrasing here, spoken in Maria Tomasula's dispassionate female voice and not accompanied by on-screen textual transcription, calls attention to the very nature of the narrative itself: by using the phrase "upon a time," Tomasula immediately and indirectly reminds readers of fairy tales and other narratives understood as having occurred either in the distant past or in a space of non-reality in general. Not depending upon this phrase alone, however, the voice-over calls attention to the tense of the story itself rather than proclaiming the tale to have taken place in the past or in a place far away from the world inhabited by the reader. This usage is indicative of the reader's position in this part of the narrative: far away, disinterested and comfortingly separate from the calamity of the storyline. The author-creators maintain this narratorial distance throughout the sequence even as it jumps from narrator to narrator and the animations shift from steam-punk machinations with scrolling text to original drawings by Maria Tomasula, to simple-seeming sequences of black lines on a white background. During this portion of the narrative, the author-creators hold nearly absolute authority over the narrative world created by the text.

What, then, does the rampant multimedia space in which this part of the narrative resides, say about the authorship of the novel itself? As Alina Ng points out in her 2010 article “Authorship in the Age of Digital Media”:

...authorship of literary and artistic works is characterized by significantly different qualities in the digital age. In the digital age, authorship is generally communal, in that an author usually creates a work as part of a creative community with sometimes-unidentifiable contributors and supporters...Works of authorship are also sometimes large collaborative projects involving multiple contributions from many different authors.  
(865)

The many credited author-creators of *TOC* obviously comprise a large part of the communal network referenced by Ng, but the multimedia space of the Chronos segment invites and, in fact, insists upon participation by uncredited collaborators (namely, the reader and the machine language which powers the segment itself). The reader, given agency to stop, reverse, or fast-forward the narrative segment, may consider these actions to be little more than the agency to stop reading a printed book or to skip forward or backward at will. Though at first glance this is certainly true and is part of the reading experience across technologies and paradigms, the multimedia nature of the narrative changes what the reader’s agency appears to be in the context of a born-digital text.

As discussed in Chapter Three of this study, the multimedia aspect of born-digital literature, apart from purposeful reader interactivity, allows a reader a sense of agency not found in traditional print media. In the Chronos section of *TOC*, this is indicated both by the invitation to skip traditional linear navigation and consumption through the needle graphic on the Chronos selection screen and by the choice of consumption methods. Though the reader is required, in order to consume the narrative at all, to listen to Maria Tomasula’s voice-over narration regardless of other choices, the reader may choose to listen to the narration with little interference by animations and scrolling text – by remaining on the table of contents screen, the

reader experiences the animations only as small, nearly-transparent movements within the bell jar to the upper left of the box. Though the reader does not, in this method, completely obscure the multimedia aspects of the story, he or she is able to minimize their effect on the reading experience. On the other hand, the reader is free to click the bell jar for the multilayered experience I referred to above, or – in a move unique to a digital environment – may choose to mute the sound on his or her machine in order to experience the narrative in graphic form, rather than as a voice-over at all.

This particular agency – the ability to mute the voice-over narrative, thus erasing Maria Tomasula's aural contribution as well as much of Steve Tomasula's text contribution – underscores the new media reader's ability to subvert the original process of the author-creators without completely eschewing the work itself. Free to experience the graphic animations, artwork, and limited scrolling text, the reader is able to find meaning in a way unhampered by the purposes of the original narrative. In the Chronos segment in particular, this method of experiencing the text erases all knowledge of the storyline of the Vogue model plagued by life's tragedies and indecision. Instead, the reader focuses upon the work of the other author-creators – the graphic artists, programmers, and animators – while also gleaning meaning in an interior space of their own, unhampered by literal translation of the abstract images.

Steve Tomasula and the other author-creators, however, while giving the reader the choices I have enumerated above as well as other narrative choices in the Logos and Creation segments of the text, also place limits upon the reader's agency by utilizing programming language in a way that requires the reader to focus entirely on the text with minimal interruptions. *TOC* is preset in a way which allows it only to run in full-screen mode; as soon as a reader opens the program, or opens the book if you will, all other activity on the screen is obscured. Without disassembling the code itself, the reader has no way to prevent this occurrence. Electronic avenues of communication such as email, social networking, or instant messaging, are blocked from view and from use, as are any work-related programs and – of

possibly the most significance – the computer's clock. In this way, the author-creators attempt to force the reader into the one-on-one experience promised on *TOC*'s website by making multitasking difficult and by taking away at least one marker of passing time; in addition to this, the author-creators of *TOC* sought to deny the reader access to the collaborative, communicative network available outside of the program. By doing this, reader interaction while in the actual mode of consuming the text is limited to spaces within the text, simultaneously increasing and decreasing the reader's agency and ability to experience the text in a manner and path of his or her own choosing. Likewise, the closing of the book is absolute: after a reader navigates out of whichever segment he or she has chosen to consume and back to the expository title sequence, one press of the keyboard's escape key closes *TOC* completely, unable to be read again until the reader restarts the program and once again obscures any other activity on the computer screen.

#### 4.2 Logos, Narrative Control, and the Author-Creator

One of two other major divisions of the book, the Logos section is reached from the table of contents screen by casting the virtual pebble into the lower box filled with water. After the water drains from the box in an animation sequence similar to that of the emptying sandbox for the Chronos segment, the reader is initially presented with a screen devoid of any cue other than a scrolling music box animation that is the Logos selection screen. As the reader navigates this section, as directed in the instruction manual by clicking the various colored lines within the music box, links to other parts of the story become visible and clickable, but in no particular order (see below).

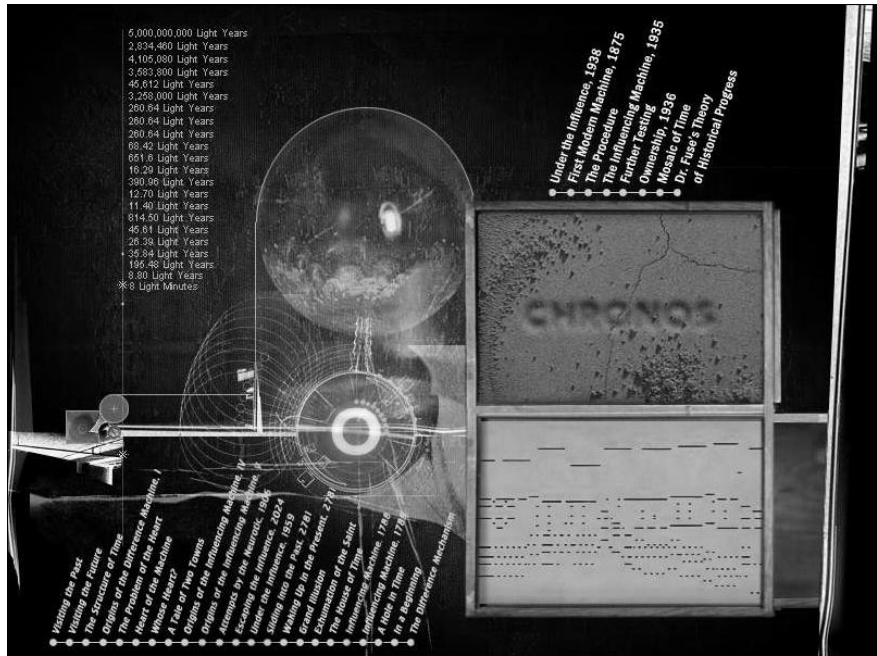


Figure 4-4 The main screen of the Logos segment of TOC offers a music-box graphic (bottom right). As the user clicks various lines within the music box, links appear along the bottom left and the top right, indicating various sections of the stories of the Differing and Influencing Machines. The reader is able to gage his or her progress through the story by watching as different sections of the timeline in the top right (unclickable) appear.

Though the reader is given a limited amount of narrative control in the Chronos segment as discussed above, the Logos segment is more concerned with the creation of and the battle for time and for the world in general. Chronicling the invention and eventual downfall of the Influence Machine and the Difference Machine, the Logos section is a navigated when the reader places a delicate crosshair graphic upon a colored line representing one note of the music-box background discovered after the virtual water is emptied from the Logos box on the screen. This method of navigation, unlike the relatively simple, large and linear needle in the Chronos segment, underscores the non-linearity of the narrative in general. Not only is a reader given the choice to move forward or backward in time, skipping around as he or she might in a traditional book, but the reader is given the choice to move into one of the two main segments of the Logos section by choosing from the different-colored lines in the music box. This is a

complex and somewhat random decision-making process: the music box graphic moves in a circular fashion, without clearly defined beginning or end, and there are no markers indicating what segment of text a reader might uncover by clicking any particular line. Non-linearity in this case is not an optional decision; unless the reader spends a large amount of time clicking the colored lines without stopping to experience the nodes they reveal (therefore revealing the entirety of the narrative before experiencing any of it), he or she has very few markers indicating in which direction he or she travels in in the timeline of the narrative, or even what sort of experience he or she will encounter next within the story.

By programming the selection process in this way, the author-creators of *TOC* have both asserted their narrative authority by requiring the reader to go through this process and therefore read the narrative “out of order” and, in the same step, have denied themselves a large portion of the narrative authority by specifically programming an inability to predict the reader’s behavior and therefore, the method in which he or she will experience the narrative. Within the two sections that gradually open segment by segment by the reader’s clicks on the music box, one presents an option for consumption very similar to the print tradition in form: in the *Difference Machine* histories, a reader experiences the narrative textually on mimetic papyrus under the bell jar, scrolling vertically to encompass the text itself. Each link takes the reader to a node explaining the origins of the *Difference Machine* as well as snippets from the lives of people in different eras of history as they are influenced by time itself, symbolized by the *Influencing Machine* and controlled by whoever has possession of it. A reader is unable to return to the main *Logos* screen until he or she has scrolled all the way to the bottom of the varied lengths of text, ostensibly ensuring consumption of each element before proceeding to the next one. Again, however, this leaves a vast amount of choice to the reader in the manner of consumption of the text. Without voiceover or any but print-mimetic graphics and typesetting, this is perhaps the most traditional textual reading experience in *TOC* and is almost a shock after a ten-minute multimedia exposition and a thirty-minute multimedia sequence in the



Chronos section. Simultaneously calling to mind the printed book, scrolled papyrus from the pre-print tradition and mimetic e-book technology, even without automatic presentation of filmic elements such as voice-over and video animation, the textual narrative of *TOC* in this section speaks to the variations of media and generic conventions within born-digital literature.

The other narrative strand of the Logos section, which reveals itself by a horizontal list of links above the Chronos sandbox after a reader clicks the red-colored lines on the music box, proceeds in much the same non-linear pattern as the textual narrative presented in links along the bottom. The difference here, though, is the mode of consumption of the narrative, which is set in almost direct opposition to the textual mode of the other set of links. Rather than offering a pseudo-mimetic reading experience, this series is completely without text (see below).



Figure 4-5 A scene from the Logos segment of *TOC* in which the reader is presented with a non-textual sequence of animations, video, and images while narrator Christian Jara explains various aspects of the Influence Machine in a whispered, sinister-sounding voiceover.

Voiceover, videography, and animation take the place of text in this segment, placing author-creators with non-textual expertise in an elevated position as well as forcing the reader

into a position of deriving meaning almost entirely from multimedia elements rather than from text itself. Here, credited author and director Steve Tomasula is not obviously apparent, though the reader remains aware of his apparent overarching responsibility for the spoken text as well as the direction of the multimedia elements. Additionally, with many focal points to choose from in the animation sequence, the reader is not obviously directed as to which element to focus upon; none are directly related to the Jara's narration, though the whole does attempt to add meaning in a way that seems almost paratextual to add to the spoken text.

The most interesting aspects of the Logos segment of *TOC* are the non-linearity of the narrative, as discussed above, and the widely varying methods by which the author-creators present the story. In some ways marginally similar to a digital version of Random House's *Choose Your Own Adventure* series, *TOC* allows the reader to choose from several narrative paths on the main screen; unlike it, however, the reader's choice is not a binary decision. Even the music box animation underscores the reader's myriad choices by being non-linear itself: the reader does not simply slide a needle backward and forward along a plane, but is invited to use a complex cross-hairs graphic to choose almost any point within the box itself. Though there are, of course, a finite number of screens a reader can view (or, arguably, pages a reader can read) within the narrative, the reader is given full control over the order in which the story is experienced as well as the media by which the story is experienced. There is no "correct" reading of the Logos section of *TOC*, which sets it apart from most of its print predecessors. There is no defined beginning or end, though several different outcomes will eventually lead to scrolling credits identical to those presented inside the front cover of the case.

By providing a narrative without an easily-definable beginning or end, the author-creators of *TOC* give readers a strong sense of temporal agency as well. Because the novel

does not “end” in the same way as a traditionally produced one, the reader is asked to end it on his or her own terms<sup>12</sup>.

Discussing interactive texts in the print tradition in his 2007 essay “The Echo of Narcissism in the Interactive Arts”, Lee Scriver points out that books such as *The Cave of Time*<sup>13</sup> offer “hardly more than the illusion of physical interactivity. Its choices are prescribed binaries, and the same author or authors who wrote the choices also wrote their consequences for the reader or the art’s audience” (283). In *TOC* and particularly in the Logos segment of the novel, Scriver’s criticism of “interactive” narrative holds true in that the reader’s choices are all author-defined, but *TOC* examines the idea that by giving a reader full control of the temporal existence of an interactive narrative, the author-creators are rendered less important, and the text, consequently, receives much more of the reader’s attention. This, simply stated, is why *TOC* is such an excellent example of a truly born-digital work. It’s unreserved and unapologetic use of computer code, graphics, voiceover, animations, videography, and more traditional text, produced by fifteen credited author-creators, calls into question the role of any single author-creator within the collaborative group. In doing so, it also calls into question the role of the reader and the machine language itself, discussed in other chapters of this study. *TOC* as a born-digital narrative not only embraced but required a networked authorship in order to be created and consumed.

---

<sup>12</sup> See Mary-Laure Ryan’s argument quoted in “The Codex Unbound: The (Failed?) Promise of the Hypertext Novel”, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> *The Cave of Time*, published in 1979 and written by Edward Packard, was the first book in the Random House *Choose Your Own Adventure* series

## CHAPTER 5

### JACKSON'S *PATCHWORK GIRL*: AN EARLY LOOK AT HYPERTEXT FICTION

#### 5.1 Hypertext and Narrative Collage

Unlike Tomasula's *TOC*, Shelly Jackson's 1995 hypertext novel *Patchwork Girl* does not immediately proclaim itself to be similar to the traditional print reading experience in any way. While *TOC*, as I mentioned before, made intentional strides towards emphasizing its similarities to the printed novel, both in its cover and its website's promise of a solitary reading experience, *Patchwork Girl* immediately proclaims its difference from print media by its packaging in a simple CD-ROM jewel case. Interestingly, however, the cover insert in the jewel case more closely resembles what reader's might expect from the print tradition: Shelley Jackson's name is listed along with the title of the work and an illustration depicting a woman seemingly created from a collage of various images.

The image and the large-print text on the cover present conflicting ideas, alerting the reader immediately to the main authorship conflict of the work: though one overarching author-creator is credited for the whole, the narrative itself is dependent upon the idea that one solitary body is created from multiple parts. As George Landow points out in his web essay "Stitching Together Narrative, Sexuality, Self: Shelley Jackson's 'Patchwork Girl'":

This digital collage-narrative assembles Shelley Jackson's (and Mary Shelley's and Victor Frankenstein's) female monster, forming a hypertext Everywoman who embodies assemblage, concatenation, juxtapositions, and blurred, recreated identities – one of many digital fulfillments of twentieth-century literary and pictorial collages. (1)

By identifying *Patchwork Girl* as a "collage-narrative", Landow calls attention to the very nature of *Patchwork Girl* as well as the nature of hypertext literature in general: instead of a linear whole with predictable divisions, as describes much of the literature in the print tradition, these

narratives are experienced in bits and pieces, leaving the reader to choose his or her experiential path either on arbitrary or intended tracks. The distinction between arbitration or authorial intention is what truly likens hypertexts like *Patchwork Girl* to works of artistic collage as much as to their literary predecessors.

Upon opening *Patchwork Girl* on his or her computer screen, the reader is presented with a title page that more completely embodies the collage-narrative that is a marker both of the structure of the narrative as well as the structure of the hypertext itself: the title is more completely proclaimed as *Patchwork Girl; or, A Modern Monster*, by Mary/Shelley and Herself. Jackson's intention here is clear: though on the cover art of the CD-ROM, Shelley Jackson receives the only authorship credit and the title is separated from all influences, the title page of the hypertext itself immediately incorporates the varied influences that shape the narrative. The title itself echoes the title of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* in a way that makes it clear that the hypertext is related to this print predecessor in particular. In case this was not sufficient, however, the authorship credit from within the hypertext narrative is itself indicative of the collage. Shelley lists this as a single but shared entity, Mary/Shelley, calling to mind both her first name as well as Mary Shelley's, and combining the two to indicate collaborative authorship and even, in a way, shared personhood between herself and her main literary influence. To complete the authorship collage as it is listed on the title screen, however, Jackson lists Herself as a third author, indicating the protagonist's responsibility for the narrative as well.

To list the text's protagonist as an author draws a parallel from the genre of fictional autobiography in the literary tradition of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, allowing the reader to immediately understand the nature of the narrative as one which explains a life from the first-person point-of-view of the protagonist. In this case, the female companion to Victor Frankenstein's monster, begun but abandoned by Dr. Frankenstein himself in Mary Shelley's original novel, is completed by the authoress and, eventually, the author and her creation

become lovers in a complex manifestation of *Patchwork Girl's* clash between several authorities: author-creators, textual influence, protagonist, and reader. In the first half of the "journal" thread of *Patchwork Girl* (one of five narrative segments in the hypertext), Jackson gives Mary Shelley the voice of the narrator at the time of her reunion with her creation, placing emphasis on the ways in which her patient stitching of the creature's various parts into one whole resulted in a creation no longer under her own control and no longer wholly predictable:

...despite the cold, she will not keep her clothes on for long, romping like a hoydenish child of overgrown proportions she tears the confining garments from her form, baring her scarred and rag-tag flesh. She makes a mockery of my parsimony, for middling seamstress that I am I saved my fine stitchery for her face and hands, imagining that I would find in her a modesty to match her maker's.

She does not resemble me. But then I begin to wonder if I still resemble myself. (Jackson, "appetite" lexia)

Obviously paralleling the creation of an interactive, hypertext narrative, Jackson appropriates Shelley's voice to point out the peril of stitching a living creature from many disparate parts: though at first, the author-creator is inclined to create in his or her own image, the parts by which the whole was "stitched" each contribute and prevent the whole from taking on the complete intended character of the author-creator. In literature in any tradition, this stitching may be said to consist of intertextuality or even of the demands of generic predecessors and artistic influence; in hypertext fiction, on the other hand, not only does the stitching take on those characteristics of its print predecessors, but offers another, more directly influential layer of literary tissue to the whole: they hypertext link.

N. Katherine Hayles points out that hypertext consists of "at minimum the following characteristics: multiple reading paths, some kind of linking mechanism; and chunked text (that is, text that can be treated as discrete units and linked to one another in various arrangements)" (2004, 72). *Patchwork Girl*, like other hypertexts, is experienced in a series of linked lexia, or

chunks of text, connected to one another both within the text and via a map presented to the reader upon opening the hypertext (see below).

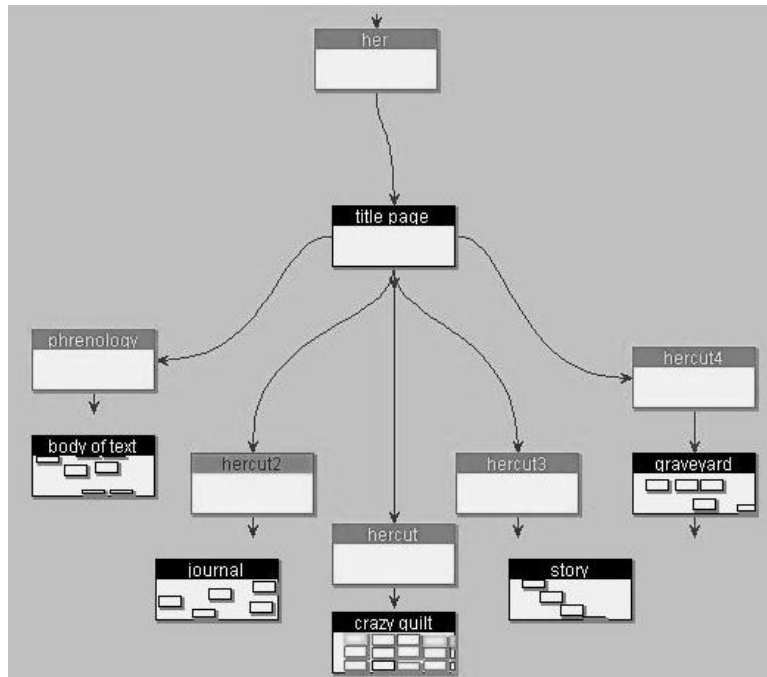


Figure 5-1 The main story map of *Patchwork Girl*, presented to the reader upon opening the hypertext program.

Within the map, the red boxes (shown as light gray in this image) indicate a link to an image: some version of the nude, stitched-together “monster” created by Mary Shelley, shown complete in the “her” link and in various stages of cut-up in the “hercut” links. By clicking around on the body presented by each “hercut” image or the sectioned head presented in the “phrenology” image, the reader is taken to various lexia within the hypertext, and may move around the story by one of several methods: returning to the body-image and clicking various body parts, by returning to the story map and selecting a different section (or a different lexia within a section, separated by empty boxes within the sectional black boxes of the map, by clicking links within the lexia themselves, or by selecting the “Links” button at the top of each lexia and choosing from the options presented there.

The multiple navigational options within *Patchwork Girl* create a narrative experience that is, like its title character and oftentimes narrator, unique to each reader/observer and largely unpredictable even to its author-creator(s). In the lexia “this writing” Jackson addresses the reading experience itself:

Assembling these patched words in an electronic space, I feel half-blind, as if the entire text is within reach, but because of some myopic condition I am only familiar with from dreams, I can see only that part most immediately before me, and have no sense of how that part relates to the rest. When I open a book, I know where I am, which is restful. My reading is spatial and even volumetric...But where am I now? I am in a here and a present moment that has no history and no expectations for the future. (“this writing” lexia)

The assertion that the narrator of this lexia is assembling words in an electronic space immediately leads the reader to the assumption that Jackson is addressing her own hypertext writing process, but as the passage progresses the line between authorship and readership becomes more and more muddled as Jackson compares the process of *either* reading *or* creating a hypertext to that of reading a traditional print book in which an author or reader is able to tell his or herself “I am a third of the way down through a rectangular solid...I am here on the page, here on this line, here, here, here” (Jackson, “this writing”). Jackson, in this passage, is both creator and consumer of her own text – the temporal and spatial jumps between lexia and image, without any clear narrative direction as one would find in a printed novel, render the processes of creation and consumption dependent upon one another. The reader, then, is placed in the position of both consumer and creator as well: by admonishing that the hypertext narrative is not a “restful” experience, Jackson informs her readers that they must become active participants in the assembly of the narrative, and in doing so, gives up a good deal of her own authorial control in homage to the collage-narrative of her creation.



As Michael Pellauer writes, “the patchwork girl is a stitched-together monster, as *Patchwork Girl* is a stitched together narrative, a work that [is] drawn from many genres, a fusing of many traditions and cultural signifiers into one grand *uber-narrative*” (1). By creating, assembling, and consuming a hypertext narrative that is in all discernible ways a collage of authorship, readership, storyline, and image, Jackson appropriated not only the linked, multi-linear format of the hypertext medium for her work, but settled herself in as a part of a large network of author-creators. Much as Jackson’s version of Mary Shelley exchanged physical flesh with her own creation before allowing it to leave her and go its own way in the world, Jackson herself created a collage in which she, herself, was necessarily only one part.

## 5.2 Jackson and the Authorship Network

Jackson acknowledges the influence of the print predecessors of *Patchwork Girl* within the narrative itself rather than, as Tomasula did in *TOC*, listing them in credit acknowledgements within the cover of her work or in a digital credits section anywhere in the novel. In the “scrap bag” lexia, reached by clicking the cut-up image of the patchwork girl in “hercut” from the main storymap, she writes

I have had plenty of time to make the girl. Yet the task was not so easy as you may suppose. I found that I could not compose a female without devoting several months to profound study and laborious disquisition. I...began to collect the materials necessary for my new creation: magic lanterns, peep show boxes, waking dreams, geometrical demonstrations, philo-sophical doctrines, fortifications and impediments, cartographic surveys, and engineering machines of all sorts. (“scrap bag” lexia, author’s emphases)

As Jackson appropriated every word of this section from her various sources and performed a sort of writer’s remix to make them into a paragraph of her own design, she used various methods of emphasis to credit each part of a line to its source: plain text indicated text from Baum’s *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, plain italics from Shelley’s *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus*, underlined italics from Shelley’s “Author Introduction to the Standard Novels

Edition [1831]", and bold text from *Body Criticism: Imagining the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine*. By listing each of these sources in matching emphases below the paragraph itself, Jackson leaves no doubt as to the influences used to create *Patchwork Girl*, but interestingly allows the reader to see past the influences and refocus upon the story itself: upon receiving reader input in the form of a click on any text within the lexia, the reader is presented with the same paragraph but without any emphases and without citation of their original sources. In doing so, Jackson first acknowledges her influences and appropriation but, as the reader is drawn into the network, erases the physical evidence (in the form of the emphases) of them.

Further drawing the reader into her own appropriation of previous works, a click within the non-emphasized portion of the scrap bag brings the reader to another paragraph which both acknowledges and distances itself from print predecessors:

At first I couldn't think what to make her of. I collected bones from charnel houses, paragraphs from *Heart of Darkness*, and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame, but finally in searching through a chest in a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, I came across a fabric of relations, an old patchwork quilt, which my grandmother once made when she was young. ("research" lexia)

This paragraph, presented without emphasis, may initially be read as Jackson's own work, written both in her own voice and that of Mary Shelley as she created her female version of Frankenstein's monster. Once again, however, reader interaction changes the acknowledgement of influence: upon clicking, the reader is immediately taken to the same paragraph with various emphases proclaiming bits and pieces of the paragraph as being appropriated from Baum's *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*; Shelley's *Frankenstein*; Boulter, Joyce, Smith, and Bernstein's "Getting Started with Storyspace", and Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Once again, as in the scrap bag lexia, the reader is shown

that only the mashup is of Jackson's own creation: there is not a single word or phrase within the lexia that is attributed to Jackson herself.

This shifting of authority shown in these lexia between Jackson as the credited author-creator, the reader as a creator and as a consumer of her text, the influences of print predecessors and the ability of the machine display code to manipulate the appearance of influence speak strongly to Hardt and Negri's theory of a collective culture, no longer with a discernible head, working together but individually rather than as an intentionally collaborative network. In *Patchwork Girl* as a whole, and particularly in these and other lexia which specifically attribute various roles of authorship in a collage of influence, it is difficult if not impossible to discern where the "head" or main authority of the reading should lie. As a work of born-digital literature, then, *Patchwork Girl* anticipates the cultural shift detected by Hardt and Negri and attempts to subvert traditional roles of creation and consumption – and again of material and immaterial value – by a shifting of authority within the narrative itself, played out both obviously (as in the paragraphs with emphasized attributions to previous works) and subtly throughout the text.

This shifting of authority, common between as well as within lexia in *Patchwork Girl*, contributes to and expands upon the collage-narrative discussed earlier in this chapter. What cannot be ignored, however, is the collage presented in the monochrome images in each of the "hercut" links as well as in both the descriptions and images of the narratorial (and, it could be argued, authorial) *Patchwork Girl* herself. Even the image of "her", accessed immediately upon opening the program and available at the top of the overarching story map and supposedly presenting the narrator in her whole form, shows not only a body that is a collage, but an image itself that has been altered to show its origins in more than one (see below).



Figure 5-2 The “her” image, presented at the beginning of *Patchwork Girl* as well as at the top of the main story map, indicates collage not only in the body of the narrator but in the image itself.

The method Jackson chose here as well as in other images of the Patchwork Girl's body throughout the narrative, speaks to yet another method of literary and artistic appropriation and repurposing: cut-up. Traceable back to the Dadaists of the 1920s, the cut-up method was revived in the 1950s and popularized by author William S. Burroughs. The method consists of taking a linear text and physically cutting it into small words and phrases, and then repurposing the text into a new form. Mirroring collage, which found its artistic birth in Surrealism contemporarily with the Dadaist movement, the idea of deriving meaning from fragmented, cut-up text realigned in random ways is often echoed in hypertext literature and art, so much so that a website, the Ultimate Cut-Up Machine<sup>14</sup>, allows users to glean small snippets of text from various news sources and recombine snippets of them into red-and-blue colored new text not dissimilar from Jackson's mashup of appropriated sources in the “scrap bag” and “research” lexia.

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.christopherarcella.com/cutupmachine/>

Burroughs's famous assertion from "Origins and Theory of Tape Cut-Ups" that "when you cut into the present, the future leaks out" is particularly apt when considering the narrative paths, structure, and subject matter of *Patchwork Girl*. Created by grave robbery just as her textual predecessor had been, the overarching narrator of Jackson's hypertext embodies the idea that the present is nothing more than a collection, or collage, of moments and pieces of the past. Jackson emphasizes this as the narrator often refers to various parts of her body and the agency they employ outside of the whole:

My trunk belonged to a dancer, Angela, a woman of low birth but high sights, and a mimic ear for the accents of the upper class...My body is both insinuating and naïve: moments of knowingness – of art manipulative and interested – punctuate my abandonment, and knowingness opens into chaos. ("trunk" lexia)

In acknowledging the source of each of her body parts, the narrator also acknowledges that she is not wholly herself: she is a cut-up, just as Burroughs's audio and textual creations were cut-ups, and in reading each of her body parts, she reads both the past and the future. Here the narrator is placed in the position of the author-creator as well as of the reader and the protagonist. By reading the past in her own body and providing a textual translation of her reading to other consumers, the narrator is the creator and the created, the producer and the consumer, the material and the immaterial – all rolled into one stitched-together body.

Jackson's work here calls attention to the structure of the authorship network itself by examining the ill-defined roles taken on by the various authorities within her own text and within, I would argue, all born-digital texts. The narrator, by becoming a cut-up version of the past, acts as an intermediary between them. The author-creator(s) themselves, headlined by credited author Shelley Jackson but each (especially print authoress Mary Shelley) given weighty power both in intentional and implied attribution and appropriation within the text, speak to the network's dependence upon fragments of past traditions. The reader, given unprecedented license to interact and control the multi-linear narrative becomes a vital part of the network here

as well, choosing to construct and consume the narrative in a way unique to his or her own experience. Finally, as is the defining characteristic of all born-digital texts, Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* is impossible to experience through traditional print medium, completing the authorship network in its dependence upon machines and computer code for its very existence.

### 5.3 The Media, the Interface, and the Message

Hayles points out in "Flickering Connectivities in Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis" that books "create rich cognitive environments, but they passively embody the cognitions of writer, reader, and book designer rather than actively participate in cognition themselves" (2000, 5). Hayles draws an important distinction here, and one I wish to focus on as perhaps the defining characteristic of born-digital media: while printed texts are *receptacles* of the ideas of their authors as well as of other influences, computer code actually works to influence the text of its own accord, often in ways unintended or unpredicted by the writers of that code and of the texts themselves.

Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, as well as Joyce's *afternoon, a story*, were created by a software program called Storyspace and, in fact, are part of a school of works known as the Storyspace School. Formed by digital media scholars and artists Michael Joyce, Jay David Boulter, and John B. Smith, Storyspace was designed and still exists as a user-friendly interface in which to create hypertext narratives, though "[t]he limitations of Storyspace as a Web authoring program are significant (for example, it has a very limited palette of colors and cannot handle sound files that will play on the Web)" (Hayles 2008, 6). *Patchwork Girl*, one of the later works in the Storyspace School, is clearly lacking in the multimedia environment espoused by more sophisticated born-digital texts such as *TOC*, as it consists solely of text, simply rendered images, and hypertext links. Nevertheless, because of its combination of originality and heavy reliance on its print predecessors as well as reader interaction and computer code, *Patchwork Girl* is a perfect example of how the authorship network in born-digital literature is a delicate balance of influence between both its human authorities and the machine on which it is read.

As Hayles assesses, “authorial design, the actions of an intelligent machine, and the user’s receptivity are joined in a recursive cycle that enacts in microcosm our contemporary situation of living and acting within intelligent environments” (2008, 155).

In “Digital Code and Literary Text,” Florian Cramer writes that “literature and computers meet first of all where alphabets and code, human language and machine language intersect, secondly in the interfacing of analog devices through digital control code” (2). This combination of digital code rendering analog results presents unique abilities both to author and reader, as well as unique experience. On a surface level, *Patchwork Girl* operates more obviously within this mandate than *TOC*: whereas *TOC* attempts to mimic the solitary reading experience of a print novel by forcing the reader into full-screen mode and by allowing no interaction with the actual program by which the narrative was created, *Patchwork Girl*’s Storyspace environment very obviously remains within its programmed setting. The reader is presented not only with the textual and graphic aspects of the narrative, but is presented with an environment of menus and maps that does not require full-screen use. The reader, then, operates directly within the digital environment and is keenly aware of doing so, and is also left free to multitask on the computer itself, moving into and out of the narrative experience without having to close the program or even render it nearly invisible by minimizing it.

On a deeper level, however, lies the fact that not only does the digital medium change the environment and options given to a reader, but that the medium acts upon the text itself. In “The Boundaries of Digital Narrative: A Functional Analysis”, Juan Gutiérrez asserts that the feedback of the system itself is a continuation of McLuhan’s asseveration that “the media is the message”:

*In digital narrative, the media acts on the message. The cycle of feedback in digital narrative is: (i) Readers receive a piece of information and, based on this, they execute a new interaction with the system, (ii) The computer then takes that input and applies logic rules that have been programmed into it by the author. (iii) The computer takes*

content from the information layer and renders it to the reader in the presentation layer, and (iv) the first step is repeated. (95, author's emphasis)

The difference between interaction with a digital narrative and a print narrative, then, lies as much within the digital medium itself as it does within the environment of multi-linearity and interaction. In *Patchwork Girl*, the cycle of feedback presented here is related to the use of hypertext links for navigation within the narrative. I would summarize that, according to the design Gutiérrez has laid out for the feedback loop in digital narrative, (i) the reader is presented with a map, a graphic, or a lexia and clicks on a certain portion of it; (ii) the computer assess the location of the reader's "click" and, reading the hypertext code Jackson and Storyspace have hidden within it, directs the reader to another portion of the narrative; (iii) the computer displays the lexia, map, or graphic as is appropriate to Jackson's logical, coded demands, and (iv) the reader once again experiences a portion of the narrative and clicks again, restarting the feedback loop. This continues indefinitely in *Patchwork Girl*, as there is no point in the narrative at which the reader is no longer presented with options and is summarily removed from the narrative experience. Though the feedback loop works in much the same way in all works of born-digital literature, including *TOC*, the indefinite (and even infinite) nature of it in *Patchwork Girl* serves to emphasize the feedback loop in way inherently distinct from traditional linear, print narrative.

The distinction between Gutiérrez's logic layer (seen in step ii) and presentation layer (step iii) is the central key to understanding much of the distinction between born-digital literature and its print predecessors. Hayles aptly states that "digital computers have an Oreo-like structure with an analogue bottom, a frothy digital middle, and an analogue top" (2000, 2). The analogue layers, analogous with Gutiérrez's presentation layer, are *resemblance* layers: when the reader perceives, for example, a textual lexia displayed on his or her screen, he or she reads the lexia in much the same manner as would be appropriate in a printed text without conscious awareness that what he or she is experiencing is actually a mimetic display



comprised of a constantly-refreshing sequence of pixels rather than the durable display of embossed symbols he or she would experience in a printed book.

Hayles's "frothy digital middle", including but not limited to Gutierrez's logic layer, consists of all the processes that contribute to the logical functions coded by the author-creator, the translation and display of the analogue layer, and the computer's interaction with human decision-making processes. This digital layer is generally invisible to a reader (as is mostly the case in *Patchwork Girl*) unless the text itself is comprised of displayed digital code. The reader, for example, is not presented with the line of HTML code which targets a specific portion of text when a certain part of an image is clicked, nor is he or she privy to the logical processes that allow the computer to convert coded commands to analogue resemblance.

That does not, however, mean that the reader is unaffected by these processes and is able to consume the text (even within a mimetic textual lexia) in the same manner as he or she would a printed book. Hayles points out that

[t]he interplay between analogue and digital takes place in a different way with screenic text than with print, and these differences turn out to be important for human perception. With present-day screens, reading speed on screen is typically about one-sixth of that with print. Although the factors causing this difference are not well understood, they undoubtedly have something to do with the dynamic nature of screen images. (2000, 3)

Dynamic images and letters, constantly refreshing and flickering over their layers of computer code, cannot be experienced in the same way as the durable symbols of the printed book. The reader, according to Hayles, is not only forced to interact with a multi-linear born-digital narrative such as *Patchwork Girl*, but is forced to slow down his or her normal reading speed in order to even read the simplest-seeming textual elements.

The reading experience, then, is as completely changed as the authorship experience. This change, as Hayles and Gutierrez as well as many other digital media scholars, have noted, has to do with the nature of the media itself, but I would expand upon that by adding the

medium to the authorship network as its own entity with its own form of authority. Even in texts such as the ones I have analyzed in this study, neither of which employ sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (AI) routines that allow the computer to, in effect, make its own decisions about the text and the reading experience, the medium acts upon the text itself simply by virtue of its logical and technical processes.

Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, by virtue of its shifting of authority between author-creator, literary predecessors, readers, programmers, and the digital medium itself, is an exemplar of networked authorship at work. Created within a digital environment and specifically for a digital environment, this born-digital text also embodies the cultural shift from the single-headed body politic to the multi-faceted, collective culture that Hardt and Negri envision as our society transitions from an industrial paradigm to a networked one. The credited author-creator is not the authority, but is one of many cultural voices heard within the multitude of dead and living influences, humans and intelligent machines, and producers and consumers, just as Jackson's Mary Shelley, pulling bits and pieces from the past to create a creature with a unique future, was not the final authority over the being she stitched together on her own table.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

In “From Work to Text”, Roland Barthes asserts that “the metaphor of the Text is that of the network” (1986, 61). Barthes, just as he did in “The Death of the Author”, uncannily anticipates the shift in authorship from its pseudo-solitary journey within the print tradition to a networked, collective endeavor within born-digital literature. In other words, as N. Katherine Hayles, citing Jay David Bolter and George Landow, writes,

Barthes’s description of “text,” with its dispersion, multiple authorship, and rhizomatic structure, uncannily anticipates electronic hypertext (Bolter, *Writing Space*; Landow, *Hypertext*)...Written twenty years before the advent of the microcomputer, [“From Work to Text”] stands in the ironic position of anticipating what it cannot anticipate. (2000, 1)

Though it would be incorrect to assert that Barthes could not and did not anticipate the shift towards collective creation that headlines the shift in theoretical and practical conceptions of authorship, Hayles correctly points out that Barthes’s focus remained on the print tradition and only coincidentally mirrors the changes wrought by the widespread use of the digital medium in today’s society.

Within the new paradigm set by the digital medium is the opportunity and the expectation for readers to become more than passive consumers of texts dominated by solitary authors. With the advent of born-digital literature, the available platform for readers to criticize and interact with narratives and author-creators outside the texts themselves, and with the new opportunities set for instant interaction and collaboration between author-creators, readers, intelligent machines, and textual predecessors, the necessary change to our conceptions of author-creators in relationship to the authorship network is clear: authors, even those operating

within the print culture or the mimetic digital culture of the dedicated e-reader, are less able than they ever have been to exist in a vacuum of the solitary genius, nor even in the textually-ruled world Barthes proposes in “The Death of the Author”. The new model of authorship in the face of digital interactivity will necessarily be a collective, networked one, and that collectivity will in and of itself change the nature of authorship within the digital medium.

As Martha Woodmansee observes, “As the collaborative nature of contemporary research and problem-solving fosters multiple authorship in more and more spheres, electronic technology is hastening the demise of the illusion that writing is solitary and originary...The computer is dissolving the boundaries essential to the survival of our modern fiction of the author as the sole creator of unique, original works” (25). Written in 1994, Woodmansee’s comments predate Jackson’s *Patchwork Girl* by two years and Tomasula’s *TOC* by nearly two decades, but her comments both anticipate the creation of works such as these and respond to hypertexts already created in the Storyspace School as well as in other digital literary traditions. Recognizing that the technology available to hypertext authors at the time was rather rudimentary, Woodmansee analyzes the technology used to create *Patchwork Girl* and looks forward to the kind of technology used to create and experience narratives like *TOC*. By noting their collaborative nature, if not their actual collective and networked nature, Woodmansee recognizes the cultural and creative shifts as well as the challenges to traditional authorship being brought about by the advent of born-digital literature.

These challenges to traditional authorship serve as something of an anticipatory headline for the more widespread cultural changes being marshaled in by the ease of access to digital and networked media. As the fall of the body politic as a political structure indicates a large shift in the relationship between the rulers and the ruled, Hardt and Negri assert that the global empire “creates and rules over a truly global society that becomes ever more autonomous while Empire relies on it ever more heavily” (335). This change in relationship is being slowly brought about by the power of society to act collectively on a global level, a power

that has been growing with the advent of more and more advanced communications systems and has come to a head as digital network systems allow for instantaneous communication and collaboration between citizens on a large scale. This ability for the ruled to work in a fashion simultaneously autonomous and collective has been evidenced in such actions as the January 18-19, 2012 blackout of Wikipedia<sup>15</sup> and other social media giants, which forced lawmakers to abandon support for the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), as well as in the Occupy Wall Street movement and smaller efforts like the attempted subversion of Facebook's new post-promotion fees by bloggers at *Dangerous Minds*<sup>16</sup>. Each of these popular actions, though they met with varying degrees of success, demonstrate the ability of a networked population to communicate and thus move towards eliminating the need for sovereign control in any form, even collective.

This movement towards collective influence of the ruled over the rulers carries over and is in some ways anticipated and headlined by the condition of authorship in born-digital media. The author, no longer considered a "solitary genius" and no longer able to be considered as the sole producer of text, now shares a similar condition with the rulers as the former head of the body politic, sharing authority with collaborators (both intentionally and as a matter of textual or media influence), with intelligent machines, and with their readers on an unprecedented level. Though this is certainly the most obvious in cases of born-digital texts such as Shirley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*, Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story*, and Steve Tomasula's *TOC*, as I discussed in previous chapters, the vast majority of texts are still based within the print tradition and the author-creators of printed (and mimetic e-book) literature still face many of the same conditions as lawmakers are facing with media blackouts and social-media-connected Occupy movements and subversive bloggers: their readers, the consumers of their texts, are no longer satisfied with passivity and interior experience.

---

<sup>15</sup>See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop\\_Online\\_Piracy\\_Act#Wikipedia\\_blackout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stop_Online_Piracy_Act#Wikipedia_blackout)

<sup>16</sup>See Chapter Two of this study for more information on *Dangerous Minds* and its subversive use of Facebook's new Promote feature to rally dissent among their 50,000+ users.

The modern reader, in the same way as the ruled in Hardt and Negri's immaterial paradigm, can no longer be overlooked as not only a consumer, but a producer of text. Just as the eighteenth-century reader of the romantic *feuilleton* expected high adventure and unpredictable occurrences within otherwise-ordinary lives and modern readers expect repetition (Eco 165), the modern reader is coming to expect interactivity and agency within narrative as well as extratextually in the form of direct communication with the author-creator him- or herself. Born-digital literature, with its dependence upon digital media and reader interaction, provides an interesting preview of what I believe readers will come to expect as our paradigmatic and societal transition continues though I would once again caution as viewing this transition as a completed process. Born-digital literature is still in its infancy, as are social media and other methods of communication and interaction

In a similar fashion to the reader's transition from passivity to interactivity, author-creators themselves are no longer wholly subject to the traditional corporate gateways into the published world of print literature: just as Facebook and similar social media and blogging sites turned former readers into authors and former observers into actors, digital publishing platforms have allowed author-creators once bound by the caprices of a corporate (or, in some localities, government-controlled) publication process to take control of their own processes without the great outlay of money that once characterized the self-publication process, therefore allowing author-creators themselves to subvert the authority of the corporation while opening themselves to interaction (and therefore subversion) by their readers. The most successful of self-published author-creators again bypass corporate marketing techniques by using social media to their advantage, reaching audiences of literally millions of potential readers by offering their audience the personal interaction it has come to expect on sites such as Facebook, Goodreads, and various forums and blogs.

The shifts in authorship and authority would not be possible without the ongoing transition of material to immaterial value, or from industry to the network and without the blurring

of lines between home and work, public and private, personal and professional. In this way, the shifting of authorship from an individual to a network is both *indicative of* and *because of* the larger paradigm shift occurring due to the advent and widespread use of digital media for communication, production, and consumption of immaterial goods.

Though I do not believe that the advent and large-scale use of the Internet in the creation and consumption of narrative texts will spell out the death of the printed text altogether nor of the novel as a genre, it is clear that as cultural production and consumption continues to shift from physical media to digital media, the days of the solitary author and his or her overarching authority over text are coming to an end.

## REFERENCES

- Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." 1977. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 125-30. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. "From Work to Text." *The Rustle of Language*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1986. 56-64. Print.
- Baumann, Nick. "Snow White and the 7 Droids." *Twitter.com*. 30 Oct. 2012. Web. 30 Oct. 2012.
- Bennett, Andrew. *The Author*. New York: Routledge: The Taylor and Frances E-Library, 2004. Kindle Edition.
- Bloom, Harold. "A Meditation upon Priority, and a Synopsis." 1973. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 131-41. Print.
- Bolter, J. David, Michael Joyce, and John B. Smith. *Storyspace*. Computer software. *Storyspace*. Vers. 2.5.0. Eastgate Systems, Inc., 2009. Web. 10 Sept. 2012. <<http://www.eastgate.com/storyspace/index.html>>.
- Burke, Sean. "The Ethics of Signature." *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 285-90. Print.
- Burke, Sean. "Reconstructing the Author." Introduction. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. Xv-Xxx. Print.
- Burke, Sean. "The Twentieth-Century Controversy." *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 63-71. Print.
- Burroughs, William S. "Origin and Theory of the Tape Cut-Ups." *Break Through in Grey Room*. Sub Rosa, 1989. CD.
- Cayley, John. "The Code Is Not the Text (unless It Is the Text)." *Electronic Book Review*. 10 Oct. 2002. Web. 15 Apr. 2012. <[electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/literal](http://electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/literal)>.



- Cramer, Florian. "Digital Code and Literary Text." *Netzliteratur*. 2001. Web. 11 Feb. 2012.  
<[http://www.netzliteratur.net/cramer/digital\\_code\\_and\\_literary\\_text.html](http://www.netzliteratur.net/cramer/digital_code_and_literary_text.html)>.
- Eliot, T.S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." 1960. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 73-80. Print.
- FanFiction.net*. Web. 21 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.fanfiction.net/>>.
- Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. *The Anxiety of Obsolescence: The American Novel in the Age of Television*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2006. Print.
- Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy*. New York and London: New York UP, 2011. Kindle Edition.
- Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?" 1977. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 233-45. Print.
- Guertin, Carolyn. *Digital Prohibition: Piracy and Authorship in New Media Art*. London: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2012. Print.
- Gutierrez, Juan B. "The Boundaries of Digital Narrative: A Functional Analysis." *Literatures in the Digital Era: Theory and Praxis*. Ed. Amelia Sanz and Dolores Romero. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. 85-102. Print.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Kindle Edition.
- Hartling, Florian. "Hypertext and Collective Authors: The Influence of the Internet on the Formation of New Concepts of Authorship." *Literatures in the Digital Era: Theory and Praxis*. Ed. Amelia Sanz and Dolores Romero. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. 289-96. Print.
- Hayles, N. Katherine. *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2008. Print.
- Hayles, N. Katherine. "Intermediation: The Pursuit of a Vision." *New Literary History* 38 (2009): 99-125. Print.

- Hayles, N. Katherine, Nick Montfort, Scott Rettberg, and Stephanie Strickland, eds. *Electronic Literature Collection*. Vol. One. College Park, Maryland: Electronic Literature Organization, October 2006. Web.
- Hayles, N. Katherine. "Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis." *Poetics Today* 25.1 (Spring 2004): 67-90. Print.
- Jackson, Shelley. *Patchwork Girl*. Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 2001. Computer software.
- Jenkins, Henry. "Multiculturalism, Appropriation, and the New Media Literacies: Remixing Moby Dick." *Mashup Cultures*. Ed. Stefan Sonvilla-Weiss. Germany: Springer-Verlag/Wien, 2010. 98-119. Print.
- Joyce, Michael. *Afternoon, a Story*. Cambridge, MA: Eastgate Press, 1996. Computer software.
- King, Stephen, and Peter Straub. *Black House: A Novel*. New York: Random House, 2001. Print.
- Lacetti, Jessica. "Where to Begin?: Multiple Narrative Paths in Web Fiction." *Narrative Beginnings: Theories and Practices*. Ed. Brian Richardson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2008. 179-90. Print. *Frontiers of Narrative*.
- Landow, George P. "Stiching Together Narrative, Sexuality, Self: Shelley Jackson's "Patchwork Girl"" *Cyberartsweb.Org*. Web. 9 Oct. 2012.  
<<http://cyberartsweb.org/cpace/ht/pg/pgmain.html>>.
- Lethem, Jonathan. "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism Mosaic." *Sound Unbound*. Ed. Paul D. Miller. Cambridge: MIT, 2008. 25-51. Print.
- Lunenfeld, Peter. *The Secret War Between Downloading and Uploading: Tales of the Computer as Culture Machine*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2011. Print.
- Metzger, Richard. "Facebook: I Want My Friends Back." *Dangerous Minds*. 24 Oct. 2012. Web. 24 Oct. 2012.  
<[http://dangerousminds.net/comments/facebook\\_i\\_want\\_my\\_friends\\_back](http://dangerousminds.net/comments/facebook_i_want_my_friends_back)>.

- Miller, Nora. "Wikipedia and the Disappearing 'Author'" *ETC* (January 2005): 37-40. Print.
- "Modern Architecture - Google Headquarters." *Funworth*. 4 Apr. 2010. Web. 13 Sept. 2012.  
<<http://funworth.blogspot.com/2010/04/modern-architecture-google-headquarters.html>>.
- Moulthrop, Stuart. *Victory Garden*. Cambridge, MA: Eastgate Systems, 2002. Computer software.
- Nesbit, Molly. "What Was an Author?" 1987. *Authorship: From Plato to the Postmodern*. Ed. Sean Burke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995. 247-62. Print.
- Ng, Alina. "When Users Are Authors: Authorship in the Age of Digital Media." *Vanderbilt Journal Of Entertainment & Technology Law* 12.4 (2010): 853-88. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 9 Sept. 2012.
- Pellauer, Michael. "A Shape in the Network, a Ghost in the Narration." *Cyberartsweb.Org*. Web. 22 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.cyberartsweb.org/cpace/ht/pg/pellauer.html>>.
- Pinder, Julian. "The Codex Unbound: The (Failed?) Promise of the Hypertext Novel." *Philament Bound* (December 2007): 39-60. Print.
- Rettberg, Scott. "Time and the Machine: Steve Tomasula's and Stephen Farrell's TOC." *Vagrant* (March 2010). *Retts.net*. 2010. Web. 19 Sept. 2012.  
<[http://retts.net/documents/Tomasula\\_TOC.pdf](http://retts.net/documents/Tomasula_TOC.pdf)>.
- Rettburg, Scott. "All Together Now: Collective Knowledge, Collective Narratives, and Architectures of Participation." *Retts.net*. 2005. Web. 19 Sept. 2012.  
<<http://retts.net/documents/cnarrativeDAC.pdf>>.
- Scrivener, Lee. "The Echo of Narcissism in Interactive Arts." *Literatures in the Digital Era*. Ed. Amelia Sanz and Dolores Romero. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2007. 277-87. Print.
- Tomasula, Steve, Stephen Farrell, and Christian Jara. *TOC*. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: FC2, 2009. Computer software.

Tomasula, Steve. "TOC: A New-Media Novel." *TOC: A New-Media Novel*. 2009. Web. 13 Oct. 2012. <<http://www.tocthenovel.com/>>.

Woodmansee, Martha. "On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity." *The Construction of Authorship*. Ed. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1994. 15-28. Print.

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Tricia Dupew received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in English from Texas A&M University in 2001. She taught English as a Second Language in the Texas public school system for ten years before receiving a Master of Arts in English from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2012. Her research is currently focused upon authorship questions in digital media creation and the interaction of intelligent machines with production and consumption of literary texts.