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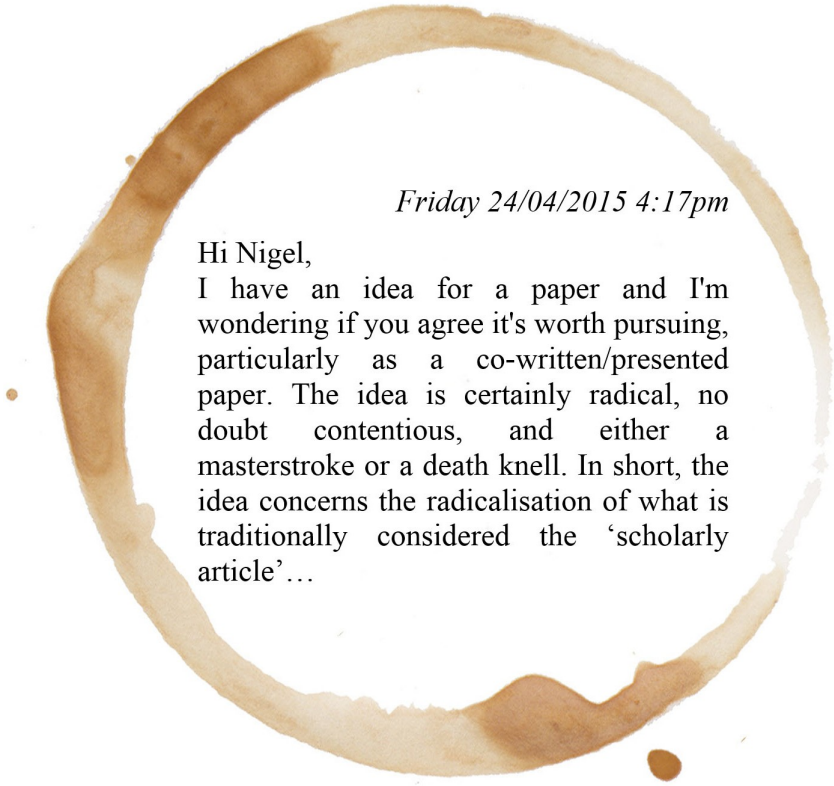
Radicalising the scholarly paper: New forms for the traditional journal article

Abstract
Over the past decade much discussion has, by necessity due to the positioning of creative writing practice within academia, focused on strategising the creative arts product – e.g. the poem or short story – into the paradigm of research value as non-traditional research output. Meanwhile, the form of the journal article – in all its monolithic history – has also undergone shifts and challenges, the fictocritical mode arguably making the most incisive impact. Nevertheless, the science-rhetoric form of the scholarly paper is still taken as granted (even as hallowed). But as the packaging of knowledge undergoes a technological transition in the 21st century, is the radical journal article already in the making? And is creative writing the discipline in the box seat for exploring and exploiting new, flexible and dynamic knowledge forms? This paper aims to invigorate discussion around the possibilities of how a scholarly paper could and should one day be written and read.
Keywords: journal article, scientism, radical research, fictocriticism, multimodality

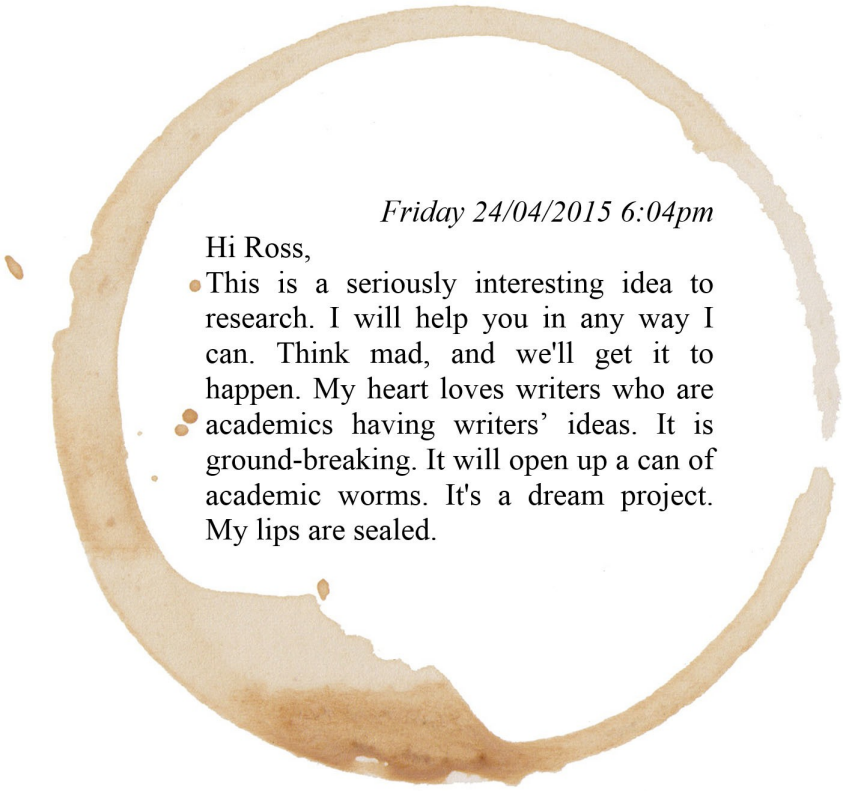


A history including Bacon and Benjamin

There is an irony in the history of the modern research university. Such an institution was first described in a novel. In 1627 when Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* was published, science-based research, undertaken by communities of researchers in purpose-built institutions, did not exist (Grafton 2011: 100). Bacon used the creative form of the novel, and the rhetorics associated with creative writing, to describe the organizational structures, methods and architecture of the 'first' research facility – called Salomon's House.

Bacon's fictional college of scholars significantly influenced the creation of the Royal Society 30 years later, where the bases of scientific method were put in place (Price 2002: 15). Earlier, Bacon pioneered the idea that the language used for reporting new knowledge discoveries should be free from '*idola fori*' – 'illusions' or 'idols of the marketplace' created by subjectivity and the slipperiness of language (Bacon 1902: 20-1). He advocated a method of writing focused on facts and free of prejudice, opinion and poetic effect. From this we get, of course, the science-rhetoric model for academic writing, stripped of humanization, lyricism, emotion, humour, self-mention, and so on.

While the history of science references the irony that a fictional college in a utopian novel created the impetus for the Royal Society, science does not acknowledge the power of creative writing as a knowledge-maker or ideas-changer. Bacon set down the method for exemplary scientific writing in 1620, but completely ignored his own advice in the years following when he elaborated on the model of the research institute. This paradox, at the very heart of the establishment of the dominant genre for knowledge representation (i.e. the science journal article), provides a starting point for our paper which discusses how creative forms might present new knowledge in journal articles in the 21st century.



Academic discourse varies according to academic discipline. Hyland and others (Hyland 2012, 2009, 2007; Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995; Bazerman 1988) propose that academic discourse is a function of language use and social

interactions within academic disciplines – one kind of talk works well in one academic group, but it doesn't work in others – and that each discipline has its own culture, jargon, rhetoric and ultimately its own version of the scholarly article genre. The features of the writing each discipline undertakes are a product of its specific ways of thinking, its history and the type of matter it deals with, along with the structures of collegiality and communication it has developed. This idea has a corollary: that the forms taken by a discipline's writing influence the kind of knowledge the discipline discovers (we will return to this later).

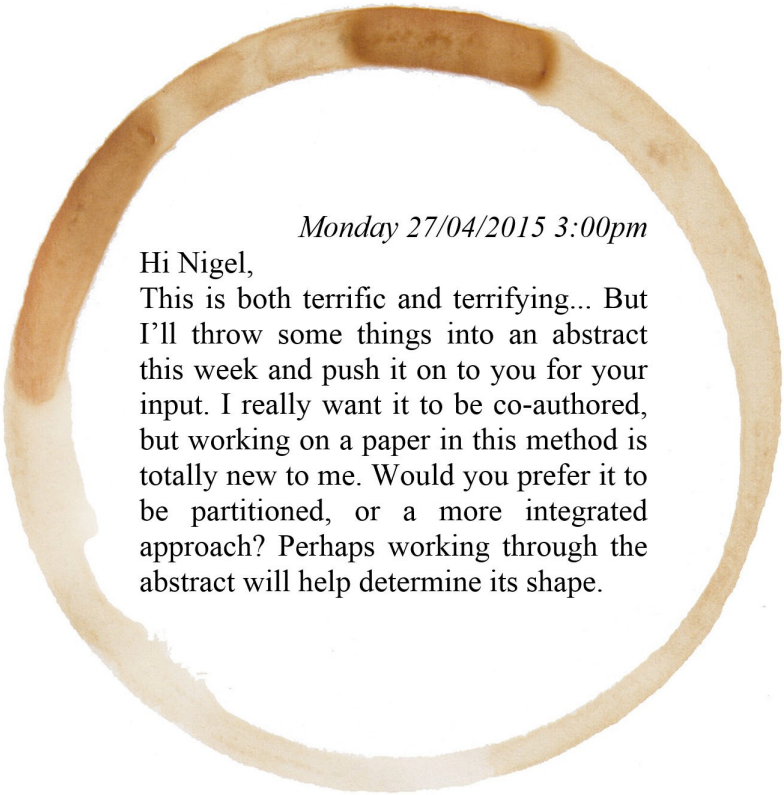
Walter Benjamin's attempt to gain a position in a university in the 1920s is an excellent case in point.

In 1924, 32-year-old Benjamin had gained his doctorate but, in order to secure an academic job in any German university, he also had to have an *habilitation* – a scholarly monograph manuscript ready for publication. This document would be judged publicly by the professors of the university. If the professors liked it at the University of Frankfurt – where he sought employment – he would obtain tenure there. When he presented *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* (1928) one professor called it 'inappropriate to German Studies' and another found it to be 'an impenetrable morass' (Steiner 1998: 11). Thus Benjamin did not get the University of Frankfurt job, nor did he ever become an academic.

His introductory exegesis for the study begins by explaining and seeking to justify the methods he used and the form the thesis finally took:

> The absence of an uninterrupted purposeful structure is its primary characteristic. Tirelessly the process of thinking makes new beginnings, returning in a roundabout way to its original object. This continual pausing for breath is the mode most proper to the process of contemplation… Just as mosaics preserve their majesty despite their fragmentation into capricious particles, so philosophical contemplation is not lacking in momentum. Both are made up of the distinct and the disparate… (Benjamin 1998: 28)

Right from the start, Benjamin admits that his study does not have a linear structure, there is no traditional line of argument, there are gaps in the narrative, the narrative itself keeps returning to its starting point, and the whole is basically a jig-saw of fragments which, in their capricious layout, reflect more the concept of thinking about a topic – a mosaic or constellation of ideas – rather than the production of a conventional, formal thesis.



Although his method was rejected by academia at the time, in each of its fragmentary parts Benjamin's scholarly treatise involved exceptional perceptions, and its method became the basis for what Benjamin is famous for in universities today – an entire philosophy based on the collecting of insightful fragments, as with his major work *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin 2002).

Academia, like all institutions, relies on the conventional and canonical to keep its power intact, even though universities are meant to be spaces where new ideas and innovation are welcomed and encouraged. Benjamin's focus on the subjective 'I' at the centre of research, and his attempt to de-stabilize the structures shaping knowledge, does not seem so 'inappropriate' or 'impenetrable' to us today, but nevertheless is still questioned in many quarters. Benjamin's investment in the fragmented, collaged academic submission was an experiment in academic writing which has far-reaching implications for research discourse.

The packaging and shaping of knowledge

In *Shaping Written Knowledge* (1988) Charles Bazerman says:

> …ways of perceiving and knowledge-making emerge out of sociolinguistic processes. Each community … finds its own way to formulate its knowledge and in so doing defines what it considers knowledge to be. As the community changes, so do the symbolic means. (20)

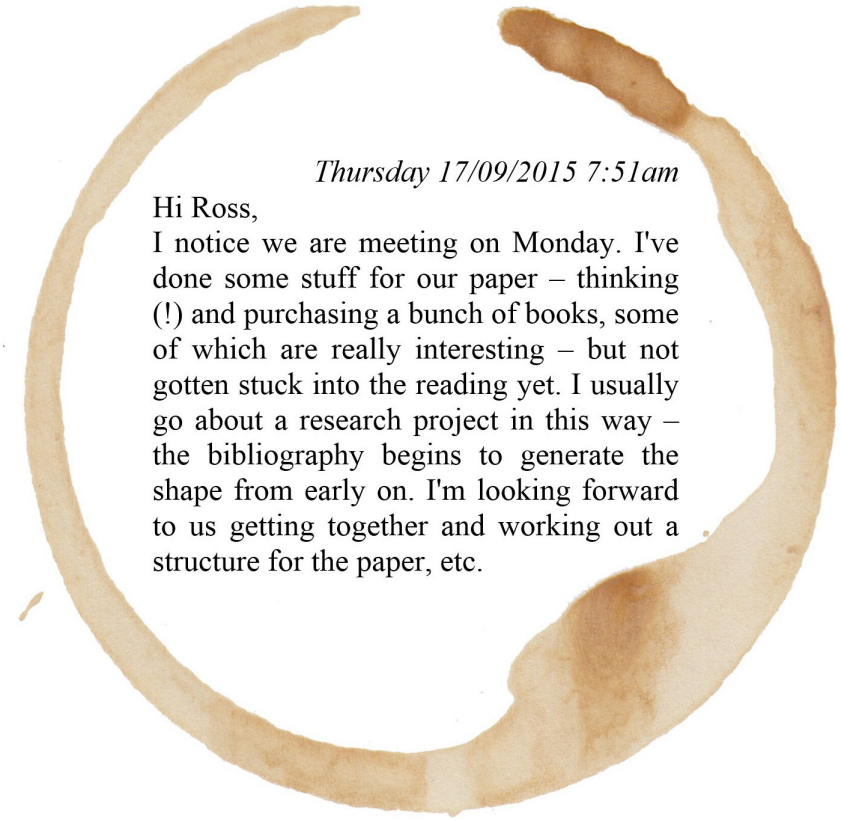
To this, Ken Hyland in *Academic Discourse* (2009) adds that in the peer-review process

> [a] manuscript develops slowly through several drafts with input from colleagues, language specialists, proofreaders, reviewers and editors, what Lillis and Curry (2006) call "literacy brokers".

> This often frustrates writers, but contributes to the final polished product shaped to the cognitive and rhetorical frameworks of a disciplinary community. The brokering of published research therefore mediates academic cultures as well as texts. The process not only manages the quality of published research, but also functions as an apparatus of community control by regulating appropriate topics, methodologies and the boundaries within which negotiation can occur … academic writing [is] a tension between originality and deference to the community. (Hyland 2009: 68)

In this context, where the writing/reporting used by a discipline authenticates the knowledge it discovers, there exists the risk that the knowledge itself will be distorted, disrupted … or even entirely misrepresented, as in the case of recent fake journal articles which demonstrated how vulnerable discovery reporting processes are (see for example Bohannon 2013).

In 1983 the influential cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz said: 'the shapes of knowledge are always ineluctably local, indivisible from their instruments and their encasements … what is seen [is dependent upon] where it is seen from and what it is seen with' (Geertz 1993: 4). In anthropology, this applies to knowledge in 'exotic' cultures being problematically interpreted by western culture, but the concept relates also to the cultures created around academic disciplines. Among the 'instruments' and 'encasements' are the method, genre and rhetoric requirements for write-up imposed by the discipline undertaking the research. 'Genres are intimately linked to a discipline's methodology, and they package information in ways that conform to a discipline's norms, values, and ideology' (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995: 1).



Inevitably the package is designed to impart authenticity in just one discipline's terms, and not in others. The history of science writing bears this out: Bacon made his initial recommendations about the use of non-poetic language for describing

discoveries in natural philosophy (i.e. what we now call science) because the language and genres in use at the time were developed by and cohered with other kinds of knowledge endeavour – especially human philosophy, oratory and the arts, which were the then-dominant academic discourses. Bacon's insight initiated the search for a whole new packaging which could contain and convey the discoveries of science (see Bazerman 1988: *passim*).

Worryingly though, discipline-generated packaging may also stifle the voice (or experimental mode of expression) a researcher might seek in order to convey a legitimately innovative discovery, as Walter Benjamin found out. Much depends on the flexibility of the genre the discipline has created, and the willingness of colleagues to recognize variations. New journal article genres have sprung up in cases of cross-disciplinary research (e.g. fictocriticism, see later) or where the language and structural requirements of disciplines are brought into question (e.g. feminist studies, postmodern studies, postcolonial studies). Disciplines need to react as favourably as possible in such situations: new language and form can indicate new discovery content.

Bazerman found that across various disciplines:

> the rhetorical gist of entire texts evoked the larger framework of meanings within the active disciplines. I couldn't see what a text was doing without looking at the worlds in which these texts served as significant activity… [C]urrent writing practices (in conventional, interactional, and epistemological dimensions) build on a history of practice and speak to a historically conditioned situation. [Academics write in their discipline] as part of an evolving discussion, with its own goals, issues, terms, arguments, and dialect. The history frames both the rhetorical moment and the rhetorical universe. (Bazerman 1988: 4-5)

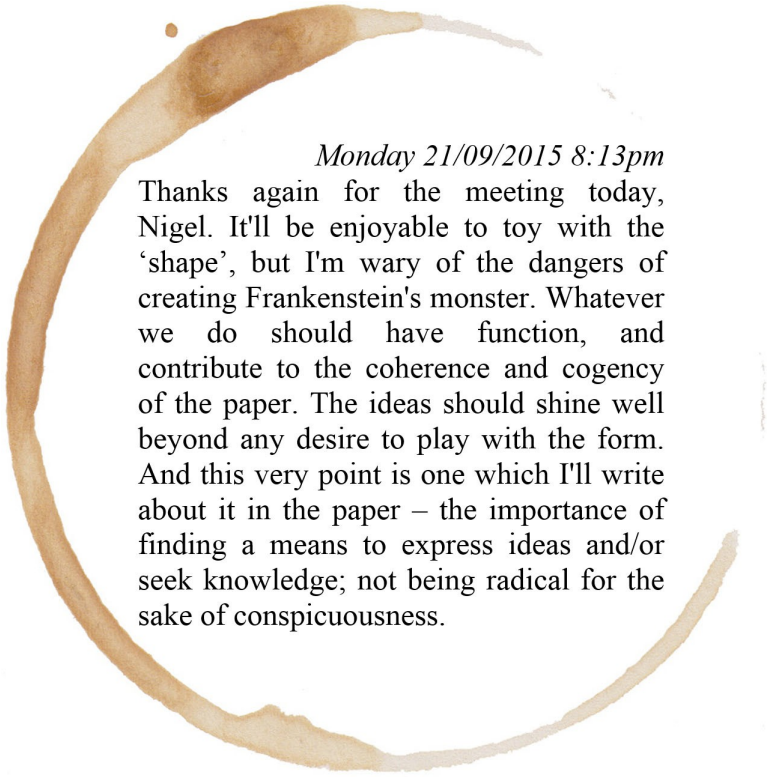
Of concern in the arts is the fact that science-rhetoric and the genre of the science experimental report have migrated to, and colonized, the forms other disciplines write in, especially the social sciences and Journalism which reside close to Creative Writing. Bazerman notes:

> as a result of science's great success, habits of scientific discourse have influenced almost all other areas of intellectual inquiry… The experimental report seems central to many conceptions of the sciences as empirical enquiry… Now anyone with results to report must somehow address the context created by the social fact of this genre. (Bazerman 1988: 6-7)

We see this happening in Creative Writing. Due to the influence of the science-rhetoric model in our universities, emerging scholars (and some colleagues) express confusion about how they are supposed to write in our discipline, and tend to default to the sciences' way of framing and developing a research project – in spite of lack of fit in humanities disciplines (Bazerman 1988: 6-7) and criticism of its effectiveness in science itself (Medawar 1964: 41; Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995: 60). There is even a word in the dictionary to describe the oppressive influence of the science-rhetoric model:

> **Scientism 2.** A term applied (freq. in a derogatory manner) to a belief in the omnipotence of scientific knowledge and techniques; also to the view that the methods of study appropriate to physical science can replace those used in other fields such as philosophy and, esp., human behaviour and the social sciences. (OED 2004)

The term *scientism* questions the notion of a universally-applicable method and approach to the discovery of new knowledge. It interrogates the idea that empiricism provides the only way to determine authentic knowledge.



Even at the early stages of establishing the scientific method in 1840, William Whewell (hew-əl – rhymes with *jewel*) the Cambridge scholar who pioneered the formulation of the hypothetico-deductive interpretation of scientific activity (and is known for coining the words 'scientist' and 'physicist'), said in his seminal work *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840):

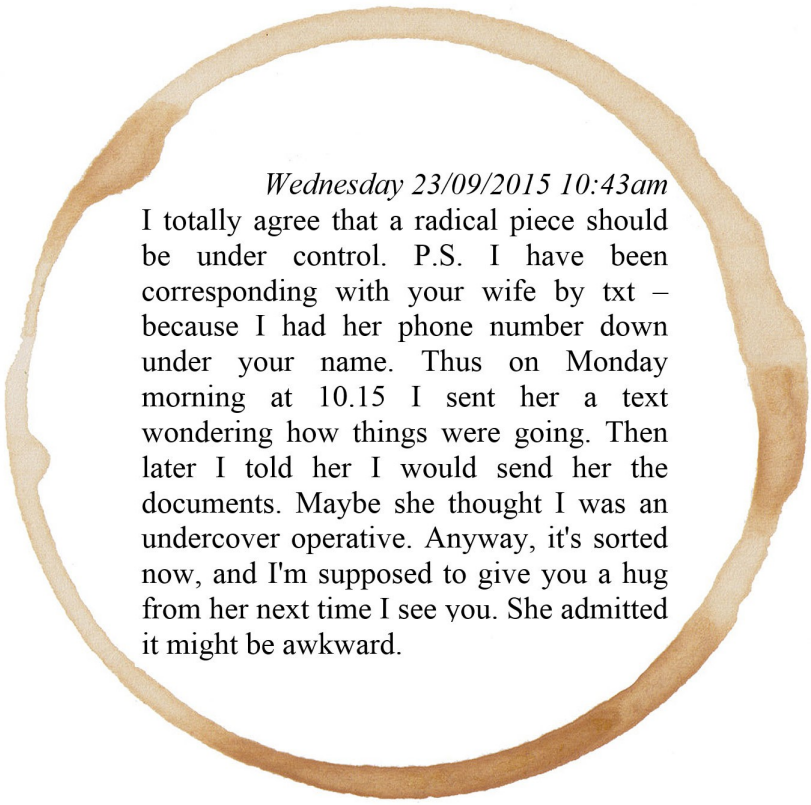
> …in truth, we must acknowledge, before we proceed with this subject ['Of Methods Employed in the Formation of Science'], that, speaking with strictness, an *Art of Discovery* is not possible; – that we can give no Rules for the pursuit of truth which shall be universally and peremptorily applicable; – and that the helps which we can offer to the inquirer in such cases are limited and precarious. (Whewell 2014: 483)

Whewell's provocative warning – that there can be no rules for methods employed in discovering and relating new knowledge – has clearly not been heeded. His 'helps' to inquiry (about observation, induction, resemblance, causation, etc) offered in his book were taken as gospel by his largely scientific community rather than as 'limited and precarious'. Whewell was far-sighted in suggesting that methods employed in research should be flexible rather than rigid, that if there is an art to research it resides in adaptability and openness to new possibility, and that the idea of just one avenue – or a strictly limited range of avenues – available for the pursuit of 'truth' was untenable. He thought there could be no singular 'Art of Discovery': it had to be plural. But, as American rhetorician Lloyd Bitzer pointed out regarding established genres, 'the tradition itself tends to function as a constraint upon any new response in the form' (Bitzer 1968: 13).

In their 1995 book *Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication: Cognition/Culture/Power*, Berkenkotter and Huckin recognized Whewell's insight by saying:

> Genres are the intellectual scaffolds on which community-based knowledge is constructed. To be fully effective in this role, genres must be flexible and dynamic, capable of modification according to the rhetorical exigencies of the situation. At the same time, though, they must be stable enough to capture those aspects of situations that tend to recur. This tension between stability and change lies at the heart of genre use and genre knowledge… Fully invested disciplinary actors are typically well aware of the textual patterns and epistemological norms of their discourse community, but are also aware of the need to be at the cutting edge, to push for novelty and originality. As the intellectual content of a field changes over time, so must the forms used to discuss it; this is why genre knowledge involves both form *and* content. (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995: 24-25, emphasis in original)

But the ability of academics to embrace new forms has been limited. Bitzer's genre-driven 'constraint upon any new response' has been manifest. In our experience, early career researchers in Creative Writing typically question the impositions of the journal article form when asked to publish during candidature. Supervisors might attribute this resistance to a residual undergraduate perversity, but more likely it is an indication of how unfitting the available article forms are to the thinking the new cohort of academics is doing. It is an indication, perhaps, that it is difficult, distorting and dispiriting to have to express new creative writing knowledge according to the rules of the current array of acceptable genres. To repeat Berkenkotter and Huckin: 'As the intellectual content of a field changes over time, so must the forms used to discuss it' (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995: 25).



Berkenkotter and Huckin pointed out the paradox in thinking required even by science academics in coping with the contradictions involved in expressing new knowledge in old knowledge's terms:

> …the conventions of the scientific journal article instantiate ideological assumptions that are regularly reinforced by scientists' routine, unreflexive use of the genre. As Bruner (1991) argued, "Genres … are ways of telling that predispose us to use our minds and sensibilities in particular ways. In a word, while they may be representations of social ontology, they are also invitations to a particular style of epistemology" [Bruner 1991: 15]. In the case of the experimental journal article, scientists who wish to have their work published must adopt a slightly contradictory stance in which they (a) act as though scientific discovery is a purely inductive process (see Medawar [1964: 41]), but (b) explicitly acknowledge, via appropriate citations and warrants, that hypotheses are inspired by earlier research done by other scientists. (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995: 60)

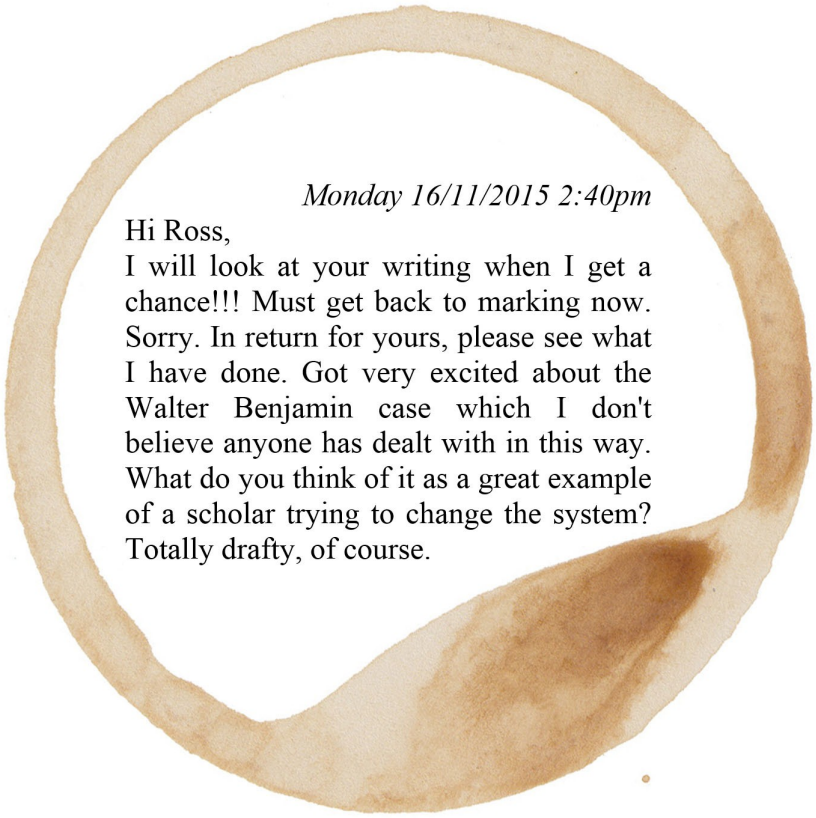
This problem – transferred from the sciences into the humanities – was faced by Walter Benjamin. Published research as we know it isn't only about finding new knowledge, it is also PR and branding for the discipline that invests in it. Berkenkotter and Huckin imply the following:

> …scientists are socialized to produce [texts] that reify scientific activity as perceived by the community… The ideological character of the genre's conventions reveal … deeply-embedded epistemological assumptions that permeate scientists' discursive practices in general… (Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995: 60)

Clearly, we need to be careful about the influence of science-rhetoric models because, at a significant level, they are advertisements for scientism. And as Geertz said: 'Scientism, and here I *will* talk of the human sciences overall, is mostly just bluff' (Geertz 1992: 131, his emphasis).

In a chapter titled 'Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought', Geertz pointed out that:

> The present jumbling of varieties of discourse has grown to the point where it is becoming difficult either to label authors (What *is* Foucault – historian, philosopher, political theorist? What Thomas Kuhn – historian, philosopher, sociologist of knowledge?) or to classify works (What is George Steiner's *After Babel* – linguistics, criticism, culture history? What William Gass's *On Being Blue* – treatise, causerie, apologetic?)… The innovative is, by definition, hard to categorize… It is a phenomenon general enough and distinctive enough to suggest that what we are seeing is not just another redrawing of the cultural map … but an alteration of the principles of mapping. Something is happening to the way we think about the way we think. (1993: 20)



Thinking about the way we think should also influence the way we write about what we think. In research activities:

> we more and more see ourselves surrounded by a vast, almost continuous field of variously intended and diversely constructed works we can order only practically, relationally, and as our purposes prompt us. It is not that we no longer have conventions of interpretation; we have more than ever, built – often enough jerry-built – to accommodate a situation at once fluid, plural, uncentered, and ineradicably untidy. (Geertz 199 3: 20-21)

Increasingly, hybrid academic works have been published out of the necessity to better deal with the plurality of knowledge. Canagarajah and Lee say:

> There is a new openness to alternative discourses in the academy. Perhaps, the backlash against modernist orientations to knowledge construction has cleared the way for a search for other modes of enquiry and writing. To some extent, the mythical data-fronted, detached introduction-methods-results-discussion (IMRD) structure … of the research-article genre received its justification from the positivistic research tradition of modernity. The realisation that knowledge is frankly value-laden, if not personal and ideological, has created a readiness to search for alternative ways of representing research knowledge. In recent years we have found research articles adopting more narrative, personal, self-reflexive, and dialogical structures… (Canagarajah & Lee 2014: 275)

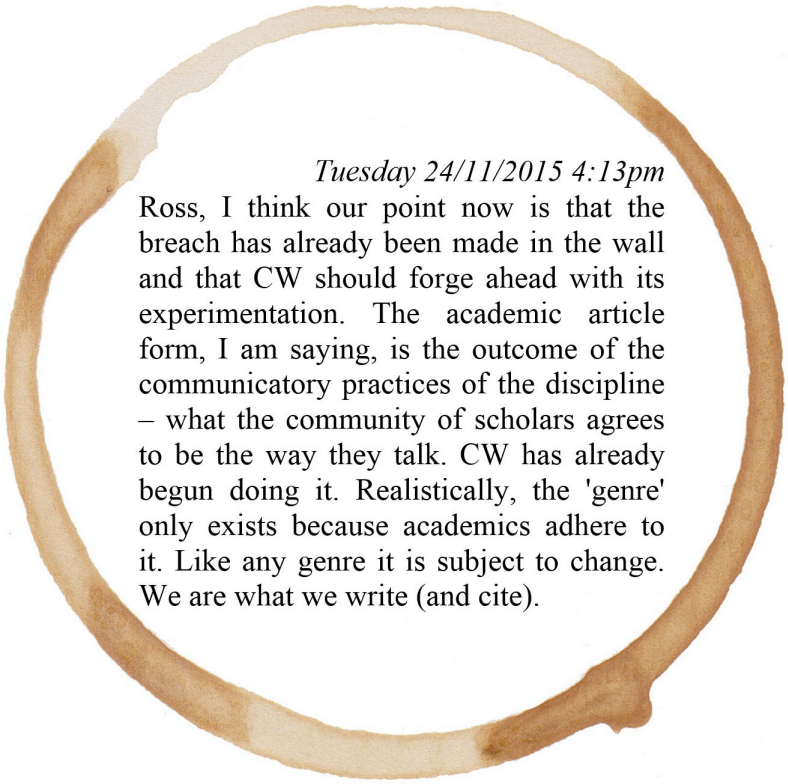
Still the myth lives on at an overarching academic level – and in the public perception/Zeitgeist – that the science-rhetoric genre of the research article is the basic and default model for, supposedly, all disciplines in the academic system. According to the myth, the dissertation genre in the humanities is subsidiary

because those disciplines don't deal with knowledge as 'truth', just critical opinion! At a very deep level – where ultimately we identify ourselves as academics – we are impelled to think that our research writing must in some way or other comply with science-genre expectations. Yet, despite the myth, since the 1970s significant researchers in the humanities have forged niches for themselves with radical language use and innovative forms in their academic writings.

Hélène Cixous, for example, crossed boundaries between literary studies, philosophy and creative writing. As part of her *écriture féminine* project, she wrote academic books and journal articles which combined poetry, autobiography, language play, literary criticism and philosophy (Cixous 2004). Other feminist scholars followed suit, including Rachel Blau Duplessis whose journal articles combine literary criticism, poetry and fragmented narrative (Duplessis 2006). Roland Barthes employed the fragment as the building block of his thinking in various scholarly works, including *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1978) which combines scenes as in a novel with referenced academic discussion, exegetical material and elements of a monologue playscript. Another innovator is Alphonso Lingis: referred to as 'the itinerant philosopher', his scholarly works combine travel writing, creative nonfiction and photography with a multidisciplinary philosophical perspective (Lingis 2000). The blending of genres in research writing is not as rare as one might expect. Often, to represent the fact that their book or article derives out of blended research activity which is cross-disciplinary at base, writers such as Stephen Muecke (2012), Michael Taussig (2006), David Shields (2010), David Brooks (2011) and others use cross-genre rhetorics to emphasise their cross-disciplinarity .

Fictocriticism's entry, impact and development

Taking the lead of Cixous and others, fictocritical writing is one radical mode which has arguably made a legitimate space for itself on the scholarly map. Discussing the historical development of this 'minor literary form' in her PhD thesis, Helen Flavell notes fictocriticism's legitimacy, as reflected by: the journals calling for and publishing works deemed 'fictocritical', the institutions teaching courses specifically on the form, and the academics contributing to its development in Australia (Flavell 2004: 141, 149-150). Sean Sturm groups fictocriticism with the performative essay, creative nonfiction essay, and the lyric essay as inhabiting 'the margins of the academosphere'; forms which 'are not only vehicles for critique (critical in their *content*) but also implicit critiques of the essay as mere container for content (critical in their *form*)' (Sturm 2012, emphasis in original).



Since Stephen Muecke and Noel King dubbed 'ficto-criticism' for readers of the *Australian Book Review*in 1991 (Muecke & King 1991: 13), shaped by references to the work and commentary of Frederic Jameson and Rosalind Krauss, fictocriticism's propagation and rise to acceptance has become a somewhat conflicted site. The conflict stems from its politicised labelling and its delimitation as a 'practice that can only be couched in terms of post-modernism' (Flavell 2004: 144), despite documented forerunners in France and Canada, specifically as a feminist discourse in operation from the 1970s (Gibbs 1997). Nevertheless, the agenda at the heart of these radical works has always been to reappraise, disrupt and partly dismantle the conventions of the science-rhetoric model of scholarship.

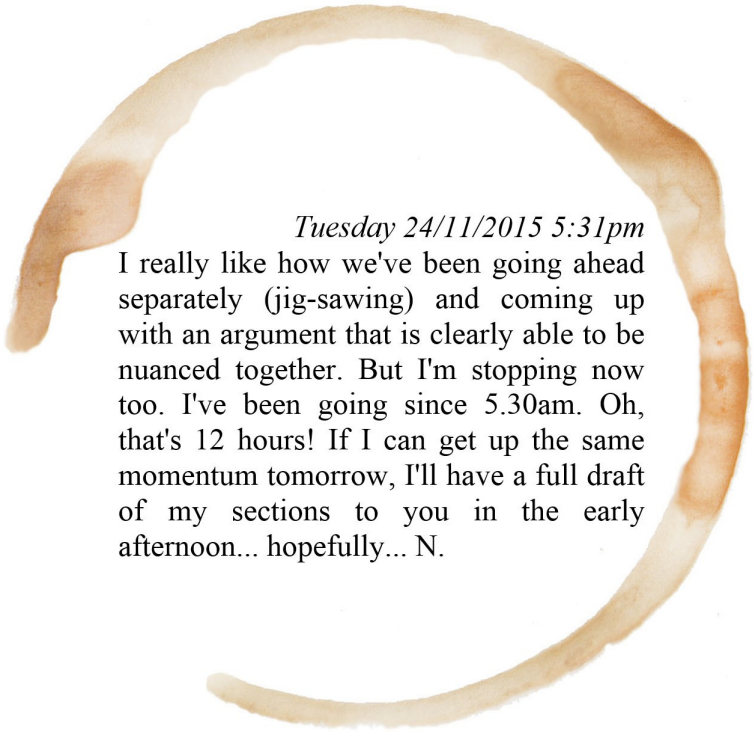
Fictocriticism achieves its subversive ends by merging (often multimodal) storytelling elements with criticism (favouring criticism, manipulating narrative devices for critical purposes). Anna Gibbs notes that the fictocritic is:

> free to make use of narrative modes and of the rhetorical strategies available to them, including anecdote and (or *as*) allegory which stage the singular encounter between the writer's emergent, embodied subjectivity and what is written about. (Gibbs 2005, emphasis in original)

Much like Benjamin's fragmentation, fictocriticism champions the discontinuity and subjectivity of heuristic writing. As Muecke puts it when aligning fictocriticism with Derrida, this radical activity is 'the collapsing of the "detached" and all-knowing subject *into* the text, so that his (or your) performance as writer includes dealing with a problem all contemporary writers must face: *how the hell did I get here?*' (Muecke 2002: 109, emphasis in original).

The appeal of fictocriticism to the creative writer is clear: it offers a means to employ and play with the skill set of the writer, and that employment and play is ironically directed at understanding the act of creativity itself. There is pragmatism in the form's offering, as an alternative to the science-rhetoric model.

The form has thereby become increasingly utilised by creative writers as a reflective and reflexive tool, not as conventionally conceived 'criticism'. A problem arising here is that while fictocritical works enact postmodernist thinking, writers might find themselves using the form for motivations and to ends which do not resemble a postmodernist agenda (or even a centrally political agenda). Flavell points out the same conflict, asking: 'But what is the cost of adherence to such conventions – at the cost of alternative paths of discovery and knowledge?' (Flavell 2004: 130). Flavell emphasises that 'fictocriticism' has become an adopted term for a variety of non-traditional transmutations, growing into 'a diverse field with influences and connections beyond those provided by the sanctioned discourse' (Flavell 2004: 150). Consistent with Anne Brewster's 'provisional naming', the form's refusal to be defined and reduced to a 'particular set of stylistic features' (Brewster 1996: 29) also means that the form itself has no form, or such a multitude of forms that the term comes to signify less and less. As radical scholarship with 'revolutionary capacity' (Flavell 2004: 141), such splintering is not exactly desirable. Delimitation is not only useful, but important to fictocriticism's rupturing of the criticism/fiction binary.



According to Verena Conley, Cixous' early radical book *Neutre* (1972) is '[n]either fiction nor criticism, it is an impersonal secret narration cutting between institutionalized barriers' (Conley 1991: 38). The liminality of such writing leads to what Muecke calls a 'little crisis' within the criticism/fiction binary:

> When criticism is well-written, and fiction has more ideas than usual, the distinction between the two starts to break down. It is a little crisis because criticism can't be relied upon to "keep its distance", and fiction can't be relied upon to stay in its imaginary and sometimes politically irrelevant worlds. The whole artifice of literary criticism was built up in order to do one thing really; to unmask the secrets of art. And the fiction was always there re-enchanting the world by putting on the beautiful masks again and again. (Muecke 2002: 108)

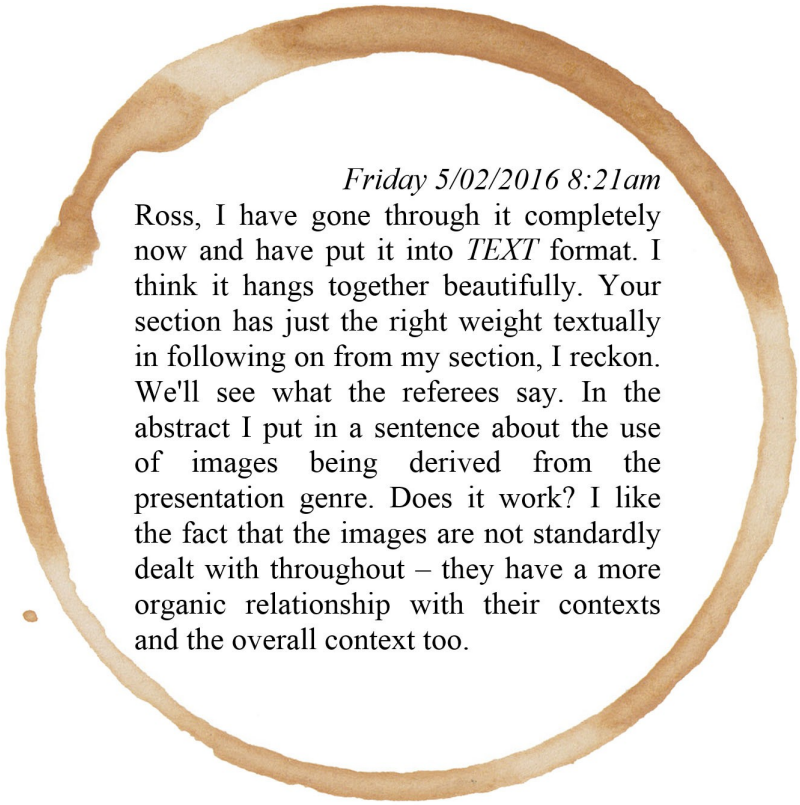
If fictocriticism dwells within the 'little crisis', it can also be argued that fictocriticism must maintain the binary its writers lever, otherwise fictocriticism is in 'danger' of becoming one or the other (fiction or criticism) and undermining or perverting its (albeit disputed) intentions and development. Limitations on what fictocriticism can and should be are in operation, and although the form 'works to refuse the magisterial position and colonising practices of normative academic writing' (Flavell 2004: 151), it also depends on normative academic writing in order to maintain its rage and relevance.

Accepting the aforementioned idea that a discipline's written forms influence the kinds of knowledge the discipline discovers, within the context of scholarship in the digital age the limitations inherent to fictocriticism might correspondingly prove limiting to knowledge. Further, because the 'cultural transformation effected by digital convergence and net worked [sic] communication has been dizzying, and, for many, disorienting', and the future of reading and writing practices has been 'thrown into doubt' (Potts 2015: 6), now is the ideal moment for writers to explore further alternatives to the established norm, as the packaging of the scholarly article undergoes transition. Just as the printing press revolutionised the formulation and transmission of ideas, online technologies present radical scholarship with the opportunity to impress itself upon the 'academosphere' by cultivating a multiplicity of knowledge 'shapes'. Via multimodality, the re-packaging of the journal article genre may liberate the voice or experimental mode of expression of the creative writing researcher.

Multimodality and the networked journal article

Multimodality is certainly not new. As Potts writes of creative practitioners in *The Future of Writing* (2015):

> [a] welter of experimental writing emerged from the mid 1990s, exploiting the possibilities of internet writing and computer based composition incorporating text, still and moving image, audio, design, and the hyperlink… (4)



However, academia has taken a long time to conceive meaningful and viable ways to make full use of online technologies (internet, 'apps') in scholarly writing, partly due to the rapid development of these technologies, and finding journal articles which embrace multimodality to the same extent as the experimental writing Potts refers to is a regularly fruitless exercise. One of two key issues here is around usage, and as with any new plaything it will take some time for scholars to handle the technology in a fluent way – to discover uses which avoid impressions of gimmickry or pointlessness, or simplification of what can be genuine research in non-verbal forms. Just as the scholarly avant-garde of the 1970s sought to cultivate by blending written forms as scholarly practice, the 21st century scholar's challenge might include integrating video, sound, images and illustration so they become part of research expression and thereby integral, not simply embedded supplements. Of equal importance to the structuring of verbal coherency in traditional scholarship, design elements such as composition, layout and sequencing can contribute significantly to the articulation of a research strategy. As multimodal theorists explore (Kress 2009), the blending of multiple textual modes demands media literacy and, in the variety of combinations possible, content is capable of a richness of experience and meaning far greater than the written monologue. That is, if and when media literacy is mastered, and applied to apposite content.

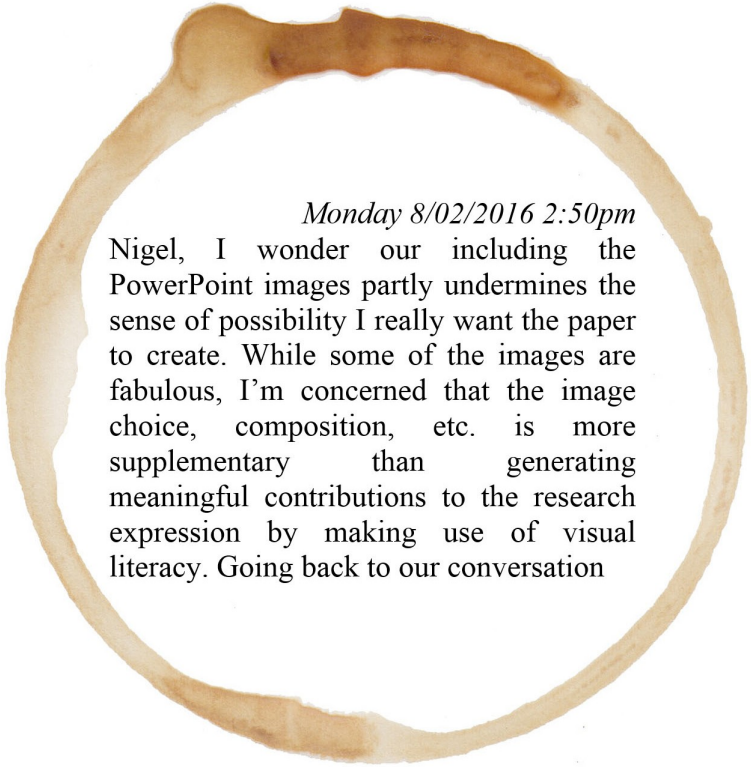
On the issue of content and its scholarly purpose, multimodality raises the query about how such modes can achieve the expositional quality which has become accepted as central to 'critical' scholarship. As creative practitioners, creative writing academics are in the box seat for such experimentation because, as one arts colleague commenting from the outside put it, 'being radical is a writer's thing'. It can be assumed what she means by this comment is that creative writers are equipped with the necessary skill set to contest conventions of written form; and further, that creative writers are acting on and interacting with an increasing level of multimedia modes in their practice. If the discipline is still perceived as the 'ghost' inside 'the machine' (Taylor 1999), then surely that position allows us

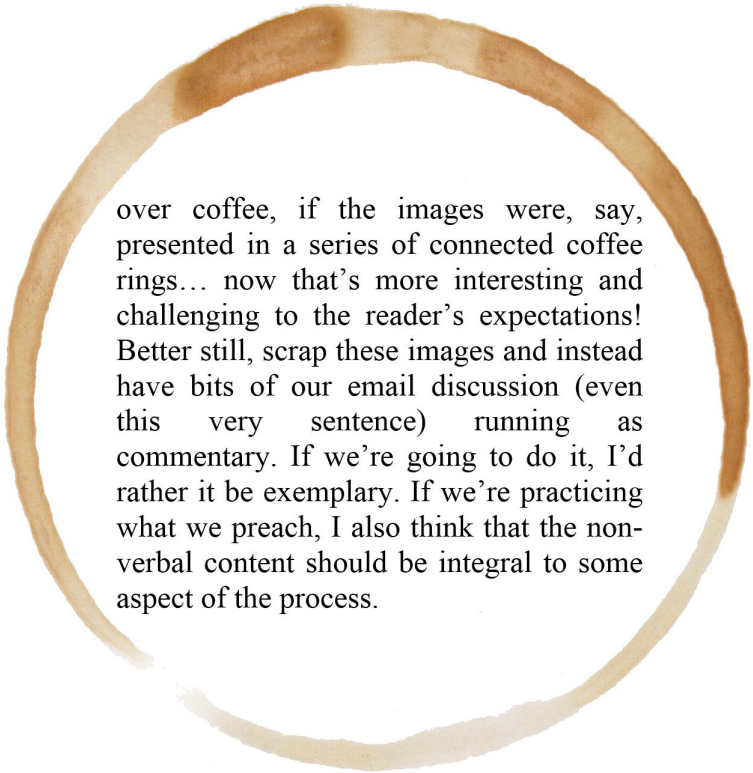
a wily and disruptive advantage to execute change – change which expands the modes available to communicate research germane to our practice.

The second issue fundamental to the lack of development in the area of multimodal scholarly practice is far more pragmatic: practitioners casting a paradigm shift in the scholarly journal article is absolutely achievable, but are publishers equipped to enable it? Evidence suggests yes and no. For established print journals, even if the decision has been to maintain the journal in hard copy, the advantages of rapid and widespread dissemination of its research online demands post-print or simultaneous conversion to digital media, usually involving the exporting of new content (and the scanning of archived content) as PDFs. For these journals, the potential for multimodal articles is obviously restricted to static content – but even further, often the journal's mandatory template or the typesetting software places significant constraints on the presentation of static content (for instance, images must be forced 'inline'). For digital-only journals the online technology is there and ready to go – if it is on the web then a journal can house it – and the opportunity for scholarly journal 'apps' presents an even more recent set of potential innovations and radicalisations.

Scholars debating the future of academic writing and reading tend to prefer circumnavigating any specific detail regarding the direction traditional scholarship might take in the 21st century. Reticence to 'predict' comes with obvious reason – while the science-rhetoric model has made hypothesis integral to scholarship, and persuasive scholarship grounded in analysis of the known to anticipate potential outcomes, the sheer progress of the technology impacting writing and reading in general is not only evolving, but diversifying and converging in radically new formations. These formations are socially linked, creating a fairly unstable means for hypothesis.

The closest to 'prediction' reads more like speculative fiction (exactly as Bacon's portrayal of a research institute did): Johanna Drucker's description of her strange entrance and navigation through an academic library of the future depicts a kind of router where the digital and physical converge, a place of virtual signage and 'cyber artisans-in-training' (Drucker 2014: 325). In Drucker's vision, university has become 'a fully integrated and distributed platform, socially networked, a node of production and review, research and assessment' (2014: 326). A little closer to now, and more broadly envisaged, Karen Bromley asks us to 'picture a world…' where communication is fully digitised and pens, pencils and paper are historical artefacts (Bromley 2010: 97). Bromley's 'world' is an exaggeration of current trends within technology and social media, and the potential of these trends to impact currently conceived scholarship; a world in which a trip to the library will apparently not exist.



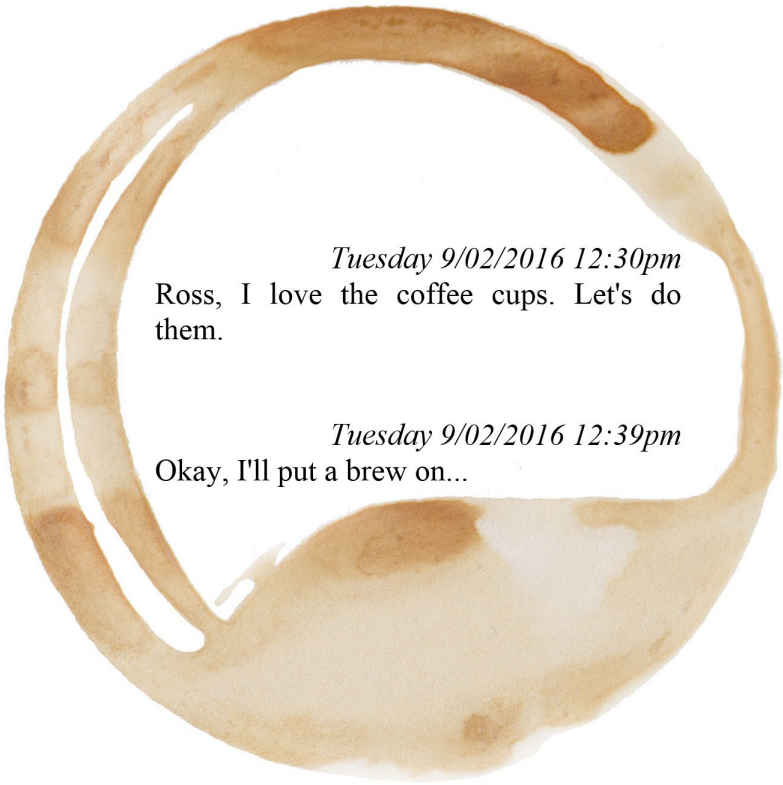


Closer to the present is the emergence of 'open-review' publishing, where written works are both peer-reviewed and published online as works-in-progress available to the public, and open to critique by any mouse clicker or tablet tapper. This is a far more 'public' event than what Benjamin's *habilitation* was subjected to. Writing on this topic in 2006, Jeffrey Young pointed out that 'the whole academic enterprise' revolves around the book as a printed, peer-reviewed artefact –

especially in relation to tenure and promotion – but that 'several scholars are using digital means to challenge the current model of academic publishing' (Young 2006: A21). 'Thanks to the Internet,' Young writes, 'the book should be dynamic rather than fixed – not just a text, but a site of conversation' (2006: A20). And while 'open-review' presents the very real possibility of new methods of both scrupulousness and personal and professional damage, the notion that scholarship – which is already collaborative in its current publishing form – may in some way become more 'networked' is an opening of the traditional publishing process which should be welcomed for its potential to increase rigour, however cautiously.

Normative journal articles are linear arrangements, but our reading of them is commonly non-linear; that is, we read intertextually, connecting concepts and arguments via internal and/or external knowledge schemata (in-text references; contextual knowledge). The journal article is already 'a site of conversation', but I agree with Young that such texts could be made more 'dynamic' if publishing platforms facilitate it. As is being discussed elsewhere, social media devices could be utilised to create commentary and para-text as a way to develop a new brand of scholarly collaboration and rigour. The reading of papers might not only require vertical scrolling, but lateral movement across the screen to see and read connecting lines of debate. Creating more than simply hyperlinks between articles, a more agile and expansive visual mapping of articles could provide another method of breaking open the siloing of research publishing, becoming more responsive and indicative of the positioning of arguments as debates expand: a literal mosaic or constellation of ideas forming in front of us; an extension of Benjamin's 'uninterrupted purposeful structure' (Benjamin 1998: 28). Such advancements could maintain all-important peer-review standards and attribution in order to adhere to current systems of research quality reporting, while shaping a new concept of intellectual production and connectivity.

Moving into that future, whatever it may be, there are substantial challenges for journal editors, publishers and contributors. Not only are these challenges technological, economic and epistemic, there are obstacles in finding suitable referees and equipping those referees with criteria which take into consideration the article's flexibility in delivering and meeting entrenched research expectations. Solutions do exist, of course, so it is perhaps only a matter of time and increased demand which will convince editors and publishers that a paradigm shift is already here and that it is a meaningful undertaking. Reigning over such change is the power and inflexibility of traditional scholarship, while how 'radical' the scholarly paper becomes depends on its contributors, and the acceptance of such strategies as a valuable continent on the scholarly map of knowledge production.



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