

Reading and Writing Between the Lines

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En collaboration: lire et écrire entre les lignes

Dans ce texte écrit en collaboration portant justement sur leur pratique de l'écriture en collaboration, Betsy Warland et Daphne Marlatt analysent la nature du procédé d'écriture qu'elles partagent. A l'aide d'images d'ordre militaire, fluvial, labial et lunaire et du monde de la danse et des jeux des cartes, tout en créant des jeux de mots et en incorporant l'autobiographie à la théorie, elles identifient les gageures et la séduction, les rapports de force et la jalousie, les règles de base et le côté insaisissable de la langue qu'elles rencontrent au cours de leur dialogue.

Collaboration is a specious term for the writing you and i do together ... here, even here, hovering between third person and second person pronoun, to choose second with its intimacy seems to me indicative of how i write with and to you. you my co-writer and co-reader, the one up close i address as you and you others i cannot foresee but imagine 'you' reading in for. and then there's the you in me, the you's you address in me, writing too. not the same so much as reciprocal, moving back and forth between our sameness and differences.

in our doubleness, no, our plurality as we read (for) and write (to) you, all the you's in each other reading and writing too – a polylogue, such bends and twists – you see how this writing rivers out to various mouths immediately?

which is why i find it difficult to use the word collaboration with its military censure, its damning in the patriot's eyes (the Father appears here with his defining gaze, his language of the law). collaboration

implies that who we are collaborating with holds all the power. the lines are drawn. but perhaps it's the very subversion implicit in collaboration that i might see in our favour were we to move between the lines. when i see us as working together reciprocally, then what i see us working at is this subversion of the definitive. running on together (how I love prose),

reciprocal in this, that the holes we make in such a definite body leak meaning we splash each other with, not so much working as playing in all this super-fluity, wetting ourselves with delight even, whetting our tongues, a mutual stimulation we aid and abet (entice) in each other.

'let me slip into something more comfortable'

she glides across the

room

lābi, to glide, to slip

(*labile; lābilis:*

labia; labialis)

la la la

'my laby l mynde ...'

lābilis, labour, belabour, collaborate, elaborate

'The Hebrews named their letters, some guttural ... others dental ...
and so they call others, labial, that is letter of the lips'

slip of the tongue

'the lability of innocence'

labium

'any of the four folds of tissue of the female external genitalia'

four corners of the earth

four gates of Eden

labia majora (the 'greater lips')

la la la

and

labia minora

(the 'lesser lips')

not two mouths but three!

slipping one over on polarity

slippage in the text

you & me *collābi, (to slip together)*

labialization!

slip(ing)page(es)

like notes in class

o labilism o letter of the lips

o *grafting* of our slips

labile lovers

'prone to undergo displacement in position or change in nature,
form, chemical composition; unstable'

giving the one authoritative version of the slip
graft, graphium, graphein, to write

slippery lines

thought is collaboration

or thought is reading one another's min(e)ds, stumbling onto unexpected gaps, holes, wait, explosive devices – this is not enemy territory we're speaking of or in, though each entry can be for the other a dark side of the moon, its sudden craters, its dry seas or season ...

mooning (we wander aimlessly) or spooning (with a lure, but whose?)
slippery words this slippery body we tongue between us comes
between us in the ways a word can sound 'slippage' you said

slipping in the age it takes the mind

to turn around its mooring words that bind

you gave me the slip suggesting you'd slip into something more comfortable

negligible and large, in which we are complicit and interested together to be in this body at sea with one another in the slippage of meaning this loss of motion forward is fear, wait, being taken off in a different direction altogether ...

collaboration then as power play where we breaks down into you and i and i'm tired of defining these feints of desire, us desiring yes this third body we go chasing after and jealousy moves in, hey what are you really after?

so let's talk about the dark side as it rises dimly behind the lit rooms of our intentions variously engaged. let's talk about the ground rules, how i can revise me but not you though i sometimes try. how we find the mean in our understanding of what we're individually after. even if it lies in two different directions? what happens to our writing when *together* to be in a body breaks down?

not simply a working together there are challenges backings up
required words we graft from each other's texts that can't be later
edited out

'where are you going with this?'
'you didn't go deep enough'

rewrites re you re me losing the rhythm instinctive steps & turns (no
box/waltz here) writing 'in the dark, i saw you ...' the tension neces-
sary following & leading s)witching unpredictably the doubt –

'you've written it all; there's nothing left for me to say'
'you gave me the slip'

the elation sparking the provoking each other beyond our endings
our meanings

'i didn't know that was in there until now'

playing with each other's logic like a dream dark side of the moon
right brain conversation the erotic zones of a word we're both
attracted to stroke *arousing* our enigmatic ménage à trois one nearly
always on the outside edge of two a living on it sharpening our seman-
tic shifts slips *yā*, for the *zeal* of a language intimate (*intimāre*, to put in,
publish, from *intimus*, inmost deepest) we risk *jealousy* the fear of losing
our voice and the afterglow of finding we haven't

and what about the talking we do that underlies or underlines (between the lines) what gets written on the page (what isn't there, the dark side off the record as the waltz winds down) – are we dancing in the dark? as if the page were a lit room read from outside while we go on doubling behind the scene, the you of the page i subvert in the unwritten you i walk our streets with, night, passing the lit rooms of story i saw 'you' of your page subvert in me biography or writing with our lives the tension necessary between what gets said and what gets written or left (out in the dark with other readers-in who are also us party to the parts we play in the game, apart and not) 'you put your whole self in' but what is yourself, your voice? as our heads slide through semantic shifts that are not ours as language never is

the talking we do that underlies the underwriting assessing the risks the mutual responsibilities of each other's *liabilities, leig-, reply* in this game of double *solitaire, sole, sel, room* two lit two dark and sometimes 'two silhouettes on the shade' the embodiment the doubling of the chance of language the cards up our sleeves power play of our idiosyncratic synapses game of chance exposing the writer's sleight of hand which tricks the reader into believing in a voice in the wilderness singularly inspired here we acknowledge that all writing is collaboration here we question the delineation between the collectivity of conversation and the individual's ownership

of the written here we affirm our spiralling dominoing wandering she-speech in the talking we do between the sheets between the lines between the writing that intertwines it's all in the cards each deck a voice distinct to its own tones its rhythms its own feel its quirky selectivity (the mind only taking in 10% of stimulation at any given moment) the card's meaning particular to the relationship of the others the *sequence, sekw-, intrinsic* to math, music, literature, making love while i'm *shuffling, possibly (but quite doubtfully) O.E. scop, poet* dealing you a double deck but card sharps are liable to whet their tongues on each other's slipperiness then call for a redeal

the card you are in this full house dancing us room to room as the music shifts – and yes, who's leading who? you and me and language makes three, no baby she, *la langue*. she'll shift the rhythm on you, bend your sense, slam you into difference while you're still stumbling over your intent, trying to keep your word/s from running away with sense ...

to keep (y)our word. eroticizing collaboration we've moved from treason into trust. a difficult season, my co-labial writer writing me in we while we are three and you is reading away with us –

who?

you and you (not we) in me and all of us reading, which is what we do when left holding the floor, watching you soar with the words' turning and turning their sense and sensing their turns i'm dancing with you in the dark learning to trust that sense of direction learning to read you in to where i want to go although the commotion in words the connotations you bring are different we share the floor the ground floor meaning dances on ...

are you trying to avoid the autobiographical? what is 'self' writing here? when you leave space for your readers who may not read you in the same way the autobiographical becomes communal even communographic in its contextual and narrative (Carol Gilligan) women's way of thinking – and collaborating?

whirling out to include....

at the bathroom sink

'so, do you think it's a good collaboration?'

'yes. do you?'

'yes ... i don't know what others will think of it -'

i continue to brush my teeth thinking about the word *euphemism*
eu-, good + *phēmē*, speech u-feminisms
all our yous (u/s) and all the others'

the words & sayings we're taught as children
so as to avoid embarrassing adults
for u it was 'fooze'
for me 'results'
the onomatopoeia the practicality
these substitutions more explicit, subjective

gift of the *ghabh-*,
cohabit

'rhythmic synchrony'
a sociolinguistic microanalyst documenting the unique rhythmic patterns of familial conversation has found the crescendos, pauses, stressed syllables, and cutlery punctuation on plates to reveal a score which is replayed and replayed (no matter what the narrative)

are u keeping score?

'auditory touch'

lovers not only share a rhythm
but a 'sustained mirror synchrony' of movements

yes
we do write to each other's u/s
but it is out of the blue
or black
depending upon the time of day
or mood

a gift is not the received
o the unruliness of our selective minds
we read each other's entries so differently

or do we always write out of black & blue:
the in-juries of our *individuality, in-, + dīviduus, divisible*

u-feminisms a strategy against u-thanasia
all our u/s essential (impossible to play without a full deck)

we shuffle
cut
and play into the source of our u-phoria

when we interwrite
we call each other's u-phonies out of the dark out of the blue out of
the glare of white