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Writing Online

I'm not sure how to title this. I write online, teach online, conference online, and even do a bit of governance - I run a number of email lists, which presents all sorts of issues. But here I want to deal with my writing, my texts, which I send out to several email lists, several times daily. In order to do this, I work constantly - a lot of the time I use online environments and tools for my work.

You can find my work at <http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/index.html> - and if you go there, then look at all of the text files, particularly the ones with names like ab, ac, lm, ln, lo, etc. Each of these is a long file containing a great number of texts; the texts are found in the order I write them. This will give you an idea of my 'standard' writing.

Now go to <http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/in.htm> - this is something quite different! Here is my web page scribbled on - it's a real mess, as if someone hacked into my site and destroyed it. But this is deliberate, and an example of what I do - which often involves a kind of 'interference'.

For this second site (at almost the same address) I used a Web browser called Amaya. You can download Amaya from the Internet - it's an experimental browser used by the World Wide Web consortium (those people who basically decide the standards that govern Web pages and servers) to text html and other online codes. It's unique because you can mess up whatever page you're looking at - and then download it, or if it's your own page, you can put it back. This felt joyful - the ability to scribble directly on my own page! So I did that, made a second page (using in.html instead of index.html) and put it back in the directory.

So what's the purpose? Other than making a new text, it created quite a disturbance - as if a clean and proper web page were taken over by someone else and reused. And I wanted to do this - make it look as if somehow my work was 'torn' or hacked into - as if it were a body that was taken over by someone else - as if someone else were speaking through my body. And, judging by the responses I got, people in fact did think that someone else had gone to the site and taken it over.

Another example of this kind of thing is a project I designed for the trAce online writing group. It's the 'Lost Project'. I was the online writer-in-residence for trAce for six months, and I first did a piece where I roamed all across the trAce bulletin board - went into all the different conferences - as if I had lost something, and might find it there. (Go to <http://hum-webboard.ntu.ac.uk/~trace/login> to see the webboard here.) This was interesting to me - writing a piece which was scattered across a whole lot of different sites. Someone would have to go to all of them to see what I was doing.

After this, I thought more about losing things, and decided I wanted a site where people could go and describe anything or anyone they had lost. But I changed this in several

ways - I made (with the aid of Simon Mills, an excellent programmer) a webpage which 'shuddered' and looked as if it were falling apart - it made it difficult to enter anything into the form. I then had it made that, after you clicked 'submit', you'd be taken to a fake error page - as if you'd make a mistake. The idea was that you would already be feeling that you had 'lost' your writing and Description as well. If you clicked on the fake error page, it would take you to a list of everything that anyone had lost - including your own submission.

On the first page, you're asked to give your name and email address as well - but when you go to the list of things lost, your name and email address aren't there - they're also lost. You have to click on a name/address page - and you'll find a list of all the participants, without their Descriptions.

The best way to think about this is to look at the page itself - at <http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/lost/> Enter some information and see what happens.

All of these projects involve webpages and thinking about the web. But there are a lot of other ways to work - for example, a simple thing to do is use letter substitution. In the operating systems I use - unix and linux - there is a command, 'sed', that allows a great deal of sophisticated substitution - you can even write programs 'in sed'. But you can also do substitution in any word processing program.

For example:

All of thoosoo projoocts involvoo woobpagoos and thinking about thoo woob. But thooroo aroo a lot of othoor ways to work - for ooxamploo, a simploo thing to do is usoo loottoor substitution. In thoo opoorating systooms I usoo - unix and linux - thooroo is a command, "sood," that allows a grooat dooal of sophistica- tood substitution - you can oovoon writoo programs "in sood." But you can also do substitution in any word procoossing program.

This is absurd and silly, of course, but you can work much more elaborately, even substituting things at the beginnings of lines, using commands such as 'sort' (which rearranges the lines in various orders) and so forth. You can also use commands to change the order of word fields - for example, make the first word in a line, the fourth - and the fourth word, the first. And you can take any large file and, with a command called 'grep', pull out all lines that have a certain string (group of characters) in it. For example, if I grep the word 'line' in a file which is a collection of my recent writing, called 'lw' - I'd write

```
grep line lw
```

- and I'd get

```
if someone hassles you on line, it is a rogue machine:
Ant PC planetary, MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! body line
TREMENDOUS HORROR! MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! lapse
PC memory line PC a dog like/although her angel-mechanism glitter.
Suicide line type TREMENDOUS HORROR! spiral smile breaks Body
line PC an ant forgets it The sun walks. The record CONSEQUENCES!
guilty nick head line TREMENDOUS HORROR! ADAM doll Her end
HORROR! crowd scrap our beat, second, MURDEROUS
CONSEQUENCES! animal line culling outline until real or virtual
disappearance lost in that specific petal, outlined against that specific
stamen, that the command-line test-jennifer conceptual work of literary
art
```

15doing this for the command-line conceptual work of literary art
 28this has to be nearing the end of the command-line conceptual work
 of the command-line conceptual work everything was disordered but i
 was in the timeline
 the timeline was me
 in the timeline 1943 it was the timeline of my life
 the segment was beyond the visible timeline
 i couldn't see the segment it was beyond the visible timeline
 i'd have to change the scale of the timeline in order to see the segment
 i didn't know how to change the scale i was stuck within the timeline
 i wanted out of the timeline the timeline i could see
 i didn't know how to move the timeline i didn't know how to shift it
 the timeline would have to be shifted
 everything was disordered but i was in the timeline
 i couldn't see the segment it was beyond the visible timeline
 i didn't know how to change the scale i was stuck within the timeline
 i didn't know how to move the timeline i didn't know how to shift it
 i wanted out of the timeline the timeline i could see
 i'd have to change the scale of the timeline in order to see the segment
 in the timeline 1943 it was the timeline of my life
 the segment was beyond the visible timeline
 the timeline was me
 the timeline would have to be shifted
 because of content - many of them not online.
 to delineate, ever so slightly, the imaginary evanescence
 2.2.2.2.2.1.1OK29 linesTextage, "Fwd: Important
 in the timeline 1943 it was the timeline of my life
 in the timeline 1943 it was the timeline of my life

- which is a kind of fascinating text, produced by 'ransacking' or going over all my other texts in a particular file, and pulling out the lines that have the word 'line' in them.

All of these things give me tools for thinking about writing and new ways of putting words and meaning together. I'll very rarely let anything alone - I don't really care how the text is produced - so I'll go back into it and rearrange things, making the text say things or lead the reader in new and different directions. In other words, the commands are catalysts for text production - not designed to deliver the final text, but to deliver a textual body I can then work on, operate upon.

I also learned some simple programming. Years ago, I programmed in Pascal, which is fairly easy and still around. Pascal and the Microsoft language Basic combined (or at least Basic was influenced by Pascal) and Qbasic, or Quick Basic, was created. It's an easy language to learn, and runs in DOS. I did a number of programs in Quick Basic, but nothing really manipulating or working with text.

Since the Net, a number of scripting languages have been developed. The two most famous are javascript and Perl. Perl runs in Unix or Linux, although there are also Windows evasions available. Javascript runs in anything - you can write it and it will be read by any browser. I did some works in Javascript at one point. These are very simple webpages that 'act up' one way or another. Some of the URLs:

<http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/z.htm> which uses a simple random generator and word list to create a page which 'breathes'. I found a parallel between the human body and the 'body' tag in html and wanted to explore that.

<http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/head.htm> contains a simple text which momentarily appears when a button is pressed. The source code is very simple; there is a double message - one for browsers that don't recognize javascript, and one which sets up the page for those who do. The page then takes you to another page when a button is pressed - the second page has the text, which remains unreadable because it's on screen so fast. But if you look at the code, you can figure out that the second page is <http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/tail.html> and then the text is readable.

<http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/tt.htm> contains another javascript page. In this case I had to look around a bit at other code and paste it in. It represents the body of an avatar or character - and the text and background color changes somewhat randomly, as if one were looking at it.

And finally, <http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/uu.htm> is two simple texts moving in two windows. I did have troubles coding this, but that's because of my ignorance of javascript.

There's another way to do dynamic work, of course, and that's dhtml, which incorporates javascript. Dhtml is dynamic html, and you can usually find an editor or program like Dreamweaver to do most of the work for you. I have one page up, <http://www2.sva.edu/~alans/x.html> - which works in most Netscape and some Microsoft Explorer windows. It's a page of moving blocks of text and one image, against still blocks of text and a background image. I didn't do any of the programming by hand, and it doesn't run on Netscape 6.0 or Netscape 6.01 (a lot of stuff doesn't by the way). It's running fine in the background now.

So there are many levels of coding html, javascript, or dhtml pages. You can code things by hand - hard writing the code - which can be difficult, but will teach you a lot. Or you can have a program like Dreamweaver code it for you - which is easier, but leads to looser code which might not always run. Finally, you can code by hand, but take bits and pieces from other programs and sources on the Net, and turn them into something of your own.

I've also used Perl to help me with my writing. Perl is a scripting language that sits mostly in Linux or Unix systems, but can download Perl for Windows, and O'Reilly publishing even has a book on Windows *Perl*. It's a fast language for doing all sorts of text transformations, and you can pick up the simpler elements, I think, from scratch in a week or two. I've written a number of programs in Perl, which I use for making pieces. One of them, a very simple one, is called 'bio' and is as follows:

```
#!/usr/local/bin/perl -w
# biography

$| = 1;
`cp .bio .bio.old`;
print "Would you like to add to bio information? If so, type y.\n";
chop($str=<STDIN>);
if ($str eq "y") {print "Begin with date.\n";
print "Write single line, use ^d to end.\n";
open(APPEND, ">> .bio");
@text=<STDIN>;
print APPEND @text;
close APPEND;}
`sort -o .bio .bio`;
exit(0);
```

All this program does is take a file called '.bio' (the period keeps it hidden most of the time), and asks me if I want to add something to it. If I type 'y' for 'yes' it asks me to begin with a date and write a single line. So I could say '2001 I am getting married.' and enter that. I would then hit the control key and 'd' at the same time, and it would take the lines I entered and place them, in order, in the .bio file. So over time I can write an autobiography just by adding lines and dates.

Of course you can do this by hand, just by typing lines into an editor and then sorting them, but I like this odd interface.

A longer program, called Julu, is more complicated, but again took only a short while to write. It asks a lot of questions and returns complex texts I can use for writing. It has 'arrays' in it, lists of words that it will substitute in various sentences at various times. Just to show you what it looks like, here is Julu (please read on; we're not learning Perl here):

```
#!/usr/local/bin/perl5 -w

$t = time;
$| = 1;
srand( time() ^ ($$ + ($$ << 15)) );
system 'touch APPEND';
@a = qw(
blood urine feces gas sand water oil solvent alcohol lymph menses
spit saliva vomit sweat effluvia detritus excretions sloughings
tears floods spews mercuries semen detergents ammonias ureas
clays ices grains substances conglomerates waxes piss shit scratches
scrapes cuts wounds tears splits breaks diarrheas
);
@verb = qw(
splits skews churns comes goes passes thrusts regurgitates flows
streams spills pours pisses shits
);
@prep = qw(
in on under to towards across beneath around upon below onto
);
@noun = qw(
ghost avatar spectre doll faerie wraith hobgoblin troll tengu kappa
presence
);
@nnn = qw(
cloth stitch suture binding closing damming holding fabric velvet
cotton wool silk
);
$nnnn = int rand(8);
$non = int rand(11);
$non1 = int rand(7);
$pre = int rand(6);
$gen = int(48*rand);
$gen1 = int(48*rand);
$gen2 = 49 - int(40*rand);
$time = int(time/3600);
$g = int(8*rand);
if ($sign=fork) {print "\nRun-time $pid\n";}
else {sleep(1); print "\nFirst flooding\n";
exit(0);}
sleep(2);
chop($that=<STDIN>);
print "\n$that is clotting everything. - \n";
```

```

print "Your $nnn[$nnnn] is soaked, written, erased. - \n"; sleep(1);
print "Consider the next smearing of your thinking skin.\n";
sleep(2);
print "\nYour $nnn[$non1] should be wiped into existence? \n";
chop($str=<STDIN>);
if ($str eq "no") {print "\nGive me your semen...\n"; sleep(10); goto
FINAL;}
else {print "\nI Consider the following again, your $that ...\n";}
print "Would $that give you hydrogenesis?", "\n" if 1==$g;
print "You flood me...", "\n" if 5==$g;
print "I flood your body...", "\n" if 6==$g;
print "The flooding of names, soaking of of things! ...", "\n" if 4==$g;
sleep(1);
print "\n$noun[$non1] $verb[$non] me $prep[$nnnn] your
$nnn[$non1]!\n";
print "\nHow would you absorb your $a[$gen2] $nnn[$nnnn]? \n";
$name=<STDIN>;
chop $name;
print "\n";
print "$that, $name remembers my $nnn[$g] ", "\n" if 3==$g;
print "$that, $name is sufficient for me", "\n" if 7==$g;
print "You have absorbed for $pid hours, you're still alive", "\n" if
5==$g;
print "Your $name is mine, my $that is yours!", "\n" if 2==$g;
sleep(1);
print "List more and more effluvia\n";
print "one by one, each on a line alone, typing Control-d when done.\n";
@adj=<STDIN>;
chop(@adj);
$size=@adj;
$pick=int(rand($size));
srand;
$newpick=int(rand($size));
print "\nMy $adj[$pick] is your chemistry here...\n";
srand( time() ^ ($$ + ($$ < 15) ));
$be=int(rand(5));
open(APPEND, ">> rope");
print APPEND
join(":", $name, $str, $that, $adj[$pick + 1], $adj[$newpick + 1]), "\n";
# join(":", @adj, $name, $str, $sign, $g, $that, $name, $adj[$pick]), "\n";
print APPEND "Does $that replace your $name? \n" if 4==$be;
print APPEND "I do not understand your fluid! \n" if 5==$be;
print APPEND "Your $a[$gen1] $adj[$pick] is $prep[$non1] my
$a[$gen]
$adj[$newpick] \n" if 1 > $be;
print APPEND "Your $noun[$non1] dissolves my $adj[$newpick]! \n"
if 3==$be;
print APPEND "$noun[$non] with $pid ideohydraulesis!" if 2 < $be;
print APPEND "Write $a[$gen1] $adj[$pick] through my $name! \n" if
1==$be;
close(APPEND);
open(STDOUT);
if ($pid = fork) {
$diff=$pid - $$;
print "$name is spilled far too many $diff times!", "\n" if 5 < $g;

print <<Construct;

```

\$name calls forth \$a[\$gen1] \$noun[\$non], hungered, making things.
 \$prep[\$pre] the \$a[\$gen], \$name is \$a[\$diff], \$[\$gen], \$str?
 ... \$noun[\$non] is \$adj[\$newpick] on wet flesh, it's \$noun[\$non]?

Construct

```

} else {
close (STDOUT);

system("touch .trace; rev rope >> .trace");
system("rm rope");

exit(0);
}
sleep(1);
print "Are you satisfied with your $name?\n";
chop($answer=<STDIN>);
if ($answer eq "no") {print "You're written with $a[10+$pre]!\n";}
if ($answer eq "yes") {print "A $a[10+$pre] and $a[15+$pre]
nightmare!\n";}
print "Your inscription finished, you have created thing.", "\n\n" if 3 <
$g;
print "$name $pid is the perfect solution.", "\n\n" if 3==$g;
print "... $a[$non] $name $$ - the beginning of flesh.", "\n\n" if 6==$g;
print "Your $name $diff text is your final enunciation.", "\n\n" if 4==$g;
print "You wrote for $time hours?", "\n" if 2==$g;
sleep(1);
print "$name and $$ and $pid - another entity named and made!", "\n\n"
if 2==$g;
sleep(1);
print "Wait! $name and $pid are written.", "\n\n" if 1==$g;
FINAL: {
$d = int((gmtime)[6]);
$gen3 = 48 - int(20*rand);
print "For $d $a[$gen2] days, we have been $a[$gen3].";
print "\n";
$u = (time - $t)/60;
printf "and it has taken you %2.3f minutes to swallow your last ...",
"$u";
print "\n\n";
print `rev .trace`, "\n\n";
}
exit(0);

```

You can see the lists of words at the beginning - and I can change these any time, of course - as well as a lot of characters that start with a dollar sign such as '\$that'. These are string variables - they refer back to the word lists. There is also a lot of '\n' which simply signals to the program that the end of a line is reached, and it's time for a new one.

When the program runs, it asks me to enter lines, gives me material in return - and I write in and out of the material it gives; it then rearranges the lines according to its own internal logic, and gives me a text at the end.

The following is a text I wrote for this essay, showing how I can use the program to develop a theme; as far as I'm concerned, the following is also a finished work, a kind of circulation of software and human presence:

hold me, hold me, and she says

my holding is absorbed in my flood flooding, my offer-proffer to you,
 my split doll beneath your binding, my split doll and flood-flooding
 wiped into existence and your own :my skin is smeared, still thinking;
 my binding is wiped into existence; my binding wipes me out of
 existence; everything is clotted with the remains of my thinking being; i
 am moving on; on the back of the software; in the heart of the thing
 itself :i am writing/riding you this, on the back of the software, what
 sort of flood flooding do you mean to me, and :through the river more
 and more and through the stream:through the river more and more and
 through the stream

Your alcohol more and more in and through the river is to my spews
 more and more in and through the river

While I could easily sit down and type out a text like this, I wouldn't have thought of it - not all the circulations and meanings that keep rising to the surface. It was the program that allowed me to do that. In this case, I don't even see the need for changing anything - sometimes I have to change things around, bring the meaning out of what otherwise might be considered nonsense.

There's still another area I work in, with my work - and that is in various kinds of chatrooms and other conversation-oriented Net applications. At times I've logged onto a chat as two different characters, and created a play by having the characters talk back and forth with each other. (Of course, I'm both of them.) By saving - logging - the whole chat session, I'm able to make a work I would never have thought of otherwise, again. The dialog seems to carry itself forward.

Of course this form can even be used in the sense of writing a play but there's something different in entering another space and using it to create dialog. The following is an example of this (as usual, see below for commentary):

The Fateful Meeting

```
{b:2} su jennifer
{b:3} telnet 127.0.0.1 6666
Trying 127.0.0.1...
Connected to 127.0.0.1.
Escape character is '^'.
```

Welcome to Clara-Machine

```
Type /? for Help
/n <name> for Name
:<action> for Emote
/q for Quit
```

```
> New arrival from localhost on line 2.
/n Jennifer
> Name set.
Julu! I can't believe I'm meeting you on this machine...
(2) Jennifer says, "Julu! I can't believe I'm meeting you on this
machine..."
(1) Julu says, "Jennifer? It's you? After all these years, ah... It's
like ripping my heart out."
Strictly speaking, that's true of course. There is always _obverse code._
(2) Jennifer says, "Strictly speaking, that's true of course. There is
```

always _obverse code. _"
 Hold in a minute - brb - phone's ringing
 (2) Jennifer says, "Hold in a minute - brb - phone's ringing"
 (1) Julu says, "You're a lot busier than I am; you were earlier down the line -"
 : is sorry; it's been a long day, storming outside...
 (2) Jennifer is sorry; it's been a long day, storming outside...
 :thinks it will take a while to get used to all the commands...
 (2) Jennifer thinks it will take a while to get used to all the commands...
 (1) Julu says, "Tell me what to do; I've always fulfilled that function for you -"
 (1) Julu says, "even when you didn't know I existed -"
 If you sign off, there will be no one to talk to; you are a sign for me...
 (2) Jennifer says, "If you sign off, there will be no one to talk to; you are a sign for me..."
 (1) Julu says, "Our sentences always end in such lassitude... languor..."
 Because we foreshadow one another...
 (2) Jennifer says, "Because we foreshadow one another... "
 :murmurs she is after all speaking to herself...
 (2) Jennifer murmurs she is after all speaking to herself...
 > (1) Julu has disconnected.
 Do not, do not, do this to me...
 (2) Jennifer says, "Do not, do not, do this to me..."
 Ah, Julu ...
 (2) Jennifer says, "Ah, Julu ..."
 /quit

> You are leaving the fictional domain of Clara-Machine

Connection closed by foreign host.
 {b:4}

In order to do this, I set up a chat application on my own machine, although I could have used any one at all. I also wrote a minimum of dialog to establish a sense of place. I then entered twice in order to have these characters talk to each other - creating a play of sorts. What you see in the final result is my own typing, and then the typing reappearing within the scene:

Because we foreshadow one another...
 (2) Jennifer says, "Because we foreshadow one another... "

- in the second line, Jennifer says what was typed in the first. So there are amazing repetitions, echoes, and types of interaction possible here.

If you've ever used IRC - Internet Relay Chat - you know you can also do these sorts of things there as well; you can type '/set log' in the IRC window, and you'll be able to log whatever you're writing/working on. If you haven't used IRC, you should be able to find a program called MIRC on the Internet, which will allow you to use it, fairly easy.

So these are some of the tools, some of the ways I work online. Almost all my writing - even this essay - I do while I'm logged in; it's more exciting to me, since I can look things up, check mail, run programs, etc, all while doing the text.

For me, it's not the ways, however, but the ends; I really feel what I want to explore are issues of 'being on line', 'being virtual', and so forth. This means there are issues of what I call 'virtual subjectivity' - what happens when someone has net sex, or falls in love online, or writes an essay online, or talks on chat, or does research? Where is the mind, what is happening here? So my work deals constantly with these issues, as well as issues of the

body and language. With language, I'm fascinated by the way one can transform meaning online, almost, but not quite, producing

Because we foreshadow one another...

(2) Jennifer says, "Because we foreshadow one another... "

nonsense - and how the brain can turn that near-nonsense into something meaningful. The texts are often lurid, dealing directly with sexuality and nudity, in an attempt to draw the reader in.

Here's part of a text with all sorts of substitutions; I think it's from my online bio, but I'm fascinated by the graphic and almost readable aspect of it:

```
[o-z][t-z][h-z][e-z][c-z][h-z][a-z][p-z]
[b-z][o-z][o-z][k-z][s-z][,-z][b-z][o-z]
[o-z][k-z][a-z][n-z][[-z][a-z][--z][z-z]
[]-z][a-z][r-z][t-z][i-z][c-z][l-z][e-z]
[s-z][.-z][H-z][i-z][v-z][i-z][d-z][e-z]
[a-z][n-z][f-z][i-z][l-z][m-z][[-z][a-z]
[--z][z-z][]-z][h-z][a-z][v-z][b-z][e-z]
[e-z][s-z][h-z][o-z][w-z][i-z][n-z][t-z]
[e-z][r-z][n-z][a-z][t-z][i-z][o-z][n-z]
[-z][a-z][l-z][l-z][y-z][.-z]
[S-z][o-z][n-z][d-z][h-z][e-z][i-z][c-z]
[o-z][m-z][o-z][d-z][e-z][r-z][a-z][t-z]
[e-z][s-z][e-z][v-z][e-z][r-z][a-z][e-z]
[m-z][a-z][i-z][l-z][i-z][s-z][t-z][s-z]
[-z][i-z][n-z][c-z][l-z][u-z][d-z][i-z]
[n-z][C-z][y-z][b-z][e-z][r-z][m-z][i-z]
[n-z][d-z][,-z][C-z][y-z]
[b-z][e-z][r-z][c-z][u-z][l-z][t-z][u-z]
```

Here's part of a text called *SECRET* which documents what everyone on my Internet Service Provider is looking at:

```
SECRET cavaleri u1 maginot.blueskys Thu09AM 3days tail -fn+1
./DT.log SECRET :cavaleri SECRET tc maginot.blueskys Thu09AM
3days BitchX :jzk tb a17-219-157-44.a 10:29PM SECRET 0 -tcsh
:webber w6 h00050208fd6e.ne Thu01PM 3days -ksh :lent w3 SECRET
enjoy.cooper.edu Tue04PM 2days -ksh Your wraithe dissolves my
cavaleri u6 SECRET maginot.blueskys Thu09AM 3days tail -fn+1
./AT.log ! spectre with SECRET ideohydraulesis! cavaleri u1
maginot.blueskys Thu09AM 3days tail -fn+1 SECRET ./DT.log :serge
td
serge.dialup.acc 10:30PM 0 -bash :cavaleri tc SECRET
maginot.blueskys Thu09AM 3days BitchX :webber w6
h00050208fd6e.ne Thu01PM SECRET 3days -ksh
:davidc wd 138.5.49.199 05Apr01 2days -tcsh Your doll dissolves
SECRET my kynn w9 mirage.harvard.e 03Apr01 4days -tcsh !
hobgoblin with SECRET ideohydraulesis! cavaleri u1 maginot.blueskys
Thu09AM 3days tail -fn+1
```

Here's part of a text using the same Perl program above, as well as some other substitution mechanisms, to create a work that looks like it's erasing itself:

wiping-existence lffllffllfflluvia surgery of the
 effllffllffllffllffllffllf wiping-existence
 flffllffllffllffllffllffllffllffllffllfflluvia-skin , bones
 wiping-existence remarking the signifier: j ust beneath the surface,
 skeleta l:::replace wiping-existence your skin-damming : scarred lips
 surround the skel etal:: stitched wiping-existence and pulled into positio
 n::: signifier-position: or wiping-existence ::

And here is part of a text - quite graphic! - that was taken from a group of error message headers - I love the repetition in it, as if something is being said, but really the only thing coming through is ERROR!

2.2.2.2.2Shown16 KBMessage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesText
 2.2.2.2.2.2Shown15 KBMessage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesText
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2Shown15 KBMessage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1.1OK29 linesTextage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2Shown11 KBMessage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesTextage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2Shown11 KBMessage, "Fwd: Important
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesText
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesTextage, "Fwd:
 Important Rea
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2Shown10 KBMessage, "Fwd:
 Important Rea
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesText
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 linesTextage,
 "Fwd: Important Rea
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2Shown9.8 KB
 Message, "Fwd: Important Rea
 2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.1Shown1 lines
 Text

Only two more examples! The following is a part of a text sent to me by a Japanese writer, Kenji Siratori. I modified it to create a new text by making substitutions all over the place. Siratori and I have collaborated and written into each other's works:

MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! end virus end machine clone boy
 room, her replicant TREMENDOUS HORROR! FUCKNAM cell air
 silence world at MURDEROUS
 CONSEQUENCES! center PC++MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES!
 desert TREMENDOUS HORROR!
 angel-mechanism glitter. Suicide line type TREMENDOUS HORROR!
 spiral TREMENDOUS HORROR! ADAM doll this zero gravity=body
 PC grief machine dances like MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! sun
 grief area asphalt soul-machine MAC MURDEROUS
 CONSEQUENCES! machine leaps MAC her love splits MISERY!
 MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! amniotic fluid mechanism MAC
 MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! nightmare TREMENDOUS
 HORROR! ADAM doll does MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES!
 clonical ground TREMENDOUS HORROR! sun desire.... Small
 smile breaks Body line PC an ant forgets it The sun walks. The record
 TREMENDOUS HORROR! murder like our dog. Asphalt holds
 MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! guilty nick head line
 TREMENDOUS HORROR! ADAM doll Her end
 be MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! beginning PC myself.
 :MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! over MURDEROUS

CONSEQUENCES!re TREMENDOUS HORROR! pupil
MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! grief TREMENDOUS HORROR!
end clone UNBELIEVABLE CONFERENCE
TERROR! approximates MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! eyes PC
0 degree TREMENDOUS HORROR! monochrome earth/vital.
:TREMENDOUS HORROR! middle TEMENDOUS HORROR! crowd
scrap our beat, second, MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! animal line
computer inside when walk MISERY! MURDEROUS
CONSEQUENCES!
angel-mechanism++MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! poor placenta
world TREMENDOUS HORROR! ADAM doll a girl like,
MURDEROUS CONSEQUENCES! gimmick air like
Cyber nightmare DOG TREMENDOUS HORROR! amniotic fluid
mechanism.... I]

Finally, here is a text which was written freely, but with everyone above in mind; the programs now speak through me in a sense:

waver=control wander=dance

she's naked, like she's on drugs, she's standing or trying to stand, he's coming out, he's naked, he's hardly in better shape, look at him, he's lifting her, he's spreading her legs, they stumble, they're in a heap on the floor, he's crawling away, she's going after him, she's turning him over, she's opening him up, she crawls to her feet, he's stumbling about, she's getting up, her mind's wandering around, she's swaying back and forth, he's hardly standing, he's trying to lift her, she's grappling him, she's starting to fall, she catches herself, he falls to the floor, she's standing up, she's weaving and stumbling, he's crawling to his feet, he's holding her open, she's falling on him, she's pulling at him, he's like he's on drugs, she's looking at nothing, his mouth's hanging open, she's spreading his legs, she's spreading her legs, she's pulling at him, she's putting him in, he's crawling on her, she's turning over, she crawls to her feet, he's stumbling about, she's weaving about, he's holding her open, she's putting him in,

she's naked, like she's on caffeine, she's standing or starting to stand, he's coming out, he's naked, he's totally in better shape, look at him, he's lifting her, he's closing her legs, they stumble, they're in a heap on the floor, he's walking away, she's going after him, she's turning him over, she's opening him up, she walks to her feet, he's working and sweating, she's getting up, her mind's clear as crystal, she's marching back and forth, he's totally standing, he's starting to lift her, she's rapping him, she's starting to jump, she catches herself, he jumps to the floor, she's standing up, she's marching and stumbling, he's walking to his feet, he's holding her open, she's jumping on him, she's speaking to him, he's like he's on caffeine, she's looking at something, his mouth's speaking clearly, she's closing his legs, she's closing her legs, she's speaking to him, she's forcing him in her, he's walking on her, she's turning over, she walks to her feet, he's working and sweating, she's marching about, he's holding her open, she's forcing him in her,

I hope this has clarified both my work and a number of ways one can write online - ways that take advantage of various programs and tools in somewhat simple fashion. The material might look complicated, but it's nothing that couldn't be learned in a couple of weeks, as I've said above. And it offers the writer (and reader) an unparalleled chance to explore language in new ways, ways that depend on interactivity, as well as what comes out of one's head.

Relevant URLs:

Internet Text at: <http://www2.sva.edu/~alans>

Partial at http://lists.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/internet_txt.html

TrAce Projects at <http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/writers/sondheim/index.htm>

CDROM of collected work 1994-2000/1 available: write sondheim@panix.com

Alan Sondheim's books include the anthology Being on Line: Net Subjectivity (Lusitania, 1996), Disorders of the Real (Station Hill, 1988), and .echo (alt-X digital arts, 2001) as well as numerous other chapbooks, books and articles. His video and films have been shown internationally.

Sondheim co-moderates several email lists, including Cybermind, Cyberculture, and Wrying. For the past several years, he has been working on an 'Internet Text', a continuous meditation on philosophy, psychology, language, body, sexuality, and virtuality. Before moving to Miami to take up a full-time teaching position, Sondheim lived in Brooklyn, New York and taught part-time at the School of Visual Arts; he lectures and publishes widely on contemporary art and Internet issues. In 1999, Sondheim was the second virtual writer-in-residence for the trAce online writing community, originating in Nottingham, England. He is currently Associate Editor of the online magazine Beehive, and is assembling a special topic for the America Book Review on Codework. His video/soundwork has been recently screened at Millennium Film (NYC), as well as Western Ontario and York Universities (Toronto).

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TEXT

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