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Cyborgography: A Pedagogy of the Home Page

Jeff Rice

My students make home pages. This simple activity, which takes place in networked computer classrooms, prompts a number of questions for me regarding pedagogy and writing. What is it about the home page that makes it a form of writing? Where does the home page belong in writing instruction? What is the relationship between writing home pages and general writing assignments that often ask students to explore personal narratives or construct arguments? How does the home page assignment reflect other practices relevant in the composition classroom? Is there a pedagogy for teaching home page construction?

I ask these questions because of the role personal writing plays in both home page writing and many composition courses. Home pages often allow writers a place on the Web to discuss items of personal interest; likewise, many first-year writing courses incorporate the personal into their curricula: “We teach students how writing discovers the self and shares it with others,” Erika Lindemann (2001: 7) writes in A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers. “Through writing,” The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing (Axelrod and Cooper 1997: 3) notes, “we learn to reflect deeply on our personal experience and to examine critically our most basic assumptions. Thus writing enables us to understand ourselves better.” I wonder what role technology, and in particular the home page, might play in this process. My purpose is to theorize how writing instruction, and consequently writing, changes when we apply technology to personal expression. I want to find a way to juxtapose the per-
personal writing valued in composition courses with the home page, a typical
and familiar place of personal expression.

In composition studies, personal writing has often been defined
through the concepts of clarity and coherence. The rhetorical need for clar-
ity and coherence belongs to a long tradition of writing pedagogy dating to
Aristotle’s remark in *The Rhetoric* that “a good style is, first of all, clear”
(Cooper 1960: 185). Aristotle’s interest in clarity derived from his usage of
the topoi, set argumentative positions audiences would recognize as famil-
iar (thus helping the discourse to be understood). Following this rhetorical
tradition, writing instructors teach students how to reach a given audience
by conforming to clear and coherent, established discursive conventions;
in other words, students learn how to create familiar writing within familiar
situations. On the Web, consultants like Jakob Nielsen (2000, 2002), or orga-
nizations like the World Wide Web Consortium, also set standards to quickly
establish rules that will instill clarity and coherence in format and design.2
These writers understand the Web (and the home page), too, as a place for
familiar writing. When Nielsen, for instance, teaches home page writing, he
situates his instructions in terms of clarity. “Use simple sentence structures,”
Nielsen remarks. “Convoluted writing and complex words are even harder to
understand online” (2002). On his own home page, Nielsen writes, “Com-
plexity or confusion make people go away. Of course, all other aspects of bad
web design should be fixed as well, but if the homepage doesn’t communicate
what users can do and why they should care about the website, you might as
well not have a website at all” (2002). The framing of Web writing as an issue
of clarity prompts me to consider how such a rhetoric might affect or hinder
the ways we teach new media like hypertext. I want to consider how clarity
and coherence might not suit a specific practice of Web writing, and I want
to propose that composition studies imagine unclear methods of home page
(and thus personal) writing.

**Confession**
I own a home page. Every semester, I change my home page to reflect my
attitudes toward that semester’s course work. My home page, however, is
anything but clear. Typically, it indicates my latest efforts to experiment with
design, to introduce new JavaScripts or style sheets I’ve discovered, and to
present myself to my students as a credible instructor of Web writing (I can
teach Web writing because I do it myself). I use this opportunity to do some-
thing different. Readers of my home page, for instance, have to figure out for

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themselves what happens when the cursor rolls over an image of Elvis, where the various links go to (some are not labeled), and who I am.

I consider the home page a form of writing as important as any other form of writing taught in a composition classroom. The home page introduces writers to readers much in the genre of the personal writing assignment. The home page declares: this is who I am, where I’m from, and what I’m interested in. The central point (the main idea) of personal writing concentrates on the narrator’s exposition of his or her monumental and interesting events navigated through various anecdotes, some trivial, some not, all revealing a greater lesson or issue.

My home page presents a version of who I am, what I feel, or what I have seen. As Jay David Bolter (2000: 17) claims, this kind of Web writing contributes to identity formation: “The World Wide Web, too, permits us to construct our identities in and through the sites that we create as well as those that we visit.” In this sense, the home page expands composition’s interest in personal narrative by contributing to a growing fascination with hybrid identities fashioned out of technological innovations. Bolter elaborates in more detail on the hybrid nature of the home page: “The homepage is a combination of earlier verbal or visual forms, the résumé, the portfolio, and even in some cases the autobiographical sketch. . . . beyond [these forms] the homepage offers the opportunity for seemingly unlimited self-representation—the opportunity to publish oneself to a potential audience of millions” (20). Bolter’s notion of the home page as hybrid in many ways contradicts issues of clarity popularized elsewhere in many of the composition studies texts and textbooks I read or assign. Even though I typically assign texts that preach clarity and cohesion to students (guides like Hacker’s A Writer’s Reference), on my home page, I don’t present myself to my audience in a clear way. I leave my home page as a place of ambiguity. If my home page narrates who I am, I am not making its purpose very clear.

This point of self-referentiality becomes more important when I reflect on the typical first assignment of any class I teach in a networked classroom. Since we will spend considerable time learning HTML to write for the Web, I have students quickly get familiar with how HTML works by asking them to make a home page. The home page assignment provides needed firsthand experience with Web writing by allowing students to learn from immediate experience. It provides me with additional time to learn about each student as I read over his or her work. It also gives us a chance to learn writing strategies that we will engage with in more complicated Web writing assignments.

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The home page assignment, therefore, presents itself as a way for students to become familiar with Web writing. The home page, Gregory Ulmer (2003: 94) tells us, marks the position of the familiar. By its very name—"home"—we associate the site with a sense of familiarity. However, in his critique of David Siegel's *Creating Killer Web Sites* (1996), Ulmer develops a theory of defamiliarization that questions Siegel’s usage of the restaurant metaphor to describe a good Web site. The restaurant metaphor states that a good site is like a good menu: it is easy to navigate and understand. Ulmer’s response asks Siegel to consider the moment when one chokes on a meal in the restaurant and must receive the Heimlich maneuver. Playing on the word *Heimlich* (from Freud’s notion of the uncanny—*Unheimlich*), Ulmer employs the choking incident to bring attention to the Web’s often unfamiliar constitution. In response to Siegel’s emphasis on the familiar, Ulmer counters with a call for an unfamiliar Web experience, the *Unheimlich* maneuver, in which the familiar (the canny) becomes the uncanny. “The rhetorical maneuver,” Ulmer writes, “involves mapping a relationship between first-aid and the uncanny, and applying the results as figurative instructions for online composition” (2003: 97). Following my own ambiguous home page writing, I am interested in expanding Ulmer’s notion of uncanny Web writing to the specific genre of the home page. To teach the home page as Web writing, I need to explore what happens to student writers when they enter the virtual writing environment. I need to develop a method for teaching *Unheimlich* rhetorics, that is, unfamiliar approaches to composition and personal writing that take place on the home page.

**Creating a Theory of the Home Page: Cyborgography**

My reason for expanding Ulmer’s *Unheimlich* rhetoric is to create a method for teaching home page writing that challenges the familiar assumptions accepted by both Web writing and composition studies. This challenge is meant to push composition studies into thinking about how new media (like the Web) demand new practices and pedagogies. To create my own practice, I must, however, begin with familiar theoretical positions. The rationale for doing so involves ethos (my ideas are not out of the clear blue, nor are they meant to be construed as bizarre for the sake of unfamiliarity) as well as practicality (all new ideas build upon old ideas). Therefore, I propose a theory of home page writing that builds off the genre of personal writing (the old, signified by genres like autobiography) and appends the work of cyberculture (the new) as a means toward creating an *Unheimlich* rhetoric. I call this new genre of home page writing *cyborgography*. Borrowing the popular science fiction
term cyborg, the cross between machine and human, cyborgography situates student writing in terms of new technology and the cyborgian legacy associated with such developments. In 1960, Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline (1995: 31) coined the term cyborg to explain a new state of human conditioning for life in outer space: “The Cyborg deliberately incorporates exogenous components extending the self-regulatory control function of the organism to adapt it to new environments.” A figure meant to merge the familiar (human life) with the unfamiliar (exogenous components), the cyborg offered scientific research an appropriate model for future identity formation theories that hypothesized a state of being that transgresses contemporary living conditions. The scientific description of a cyborg organism has since fused into popular culture through a variety of media representations. As Chris Hables Gray, Steven Mentor, and Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera (1995: 2) note,

There is no one kind of cyborg. To borrow from the future/present world of science fiction, where most cyborg theorizing has taken place until recently, cyborgs can range from the barely organic Terminating, merely a human skin over a complete robot, to Chief Engineer Geordi La Forge of the liberal Federation of United Nations and Planets multicultural fantasy Star Trek: The Next Generation (ST:TNG), with his prosthetic visor. Cyborgs can be “rugged” individuals but they are usually trapped in intense corporate settings, like The Six-Million-Dollar Man of television who works for U.S. intelligence, and Robocop of the Detroit Police, a subsidiary of OmniConsumerProducts (OCP).

Typically, cyborgs capture a state that crosses machine with human. This may include everything from eyeglasses to artificial hearts, from Teletubbies to e-mail (which merges one’s name with a cyberspace location). The notion of a cyborg traditionally applies to identity. Instead of adopting recognizable cyborgian theories that associate the individual as a state of being (i.e., she becomes cyborgian because of her usage of technology or because she owns a home page), my invention of cyborgography considers the relationship between writing and the most familiar of all identity-related Web writing spaces, the home page. In other words, cyborgography works from the question of what comprises identity in the digital age by redirecting focus from the state of being human toward the act of writing. In turn, the cyborg serves as a familiar model for the writing practice I want to develop, a practice that recognizes the hybrid identities we assume when writing in technology-rich environments.

Cyborgography’s purpose is to defamiliarize the writing process in
general so that students may learn more about the complex relationships between writing, technology, and personal experience. However, the familiar experience of creating a home page, framed as a “clear” method of writing, often prevents students from experimenting with what is still a relatively new experience: writing in hypertext. Cyborgography attempts to alleviate this problem by creating a writing practice that teaches how to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Generalized to composition studies, this practice teaches students how to work with unfamiliar rhetorics to figure out how to invent ideas and concepts in unfamiliar writing spaces.

To describe and rationalize cyborgography, I focus on five areas of consideration relevant to writing:

- Pedagogy: the practice of teaching home page writing (in this case, represented by the familiar theoretical position of expressionism);
- Autobiography: the genre most closely related to the home page;
- Theory: the reason and rationale for doing any type of writing (in cyborgography, I relate the theoretical positioning related to code);
- Cyberstudies: the new theoretical concerns justifying why we write for the Web;
- Media: the places where Web writing takes place.

With each element of writing and writing instruction we move from the familiar to the unfamiliar; pedagogy marks the most familiar position to writing instruction, I claim, media the least familiar. In the rest of this essay, I describe each of these issues through key reading selections that elucidate and complicate the areas and that occupy familiar positions in composition studies. These points may be taught to students in a formal way (actually studying the texts in class) or in an informal way (instead of reading the texts for class, highlighting the main points I borrow from each text for students to work with).

Together these five distinct areas inform what I call cyborgography. In itself, the term cyborgography is an unfamiliar one to composition studies. By juxtaposing theories and texts, each of which maintains some degree of familiarity to composition, cyborgography manages to demonstrate to both teachers and students how to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar in the new rhetorical experience of writing the home page. Why I choose the following texts, as opposed to others, then, stems from my own familiarity with composition studies and those texts I feel are relevant to its aims. As Ulmer (1994: 5) notes, “Nor is just one politics or aesthetics or pedagogy available in
a theory but many, depending on who is doing the inventing and within the practices of the institution.”

Expressivism

Peter Elbow’s *Writing without Teachers* (1973) pedagogically defamiliarized writing instruction by proposing that students write about their own experiences. Elbow’s pedagogy introduced new content to student writing (personal subject matter, as opposed to the strict research model) and proposed that writing is a lengthy process in which writers consistently rework their ideas. To emphasize the process of writing over the final product, Elbow proposed a series of freewriting exercises in which students write out their thoughts without any self-editing. Central to Elbow’s theory is how students reject the desire to control every idea or thought: “The developmental model [Elbow’s model], on the other hand, preaches, in a sense, lack of control: don’t worry about knowing what you mean or what you intend ahead of time; you don’t need a plan or an outline, let things get out of hand, let things wander and digress” (32). One metaphor Elbow chooses to explain this process is cooking. “Cooking is the interaction of contrasting or conflicting material,” Elbow writes. “Cooking consists of the process of one piece of material (or one process) being transformed by interacting with another” (49). Thus cooking involves the juxtaposition of unlike material to produce a new idea; it presents itself as a defamiliarizing process and, for this reason, becomes important to cyborgography. Drawing from Ulmer’s metaphor of choking in a restaurant (*Unheimlich*) for a rhetoric of defamiliarization, my inclination is to continue with Elbow’s metaphor of cooking. The details of cooking, however, appear limited, particularly in the example Elbow (55) provides: “First you are writing about a dog you had; then you are writing about sadness; then you are writing about personalities of dogs, then about the effect of the past; then a poem about names; then an autobiographical self-analysis; then a story about your family. Each way of writing will bring out different aspects of the material.”

While I want to use cooking’s focus on contrast and juxtaposition for personal expression (because it promises a defamiliarization of common ideas so that alternative conceptions emerge), the potential of a writing strategy that contrasts dogs with families seems limited to focusing only on familiar situations and experiences. Instead, the general concept of contrast, of juxtaposing personal experience with other issues (political, social, technological), serves cyborgography as a place to begin teaching home page writing. Because juxtaposition (as Bolter teaches me) leads to hybrids in various forms, to engage
with cyborgography, students must learn how to contrast. In turn, I contrast Elbow’s expressivism with Malcolm X’s autobiography.

**Autobiography**

Elbow’s emphasis on contrast extends to Malcolm X’s *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (Haley 1990), a text that provides an example of how the genre of autobiography creates insight through the revelation of personal experience. Since cyborgography asks students to begin to understand their lives through electronic environments, it borrows from Malcolm X’s analogous experiences in the streets of Roxbury, Massachusetts, in the mid-twentieth century. Inexperienced with city life and newly transported from the Midwest, Malcolm X (still called Malcolm Little) worked within the medium of the inner city to learn a new language that would allow him to survive. Words like *stud*, *cat*, *cool*, and *hip* exposed Malcolm X to new vocabularies from which he could shape experience. His later encounters with language construction reveal how new media for expression create further demands on identity formation. The street teaches how Roxbury culture operates. Outside the street, other requirements take over: “I had been the most articulate hustler out there—I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn’t articulate, I wasn’t even functional” (Haley 1990: 171).

After imprisonment for petty theft, Malcolm X reveals what has since become the canonical scene of self-improvement. Reading a dictionary every day teaches Malcolm X the power of language and transforms him into a literate citizen. “I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary—to study, to learn some words. . . . up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life” (172–73). This tale of self-empowerment has reached its zenith for cliché, yet it still maintains strength in defining the focus of the autobiographical genre’s contributions to popular notions of literacy.

In terms of a theory of cyborgography, Malcolm X’s story represents the student writer engaging with the Web for the first time. Malcolm X knows how to speak, yet he finds that different media (the political arena as opposed to the street) require different usages of language. He may know English, but he can’t figure out how to make himself articulate. Similarly, the student writer understands what technology is through her usage of a word processor for writing, her likely ownership of or access to a computer, and her experience surfing the Web at some point. She also interacts with technology in less obvious ways (driving her car, depositing money, ordering airline tickets). Yet how to create self-expression with technology remains an alien task. She
still is not sure how to write in these media. Cyborgography learns from Malcolm X’s empowerment through language acquisition in order to offer a parallel for home page writing. Besides knowing how to use English, students must also know how to work with one technology-oriented language, HTML, even if they cannot write out HTML tags on their own. In other words, similar to Malcolm X’s decoding of context-specific language, students must become familiar, to some extent, with HTML code.

**Code**

A theory of cyborgography can learn about the relationship of code to personal expression through Roland Barthes’s autobiography *Roland Barthes* (1997). Barthes’s work emerges from the question of how the body (personal body/body of writing) relates to textuality. Choosing the autobiography as genre, Barthes demonstrates that personal expression is allusive; its meanings become scattered through various references and signifiers—that is, through code. “My texts are disjointed, no one of them caps any other; the latter is nothing but a further text, the last of the series, not the ultimate in meaning: *text upon text*, which never illuminate anything” (120). I apply Barthes’s work as the antithesis of the topic sentence whose fixation on a singular constructed meaning is countered by Barthes’s complex juxtaposition of social and personal codes. What we understand as “natural” identity construction (race, gender, class) must now be understood as these scattered codes. Thus *Roland Barthes* attempts to defamiliarize understandings of identity by presenting the autobiography as code. “Where does this [personal] expression come from? Nature? Code?” Barthes asks (32). The distinction lies between what is natural (the assumed forms that writing takes, such as clear and coherent prose), what must be learned and deciphered (the codes of writing complicated by technology), and what becomes absorbed into our identity (appropriation of writing from various methods and sources). Through code, Barthes teaches cyborgography how to challenge clarity. Whereas *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* or Elbow’s work opt for clear expression, Barthes’s autobiography is coded; it must be deciphered, disassembled, and assembled again to make sense of it: “To this initial state of semantic reading, according to which things are proceeding toward the ‘true’ meaning (that of History), corresponds elsewhere and almost contradictorily another value: meaning, before collapsing into in-significance, shudders still: there is meaning, but this meaning does not permit itself to be ‘caught’” (97).

In cyborgography, this lesson is extrapolated so that computer codes, like other social and discursive codes dealt with in the composition course,
must be understood as constructions, not “caught” meanings, as Barthes notes. HTML, JavaScript, cascading style sheets, and DHTML, therefore, are in themselves not natural, but become circulated throughout cyberculture through various forces. Students must learn to appropriate these codes and apply them to describe themselves in a number of ways. Students express personal narrative completely through code. Just as Barthes claims that identity is constructed from a rhetoric of social codes, so does cyborgography position the student writer regarding computer code.

The Cyborg

Computer code and identity construction are further developed in Donna Haraway’s (1991) concept of the cyborg, a posthuman state beyond the borders of gender identification. Haraway’s contribution to cyborgography involves her description of the cyborg as a metaphor for a state of identity not limited by cultural codes associated with feminism. Interested in a postgender world, Haraway constructs a new version of the cyborg, the hybrid entity that suggests a state outside of the dualistic roles of male and female or masculine and feminine. Haraway’s cyborg encourages transgression at sexual and at formal levels. “The cyborg,” she writes (150), “is a creature in a post-gendered world; it has no truck with bisexuality, pre-oedipal symbiosis, unalienated labour, or other seductions to organic wholeness through a final appropriation of all the powers of the parts into a higher unity.” Cyborgography can develop from Haraway’s concept by creating technology-rich writing that transgresses traditional limitations imposed by personal writing in composition studies. Cyborgography includes personal writing. But its understanding of personal writing involves an exploration of how personal experience becomes shaped by technology and, in particular, computer code so that a discursive transgression occurs. Haraway reveals the connection between cyborg identity and cyborg-based writing by emphasizing that writing, itself a technology always involves hybridity between human and machine as the struggle for meaning unfolds: “Writing is pre-eminently the technology of cyborgs, etched surfaces of the late twentieth-century. Cyborg politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly” (176, emphasis mine).

The inclusion of Haraway’s cyborg poses a challenge to conventional academic writing that, in the computer classroom, often is displaced to the home page. Since cyborgography adapts transgression as an important feature of home page writing, student work cannot be assessed according to academic conventions typically found in composition programs. Writing
the home page cannot mean uploading a traditional essay or using only print standards. Haraway’s notion of the cyborg as transgression complicates the commonplace assumptions regarding writing found in both student work and composition programs, assumptions largely centered on what David Bartholomae (1996 [1985]) identifies as the need to “invent the university,” that is, the requirement to appropriate academic conventions and create what Haraway labels the “one code” leading to “perfect communication” (176). Students who work with cyborgography learn from Haraway how to resist this move and think of their identity in terms of the less perfect, sometimes confusing, hybrid juxtaposition of HTML, DHTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Coded writing resists the familiarity of a typical composition assignment that asks a writer to maintain clarity and cohesion. In cyborgography, writers invent a new, coded self by transgressing expectations of both writing and technology. In turn, to engage this transgression, cyborgography locates writing not in the familiar form of the essay, but in the still, fairly unfamiliar form of new media.

**Media**

As a technology-based writing, cyborgography models its practice on new media. Lev Manovich (2000: 7) points out that to some extent, new media practices owe their structure and organization to film: “Just as film historians traced the development of film language during cinema’s first decades, I am to describe and understand the logic driving the development of the language of new media.” Cyborgography recognizes the influence of film on new media and consequently looks to film to learn how to write the home page. Notably, it borrows from Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane*. In the film, Kane struggles to understand the unfamiliar, allusive meaning of his life. Explained through the reoccurring image of a familiar childhood sled, Rosebud, the film searches to understand Kane through the sacred object whose name Kane mutters on his deathbed. Kane accumulates odds and ends from his life and stores them in his basement at Xanadu, hoping to familiarize for himself Rosebud and its meaning. The problem, though, arises out of Kane’s inability to use his collection as writing. By the film’s end, workers throw these amassed cultural artifacts, and even Rosebud, onto a burning fire. Personal meaning remains allusive to Kane as no contextualization has taken place.

Cyborgography learns from *Citizen Kane* how collections transform into writing by focusing on Kane’s effort to write his autobiography through the collection. Key to cyborgography is the need to use collections in new media-based writing. A principal assumption that cyborgography makes
regarding code, therefore, is that the importance of code (learned from the Barthes and Haraway sections) need not be hindered by an inability to write code. Kane’s collection teaches cyborgography to use media that embrace collections, like the Web, for finding code. HTML, DHTML, CSS, JavaScript, and other libraries of code exist throughout the Web. Students of cyborgography adopt the Kane model (that is, they learn a method from media) by using these libraries to form their own collection of code. Students search for scripts that later can be applied to their home pages. The collected codes serve as the basis for writing the home page (and do not remain unused in a hidden basement—or computer folder—as Kane’s collection does). The media lesson is to use collected code for rhetorical purpose.

**Practicing Cyborgography**

The pedagogical practice of cyborgography emerges from the juxtaposition of these various theoretical elements. First of all, this practice encourages students to use the home page as a place of personal exploration. Whereas the typical home page may reflect only the expressivist/authobiographical gesture, cyborgography uses the elements I have just discussed to teach connections between such expression and technology. The value of such teaching comes from an understanding that usage of technology for communicative purposes cannot be separate from personal expression. In this kind of pedagogy, students negotiate the content of their own home pages with the various instructions raised above.

Thus, rather than narrate personal experience in the autobiographic/expressivist tradition (I am studying accounting; my hometown is X), the cyborgographer uses technology to demonstrate the personal as coded construction (the unique application of HTML tags, JavaScripts, cascading style sheets, or DHTML) to demonstrate what one is, what one likes, and what one does. In turn, the cyborgographer transgresses familiar assumptions regarding how to present and organize such information (clarity and coherence) as well as one’s relationship to technology. Students are asked to work with computer and cultural codes, to contrast personal experience with computer code, and without necessarily possessing the computer expertise to write such code, cyborgographers adopt the Kane model and collect code from the vast resources of the Web. The acknowledgment that writing is coded, in computers or in content, allows students to recognize how language is assembled in complex and content-specific ways. Through the merger of collected code and personal stories, the Web site becomes defamiliarized; the writer merges with the technology.
This practice necessitates a pedagogical willingness on composition studies’ part to integrate home page writing more fully into the writing curriculum, and in turn to rethink such writing as learning the rhetoric of the unfamiliar. Moreover, composition studies must then engage with a new form of home page writing in which instruction abandons the need for clarity and coherence and works simultaneously within the framework of the various, conflicting, discursive practices cyborgography draws from. Danielle DeVoss and Cynthia Selfe (2001: 44) call for a similar complication of writing in their discussion of women cyborgian writers:

Composition teachers need to expand their understandings of “text.” Unlike the traditional paper-based compositions many of us still assign, the texts authored by the women in this study are designed with attention to words, graphics, and visual arrangement. They are fragmentary but not necessarily disintegrated. They require readers to focus on the relationships between text and image, on the architecture of nodes and links, on the content of menus and choices, and on the continual process of “rewriting,” rather than on traditional notions of coherence supported by topic sentences, paragraphs, arguments, the linear development of ideas, or the consistency of register and style.

Cyborgography, however, deals not just with attention to visual elements but with code itself. It teaches writers to completely defamiliarize the writing experience to better understand identity and expression; in other words, it teaches what Diane Davis (2000: 6) calls “mak[ing] a space for a composition pedagogy of an/Other kind, one that puts itself into the service of writing rather than the other way around.” When the home page becomes defamiliarized through cyborgography, the language of new media motivates how the student writer sets out to express herself. In turn, cyborgography, unlike composition’s standard instruction, is not audience directed in the traditional sense. Its focus is on the unfamiliar, which never works toward audience comprehension but rather evokes audience interest through the different and the strange.

Because cyborgography is a defamiliarizing practice, we must approach it not as a confirmation of what has already been established and codified but as an expansion of our vocabulary regarding what we do when we write for the Web. There are obviously many ways to write the home page. Cyborgography is meant as one approach toward enhancing our understanding of the Web. The benefit of working in an unfamiliar way, and of producing unfamiliar rhetorics, is that we create increased opportunity to allow what we discover to lead to the invention of new practices.
I conclude by returning to my own home page. I ask, what is it about cyborgography that allows me to write this way? How am I composing myself in terms of technology acquisition? How am I as coded as the home page I create or the pedagogy I practice? My interest is that students will not replicate my own usage of cascading style sheets or hyperlink layout but, with me, will question what we are learning about online writing as we learn about ourselves. My own writing is an investigation into how all writing and living practices are coded, as well as how I practice cyborgography in my own work to transgress stability and familiarity. In this sense, as Davis (2000: 250) writes about teaching in general, I use code to “remain suspicious of any pedagogical imperative that does not admit that the solidification of identity (‘self-consciousness’ about who one is) functions as a manifestation of ‘domination and exploitation.’” I use cyborgography to prevent rhetorical domination. So that students will not be dominated as well, I encourage them to practice cyborgography as a flexible, inventive writing, one that returns them to many of the questions I pose within this essay about technology and expression. After all, these are the inquiries and positions to raise when we work with technology, when we teach Web writing as writing, and when we theorize and practice personal expression.

Notes
I thank the anonymous reviewer of an earlier draft of this essay and Marcy Taylor for helpful comments and suggestions.
1. In this essay, I am not referring to blogs (short for Web logs), which have, in some cases, displaced the home page. The blog is a template-driven log of personal reflection, criticism, and links. The home page is still the main site of personal expression.
2. Other examples can be found in Jeffrey Zeldman’s online Web design advice at www.alistapart.com. The World Wide Web Consortium is the group begun by Web founder Tim Berners-Lee, which sets standards on how it believes HTML and other related Web markup languages should function. See w3.org.
3. One may object to cyborgography on behalf of students who do not know HTML or other related codes. The reason for studying Citizen Kane is to learn how to gather codes written by others and to incorporate the codes into one’s work. Expertise in HTML (or other related codes), then, is not a prerequisite for the practice of cyborgography.
Works Cited


