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A Convenience
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1. Interdisciplinary Collaboration: A Personal Narrative as Prelude

At the risk of sounding like a parody of a conversation about opera and illness in the 1987 movie *Moonstruck*, we would like to relate a postperformance dialogue about Richard Wagner's last opera, *Parsifal* (not Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, as in the film). While descending the same staircase at the Metropolitan Opera in New York as Loretta and Ronny, the film characters played by Cher and Nicholas Cage, a man turned to his wife and said, not "You know, I didn't think she was going to die! I knew she was sick," but "Do you think audiences today understand that Amfortas had syphilis?" Since this man is a physician, his wife was used to his medical observations, though this time he took her by surprise: "Syphilis? He was wounded by a spear when caught in the arms of the seductress Kundry!" "Yes," he replied, "but that might just be Wagner's indirect or allegorical way of invoking nineteenth-century obsessive worries about venereal disease. Did you notice that this is a wound (one inflicted in a moment of amatory indiscretion) that won't heal, whose pain is worse at night and is eased only slightly by baths and balsams? To any nineteenth-century audience these symptoms and signals would have meant only one thing: syphilis." "If that's the case," his wife suggested, "then people must have written about this and we can find out." "Not necessarily. People didn't talk openly about this kind of disease; it was secret and shameful, remember. And today, thanks to the discovery of penicillin, we luckily don't have to know about such things anymore," said he.

Intrigued but still skeptical, she began to mull over some of the standard interpretations of this complex musical drama, the one that throughout the years has provoked the most varied and conflicted responses from critics as they responded to its overt Christianity as much as to its equally overt anti-Semitism and misogyny. She was trained not in medicine but in comparative literature, and once the seeds of the idea of syphilis had been planted, over the next few days other parts of the opera started to take on different meanings. Recalling Baudelaire's infamous *fleurs du mal* and Huysmans's decadent fin de siècle linking of flowers and venereal disease in *A rebours*, she began to see Wagner's dangerous

"Blumenmädchen," or Flower Maidens, in a different light. When she told her husband of these associations, another piece of the puzzle fell into place to explain why these female characters were considered particularly dangerous to the Grail Knights, whom the maidens sought to lure to destruction. The Knights brought to his mind the history of military campaigns from the sixteenth century onward: the least "syphilized" army was always said to win. And perhaps, she then suggested, the Christianized reading of syphilis over the last five hundred years—as the scourge of God against the sinful—might have something to do with the racial as well as sexual issues of the opera, especially the depiction of the decline of the Grail realm after its leader, Amfortas, is wounded during his dalliance with a woman specifically dressed in Arab style. Certainly, in the nineteenth century the discourse of social decline linked to personal and racial degeneration was often invoked not only in the European campaigns against prostitutes and venereal disease but also in much anti-Semitic writing, including Wagner's.

As more and more of these pieces cohered, the literature scholar and the physician felt sure that others must have written about this, but a search of the operatic literature revealed nothing. Now definitely hooked, they decided that this silence was not surprising, not only because syphilis is a somewhat embarrassing topic still today but because this was the kind of issue that would easily escape a single disciplinary examination: the historical, social, political, literary, musical, and dramatic complexities would demand multidisciplinary perspectives. The couple were game to try to tackle the topic, but where to start? They could certainly bring their medical and literary backgrounds to bear on the issues, but they would need other tools, too. Acknowledging that they were formed—or, as the French say, deformed (as in the wonderful expression *déformation professionelle* 'professional deformation')—in their disciplines, they knew they would never be able to learn to think (or write)

like musicologists or historians: the best they could hope for was to learn the discourses of musicology and history—that is, learn how to formulate and articulate each discipline's issues in its terms, understanding its rules of evidence and standards of evaluation. They could import and borrow, but they would have to do so with care. The core of the analysis would—and did— remain the literary and the medical historical (the main disciplinary perspectives of the two of them), whose end points came together in a synthetic, synoptic convergence of perspectives.[1] For these two, collaboration inevitably meant interdisciplinarity and vice versa.[2]

2. Collaborative Interdisciplinarity: A Personal Metanarrative

This is not the first time we have attempted to describe what happens when a comparatist and a physician choose to do research and write together on opera. A few years ago, in "'All Concord's Born of Contraries': Marital Methodologies," we wrote of our clear disciplinary and personal contraries, of our early amazement at each other's different ways of thinking and working—details previously undiscovered, despite then over twenty years of marriage and the acceptance, at least in theory, that postgraduate work in respiratory physiology and comparative literature would turn out different kinds of minds. We also noted the humorous, if productive, results of sharing a collective obsessive-compulsive personality. Little has changed: the medical one still does the obsessing; the literary one still does the compulsing. But we realize now, especially in the light of our story, that we had elided an entire part of our history of collaboration, one that points less to differences than to similarities, on which we would like to concentrate in this discussion.

Our first ensemble work, "Medical Mythologies," was born of nothing more than the desire to have fun bringing our areas of expertise together. Influenced by attending the lively monthly meetings of the Toronto Semiotic Circle in the 1970s

and 1980s, we did a semiotic analysis of pharmaceutical advertising in medical journals. With Roland Barthes's *Mythologies* as our methodological inspiration, we set about determining the ideological implications of the visual and verbal messages conveyed not to the consumer of pharmaceuticals (the patient) but to the intermediary, the physician who prescribes the medications. Our disciplinary differences surfaced primarily in the physician's demand that we not simply analyze the most interesting advertisements but do a cross-sectional study by looking at all 162 advertisements in a set of journals over two months. While this was certainly not something a semiotician like Barthes had felt compelled to do, we knew that our intended scientific-medical audience would only understand and believe the results of a study done in this way. Disciplines have different notions of evidence, and we accepted the responsibility for the "burden of comprehension" that interdisciplinary work always entails (Klein 110). Considering our personal history of collaboration from this starting point, we now see that a similar kind of semiotic perspective carried through, in a sense, to our subsequent work on opera, teaching us that all parts of the operatic work (to extend Kier Elam's terms for theater)—its dramatic texts (the libretto and the score) but also its performance texts (the production aspects)—are open to interpretation; indeed, they demand interpretation (3). If to the literary scholar language is not transparent, to the physician the body is not transparent: one must analyze both to get beyond their surface meaning, their stubborn opacity. The Greek term *semeion*, after all, means physical symptom as well as semiotic sign. Our additional agreement that bodies and texts must be interpreted in a cultural context became a kind of structuring principle of our collaboration.

The topics that we have chosen to study together further complicate our collaboration. Not only are we trained in different disciplines, but we are working on cultural and social issues that by their nature transcend disciplinary bound-

aries (representations of disease and sexuality in *Opera. Desire. Disease. Death*; the body in *Bodily Charm: Living Opera*. death and dying in our current project) To this complication we should add that the art form through which we explore these issues is resolutely collaborative and interdisciplinary.[3] Opera is what Jean-Jacques Nattiez calls an "allographic" rather than "autographic" art (73–77). Unlike a painting, an opera is not a thing to be apprehended directly by a viewer; it is made fully available only through performance. An opera is the product of the collaborative work of a librettist, who writes the dramatic or poetic text, and a composer, who sets that text to music,[4] and a host of other artists, whose task is to bring those dramatic texts (the libretto and the score) to life on the stage: a director, a conductor, designers, singers, musicians, and so on. Not only a complex mix of the musical, the dramatic, the poetic, and the visual, opera is also a performative art form; it cannot be completely understood if studied only with a musicological focus on musical structures and history or only through literary interests in language, genre, narrative, and source texts or even only through a dramatic perspective on staging. These and other dimensions, including social and cultural history, are all important to understanding opera in its larger contexts of production and reception.

The four-hundred-year-old history of the collaborative relations between librettist and composer is one of alternating dominance in recognition or fame (Beeson; Heartz; Flatow; Weaver; Mitchell). Opera emerged in sixteenth-century Florence from the musical and dramatic experiments of a group of humanist poets and intellectuals, known as the Camerata, who wanted to re-create Greek theater. With no historical evidence but many imaginative theories about Greek tragedy, the Camerata believed words and music to be equally important to this revered dramatic form of antiquity. Hence the appeal of the story of Orpheus, the singer and poet, as subject matter. The history of opera is one of a

movement away from and back to some (never realized) ideal balance between the musical and literary dimensions of the form; either the composer or the librettist is seen as the dominant force in the collaboration. To this struggle between those who were originally thought of as natural allies, we must add the other figures in the operatic collaborative process who periodically came into prominence, displacing the composer and librettist: figures such as the singer as star (especially the castrato) or the stage designer responsible for the spectacular effects that drew audiences to the opera as early as the seventeenth century in Venice. Given this conflicted history, it is not surprising that many collaborating composers and librettists had a marriage of convenience—or perhaps even more often a marriage of "necessity and inconvenience" (Beeson 6).

Our personal collaboration might best be described as a convenience of marriage. Being married changed the dynamics and power relations as much as did the fact that we worked in separate, noncompeting fields (and that opera was the specialty—and thus the turf—of neither of us). We could collaborate and retain that separate identity that researchers insist is so important to the success of working together to create a "collective singular" (Yancey and Spooner 51). Couples who write together frequently note that the relationship is "a motivation to work out the problems" (Leo Dillon and Diane Dillon, qtd. in Nilsen 30): simply put, there is a lot at stake. Disagreements therefore tend to be intellectualized, not personalized. Couples often have a track record of dealing with problems, of course, and that potentially can work either to help or hinder the collaborative process. The positive view is that a sustained personal relationship can enable a couple "to ask hard questions and take up complicated scholarly issues" (Austin 144); the negative possibility is that conflicts from other domains of the relationship will intrude on the scholarly. If the relationship is not the ideal egalitarian one described by Elizabeth G. Creamer and her associates in

Working Equal: Academic Couples as Collaborators, with its shared worldview (4), its "trust, overlapping interests, and intellectual intimacy" (12), things can go wrong easily.[5]

Collaborating couples, heterosexual, gay, or lesbian, remark that living together allows more time for talk. It is no accident that the conversation or dialogue model is a dominant one in theories of collaboration.[6] In what are called "face-to-face" working relations, collaborators occupy the same room and potentially interact on all levels—from brainstorming and planning to drafting and revising.[7] Talk is one way of "composing aloud" (Doane and Hodges 56); it is also a way of creating a shared voice, literally and figuratively. While electronic exchanges provide a different set of constraints and liberations, we have found that the only way to ensure the single-voiced text we want to write is to talk, talk, talk. The frequent, immediate feedback of this kind of "ongoing constant exchange" helps us guarantee that we share such things as standards and expectations (Austin 140). From the start of our coauthorship, we decided that we would not write separate parts of our texts, even though we would often research different areas; we wanted one "collaborative" voice (Alm 134), in full knowledge that it would be the voice not of either of us but of some third entity, a collective we.[8] Just as we would try to bring our different disciplinary expertises to bear on an interdisciplinary analysis, so we would try to bring together our contrasting writing styles and modes of argumentation. Only much talk would guarantee this merging and create the kind of coherence and unity we sought through this grammatical and stylistic version of what Michel Foucault in "What Is an Author?" called the "author-function" (142).

This collaboration clearly wasn't going to be a version of the one to be found in the scientific laboratory so familiar to at least one of us.[9] Laboratory science is indeed "a social endeavor that requires collaboration at every level" (McCarthy and Steingraber 101), but the hierarchy implicit in that model, with its "stratified division

theories and methodologies

of technical and intellectual labor," as reflected in the ordering and attribution of coauthorship credit, simply didn't fit how we worked or how we thought of each other's contributions (Trimbur and Braun 22). Even recent attempts in the scientific community to be clear about who does precisely what in an experiment couldn't capture the kind of complex interaction that we felt characterized our working relationship or its results.[10] If anything, our collaborative experience felt closer to that described by feminist scholars like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, who claim that working together provided them with the mutual support needed to tackle large topics.[11] While there can be little doubt that feminist ideology has made collaboration among women desirable and congenial (Kaplan and Rose 557; McCarthy and Steingraber 101), we, like others, have found ourselves resisting—because of our personal experience—the usual gender-defined categories by which women are seen to be more successful collaborators than men because women "use group maintenance strategies such as self-disclosure and reflective listening to encourage close interpersonal relations" and thus have useful group "bonding skills," whereas men focus on task completion and instrumentality (Lay 83–85; see also McNenny and Roen 294). In our joint obsessive-compulsive personality, on the contrary, it is the woman who "compulses" and is thus the goal-oriented one.

We find appealing the idea that effective collaborators need to be psychologically androgynous, "capable of calling upon a range of collaborative strategies that have been traditionally reserved for either males or females" (Lay 83). What's more, as we've learned, collaborators have to be capable of shifting roles constantly to achieve what has been called the necessary high degree of "jointness" (Austin 139, referring to Baldwin and Austin); ideally, they must be willing to listen indefinitely and able to let go, to stop being possessive of everything from general ideas to specific words.[12] (We leave to the reader's imagination how often

such ideals are achieved. Yet perhaps simply having them is crucial.) Ideal collaborators start to sound a lot like those ideal interdisciplinary individuals defined by Julie Thompson Klein as being characterized by "reliability, flexibility, patience, resilience, sensitivity to others, risk-taking, a thick skin, and a preference for diversity and new social roles" (182). She goes on to add Forrest Armstrong's warning that such individuals should also have "a high degree of ego strength, a tolerance for ambiguity, considerable initiative and assertiveness, a broad education, and a sense of dissatisfaction with monodisciplinary constraints" (qtd. in Klein 183).

Is there a downside? Of course there is. The critical literature on the subjects of interdisciplinarity and collaboration is full of warnings about the dangers of working with others or across disciplines in the current academic context. In "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship," a contribution to this series of reflections on authorship in *PMLA*, Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa Ede outline the frightening institutional risks and difficulties involved. It is no accident that all the couples interviewed by Creamer in *Working Equal* "chose to wait until after they had each achieved individual recognition before publishing together" (141)—as did we. The dangers are clearest before tenure, of course. Given the time-consuming nature of collaborative work and, even more important, the ideology of individual achievement that guides assessments of scholarly labor, it is perhaps wise to wait (as Leonardi and Pope discuss [259]). There are also risks implicit in doing interdisciplinary work—solo or collaborative— among them the possibility or likelihood of being judged by specific disciplinary standards and being found wanting. The March 1996 *PMLA* forum on interdisciplinarity is full of disturbing tales of interdisciplinarily trained PhDs having difficulties obtaining academic positions in traditionally defined departments.[13]

The "power of institutional cultural values" is not to be underestimated (Creamer 141; see

also Loeb). The personal risks—to the stability and health of a personal partnership, friendship, or collegial relationship—are equally serious. As one member of a collaborating couple puts it, "We sometimes find ourselves living in a hothouse, with no place to escape" (Judith Barnard, who writes with Michael Fain as "Judith Michael"; qtd. in Mills 68). But we do feel that the intellectual dangers of collaboration have been perhaps overstated. Bill Karis has argued that compromise (presumably including the kind that collaboration like ours necessitates) can limit free and open dialogue and restrict the generation of new ideas (114). But compromise does not necessarily negate disagreement or the articulation of alternative views; it points instead to a different way to conceive the interplay of ideas: not, that is, in terms of the aggressive rhetoric of Kenneth Burke's cooperative competition (used by Karis 120) or Karis's own agonism (118) but in terms of negotiation and acceptance of difference.

3. Team Tristan: Enlarging and Shifting the Terms of Collaboration

There have been times when we needed more help than even our combined disciplines and research could provide. This first occurred when we began to study another opera by Richard Wagner—a figure who seems to haunt our interdisciplinary and collaborative labors and constantly to force us to move in new directions. His *Tristan und Isolde* has elicited a vast amount of commentary over the last century because of its musical innovations, philosophical complexities, literary and dramatic conundrums, and enormous aesthetic and historical influence. We frankly did not know where to start to get a handle on the various critical discourses that have been brought to bear over many decades on this music drama. Since we had been awarded a research grant by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (which has been very supportive of team research in the humanities), we decided to expand our model of collaboration and to this end hired four graduate

research assistants. Erika Reiman was then writing a dissertation on Robert Schumann and Jean Paul; her musicological expertise and sensitivity to the interactions of the literary and the musical made her a perfect collaborator. Russell Kilbourn, who had previously worked productively with us on other projects, came on board as well; a doctoral candidate in comparative literature working in related areas of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European philosophy and literature, he brought to the team not only philosophical expertise but wider genre interests in film as well as opera. Jill Scott, at the time a comparative literature graduate student (the only one of this group supervised by L. Hutcheon), was just back from a study leave in Berlin and was researching representations of the figure of Electra in literature and opera; she added to the mix her extensive knowledge of German Romantic literature and Freudian theory. The fourth member was Helmut Reichenbächer, a German-born (and in part German-trained) student who had done his initial degree in music and literature; though he was then completing a dissertation on Canadian literature, his love and knowledge of music and his native-speaker proficiency in German made him a valuable part of the team.

This group, in practice as in theory, seemed to undo the precise distinction between dialogic and hierarchical models articulated so influentially by Ede and Lunsford (*Singular Texts* 133). We (the Hutcheons), as directors of the research, (hierarchically) oriented the team's work according to our own perceived needs; but a genuine dialogue did result, as the group agreed. Members functioned as equals intellectually (as we shall try to show), perhaps because everyone self-consciously acknowledged the status hierarchy involved in the teacher-student and employer-employee relationships. It could be said that this expanded form of our research team engaged in collaborative research rather than collaborative writing. While the two of us intended to continue to write together, the plan was that the others would write individually, even if the research

theories and methodologies

results were pooled collaboratively. In regular seminars, participants took on aspects of the topic closest to their disciplinary expertise: the musicological debates (Reiman), the philosophical background, mostly Schopenhauer and Nietzsche (Kilbourn), the Romantic literary context of Novalis and his contemporaries (Scott), the early German source text, Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* (Reichenbächer), relevant medical and psychoanalytic theories of trauma (M. Hutcheon), and the structural analysis of the libretto and the criticism on the text (L. Hutcheon).

At meetings, guided by the initial hypotheses the two of us had developed (given our interest in and focus on questions of mortality), the group would brainstorm collectively about which directions the members should follow in their individual, often disciplinarily limited research, always building on what had been found since the last meeting. This mixture of presenting work and at once moving beyond it gave a certain dynamic drive to the process; the constant coming together of insights and findings from different areas enriched the individual work and made all six participants think in ways they otherwise might not have done. But it is important to emphasize that the structure here was different from that of our dual collaboration. This was not a situation in which tenured professors and graduate students would be coauthors. The students' endeavors were separate and individual, though collectively researched and directed by our particular scholarly interests. This is why we think of this experience as collaboration in researching rather than in writing; it was complementary (Fox and Faver 329) and cooperative (Yancey and Spooner 45) rather than strictly collaborative. This seemed an ideologically and pragmatically safer way to proceed, given the acknowledged status and hierarchy issues (Nesbitt and Thomas 32).

At the end of seven months, the two of us sat down to write our essay on Eros and Thanatos in the music drama ("Death Drive"), drawing on the work of the entire group; the other four,

also drawing on results of the collective labors, wrote four individual but interlinking conference papers on the theme of death and dying in *Tristan und Isolde*. The collaborative and the individually complementary came together in these two writing modes. Group members then workshopped the drafts of each of these pieces (the double- and single-author) with the whole team, revising and editing one another's work in considerable detail and with equal critical severity. The four conference papers were then prepared for oral delivery. This was a separate stage in the collaboration, one that the two of us knew well, since much of our work has been conceived first as a talk, and only later—after receiving responses—has it been revised for publication. In other words, the first iteration of our collaborative efforts has almost always had specific disciplinary audiences in mind: sometimes medical, sometimes literary, sometimes a more general cultural studies audience, sometimes a more specific operatic one, professional or lay. We have always tried to bring something of the interdisciplinary nature (and appeal) of opera into our oral performances, incorporating visual images, as well as video and audio clips, and alternating our speaking voices. (We have thus far spared our audiences the trial of hearing us try to sing.) Our challenge to the other team members was to engage the operatic self-reflexively in their performances, and their imaginative responses opened up for us new possibilities we had never considered. The authors presented their entertaining and provocative papers as a kind of individual yet collective interdisciplinary performance piece to the Toronto Wagner Society, to a special session at an MLA convention, and finally to a conference entitled "Voices of Opera." Each occasion required changes because of different audiences and different contexts. When the *University of Toronto Quarterly* decided to publish a selection of papers from the conference, the four were asked to prepare written versions—another exercise in the transposition of genre and presentational mode (see Kilbourn; Reichenbächer;

Reiman; Scott). Now all graduated and working in academic, publishing, and media fields, they tell us that the professional skills learned in this collective process of researching, writing, and adapting have stood them in good stead in their subsequent (and differing) careers.

The six members of what came to be called Team Tristan agreed that, by working together, they learned more and had more fun learning it.[14] There were moments (indeed hours, even days) of frustration, but many fewer, we suspect, than had the group been writing rather than researching together. The greater experience and knowledge achieved seemed to us worth the extra time and effort involved, for we have to admit that the process was time-consuming.[15] Nevertheless, the benefits were clear: everyone was forced to think differently, to listen more carefully and more critically, to look for new ways to integrate insights and findings instead of only differentiating them to assert individuality and originality. We learned to see working together in researching as well as in writing as potentially marking a shift away from "the unquestioned primacy of the solo performance and the intertwined ideologies of authorship and possessive individualism that have dominated the humanities" (Forman, Introduction xxi). In the seminars, roles changed constantly as team members questioned, debated, and challenged one another, thereby contesting the familiar view that collaborative work minimizes contention in the name of cohesion (Schilb 109), just as we had learned to question through our writing experience the idea that multiple authorship privileges compromise at the expense of substantive critique (Forman, Introduction xiv). If anything, the group developed a collective respect for personal and disciplinary differences and evolved a kind of "rhetoric of dissensus" that permitted, indeed demanded, continued discussion (Trimbur 609). In addition, acting as one another's audiences, team members could assess the impact and the accessibility of their work across disciplinary divides. All six began to see as merely a convenient fiction

that idea of one controlling intelligence that has been used to validate meaning and authority in the Western tradition of creative and critical writing (Stillinger vi)—or researching.

4. Interdisciplinarity and Interdiscursivity: An Epilogue on Collaboration

As Marjorie Garber has noted, interdisciplinarity is one response to "discipline envy," an attempt to "try to have it all" (B7, B9). Working collaboratively may help mitigate the dangers of this kind of intellectual megalomania: since Team Tristan consisted of a musicologist and a medical doctor doing research with people trained in literature, the work that each of the members (or pairs, in our case) produced was more likely to be interdisciplinary. But even if that is true, could any of the group individually be defined as an interdisciplinary scholar? Or is some other word needed to describe what professionals do individually, not collectively? *Interdiscursive* might be a more accurate term to describe people who remain, inevitably, disciplinarily trained but borrow from other disciplines (L. Hutcheon 20). Not a form of disciplinary tourism, interdiscursivity would nevertheless be more modest in its claims than interdisciplinarity. It would not be a question of formation—that is, of learning the ways of thinking, seeing, and therefore interpreting the worlds we experience as well as the worlds we make. Formation takes time and work; it may even take talent and inclination. Part, but only part, of being formed disciplinarily involves learning a discourse, a way of talking about what one does. Too often, this subsidiary process is taken, and mistaken, for full disciplinary training, especially in discussions of interdisciplinarity. But interdiscursivity isn't easy to achieve; breadth of knowledge involves more than knowing where to cull a supportive quotation from another field. Learning a discourse means learning how to formulate and articulate the issues in that field. The dangers are obvious: a scholar might choose parts of another

discipline's discourse that are considered less than central or less than current in their home context. Disciplines have different rules of admissible evidence, different criteria of proof. If interdisciplinarity is, as Alan Liu has suggested, "the most seriously underthought critical, pedagogical, and institutional concept in the modern academy" (743), then one of the reasons may be its confusion with the more limited notion of interdiscursivity. Klein talks of "borrowing" tools, data, results, and methods in such a way that disciplinary boundaries are not transformed (85–88). This borrowing, we would argue, marks interdiscursivity, not true interdisciplinarity.

Ken Wissoker has astutely asked whether interdisciplinarity is an attribute of the author, the work, or the audience (B4). From our experience researching and writing with each other and in a team, we would likely argue that it is an attribute of the work, especially when the work's object of study (opera, for instance) demands multidisciplinary perspectives. While possibly becoming familiar (in part through the work of the team) with other discourses, collaborators remain formed disciplinarily; they interpret each new disciplinary discourse through the lenses of their primary disciplines. It is typically researchers' own "disciplinary assumptions and preferred methods" that lead to interdisciplinary challenges, sometimes through explicit critiques of disciplinary positions (L. Luttaca, as discussed in Austin 134–35). This is not to deny that there are truly interdisciplinary scholars, like Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, people with clear double formations (here, visual art and literature) who can therefore articulate useful theories of interdisciplinarity, as Bal does in *The Practice of Cultural Analysis: Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation*, or who can have an impact on one discipline precisely because of their formation in another, as the literarily trained Bryson managed to do in *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*. As Giles Gunn has warned: "To bring two or more disciplines into significant interaction with one another requires considerable mastery of the subtleties and particularities of each, together with sufficient imagination and tact, ingenuity and persuasiveness, to convince others of the utility of their linkage" (239).

In our experience, the easiest way to approach such mastery is through collaborative work across disciplines, in situations where researchers can learn from one another, collectively resist those individual temptations of discipline envy or disciplinary reductionism, and even curb their (imperialist) appetites for "metaphorical transfer" from one discipline to another (Gunn 255). Working together may help prevent the kind of totalizing goal of wholeness that some argue is the aim of interdisciplinarity (Klein 12), making room instead for differences and even dissensus across disciplinary lines. As Len Findlay reminds us, "[I]nterdisciplinarity is not necessarily a good thing" (3); neither is collaboration. And, of course, neither is necessarily a bad thing. "Humanities labs" are springing up across the North American continent; Stanford University and the University of Illinois have recently established such laboratories for humanists to work in collaboratively and interdisciplinarily. We have both engaged in collaborative work with others and not always with total success; so far our work together and in a team has been productive and, frankly, intellectually stimulating and personally enjoyable. Perhaps because our experience of collaboration has involved interdisciplinarity and interdiscursivity, neither its processes nor its results have threatened our disciplinary or personal autonomy; rather, they have extended our perspectives beyond our individual limitations. We can think of no better convenience of marriage.

Notes

[1] Eventually an article (Hutcheon and Hutcheon, "Sexuality") and a chapter (Hutcheon and Hutcheon, *Opera* 61–93) would result from this early collaboration.

[2] In this discussion, we will not make the kind of distinctions among interdisciplinarity, cross-disciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and multidisciplinarity that some theorists have made (e.g., Wicker; Vickers). For our purposes in this essay, our work brings together two disciplinary formations, and it is this that we call interdisciplinarity; that we are not—as individuals—necessarily interdisciplinary scholars is addressed more fully in section 4.

[3] Some have argued that all the arts, at least from the start of the twentieth century on, are the result of collaboration, especially but not only performing arts (Inge). Stillinger argues that Jerome McGann's idea of "a socialized concept of authorship and textual authority" that includes publishers, printers, booksellers, readers, teachers, students, and so on would challenge even the book as the result of individual rather than collective authorship (199).

[4] Some artists have fulfilled the functions of librettist and composer—Richard Wagner, Ferruccio Busoni, Arrigo Boito, Arnold Schoenberg, Giancarlo Menotti, Carlisle Floyd, and so on—but the norm has been to separate the text creation from the music composing.

[5] Egalitarian relationships are defined as ones involving "the interchangeable non-sex-based roles assumed in collaborative projects, in expressions of mutuality, and in comparable priority awarded to each member's professional goals" (Creamer 4). See Fox and Faver 328–30 for more on the pragmatics of partner selection.

[6] Following on Ede and Lunsford's adaptation of Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to account for dialogic (versus hierarchical) modes of collaboration (133; see Bakhtin, *Imagination* and *"Speech"*) or on Rorty's idea of "conversation" as social process and exchange without domination and learning as "a shift in a person's relations with others" (187), many have written on conversation as a model for their own work together (Elbrecht and Fakundiny; Singley and Sweeney; on types of conversation, see Cafferty and Clausen 86) or have used it to describe the work of others (e.g., that of Louise Erdrich and Michael Dorris, in Brady 161). Others argue that all writing (certainly when published) is intertextual and thus the product of dialogic processes (Thralls) or that all knowing is in fact a conversation (Yancey and Spooner 47).

[7] Rogers and Horton 122. Rogers and Horton outline the advantages of this kind of relationship (gaining understanding of the rhetorical situation, considering language choice and developing a group vocabulary, considering ethical issues, reappraising group decisions; 124–34) but note that Ede and Lunsford found in their interviews that face-to-face work is often frustrating, time- and energy-consuming, and better for brainstorming, information gathering, and revising than for drafting and editing (121). For a personal account of how this kind of model works, see Kaplan and Rose 549.

[8] Others write about this experience as being like a "field of energy or a field of transaction" (Anderson 70). Still others use different language: "'She' and 'I' metamorphose into 'we,' hypothetical, invisible, yet nonetheless articulate. 'We' emerges from the space between our individual, different voices, its meaning elusive, dispersed, always deferred, never unitary" (Kaplan and Rose 549); "[t]he two [collaborators] traverse the boundaries of discrete subjectivity to found a nonindividuated collective subject, which is also the liminal subject, whose constant shifting does not resolve into any fixed state but instead, as Rachel Blau DePlessis has expressed this, 'dissolves alternative, polarized, either/or possibilities into infinite potentiality'" (Dever 70). The four coauthors of *Women's Ways of Knowing* write, "In collaborating on writing this book, we searched for a single voice—a way of submerging our individual perspectives for the sake of the collective 'we.' Not that we denied our individual convictions or [. . .] points of view—we argued, tried to persuade, even cried at times when we reached an impasse of understanding—but we learned to listen to each other, to build on each other's instincts, and eventually to arrive at a way of communicating as a collective what we believe" (Belenky et al. ix).

[9] Because science is data-oriented, depends on consensus about theory and methodology, and has clear paradigms and sophisticated instruments and facilities, it is more open to collaboration than the humanities. See Austin 133–34.

[10] As Trimbur and Braun explain, the conventional pattern of name ordering in scientific publications is that the first author listed designed and performed the experimental work; the last was usually the senior scientist or head of the lab who supervised and may have initiated the project; the others are listed in the order of the importance of their assistance (25). Today there is an attempt to be more exact. As an example, witness the long and detailed contributors' note following an article called "Novel Cases of Blastomycosis Acquired in Toronto, Ontario" by Robert S. Lester, Joel G. DeKoven, Julius Kane, Andrew E. Simor, Sigmund Krajden, and Richard C. Summerbell in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*: "Drs. Lester and DeKoven were the primary physicians and providers of patient information for cases 1 and 2 respectively. They did extensive follow-up work when additional queries were raised by reviewers. Dr. Kane contributed to the laboratory diagnosis for both cases, initiated the report and collated the patient information from the 2 primary physicians. He was a co-strategist of queries to patients. He also ensured correct geographical knowledge of past blastomycosis cases compared with the present cases and maintained the collection of long-term data about the endemicity of blastomycosis in Ontario. Dr. Simor contributed to the laboratory diagnosis in both cases and provided useful amendments to the article. Dr. Krajden coordinated the broader epidemiological analysis. He assembled the criteria for distinguishing inoculation from disseminated blastomycosis and interpreted the present cases in light of this information; he was

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instrumental in comparing these cases with reactivated blastomycosis. Dr. Summerbell was involved in reference laboratory confirmation of the identity of the organism, wrote and revised the manuscript and responded to reviewers' comments (after discussion with the other authors)" (1312).

[11] In the preface to *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar write, "Redefining what has so far been male-defined literary history in the same way that women writers have revised 'patriarchal poetics,' we have found that the process of collaboration has given us the essential support we needed to complete such an ambitious project" (xiii). In almost all the essays collected by Peck and Mink, claims are made that collaborative work like this is often interdisciplinary.

[12] See Watson-Rouslin and Peck for an interesting account of the need for and benefits of flexibility.

[13] See also Ede and Lunsford, *Singular Texts* 5, 73; Caplan 52.

[14] From their interviews across disciplines, Ede and Lunsford also analyze the multiple factors involved in the degree of satisfaction with collaborative work (*Singular Texts* 65).

[15] While some argue that collaboration saves time—especially in the sciences, in a problem-solving environment—our experience is that not only this larger team structure but indeed all "full" collaboration requires much more time; this may explain why it is relatively rare. "Full" collaborators (like the two of us) "do not clearly divide the labor but work closely, seeking consensus and engaging in considerable discussion and negotiation," and this takes time (Austin 132).

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