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## Understanding Knowledge Work

Alan Liu

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A L A N L I U

## Understanding Knowledge Work

### Huh?

To a greater or lesser degree, Johanna Drucker's and N. Katherine Hayles's fair, principled reviews of my *Laws of Cool* articulate in their own right a broad vision of what is staked upon the humanities and arts in the information age. Drucker writes: "At stake is nothing less than the future of the humanities. To set a viable course for survival we have to unmask assumptions about what the humanities *are*." Hayles adds: "In my view, the humanities cannot afford to abandon its connection with history, or to construe this connection solely as the history of critical destruction. Such a narrowing of historical focus and thus of the meaning and importance of the humanities would be a grievous capitulation." If there is more momentousness behind such statements than might strictly seem merited by the topic—the academic humanities and arts—then this is because the question of humanities education overlaps with the question of "humanity" itself. What is humanity today, and what can humanities and arts education do for it, or to it, by comparison with other institutions and disciplines?

The answer my book offers may be summarized as follows. The portion of humanity that higher education today trains is preshaped by general culture—specifically, "producer culture" in league with consumer culture—for knowledge work. The present task of humanities and arts education, therefore, is to modulate the signal of that broader training so that it carries not just productive knowledge (matched to consumption) but also a more intelligent form of the counter-signal—ordinarily riding above or beneath the main carrier wave—that I call the "ethos of the unknown." Once we might have termed this ethos "identity," "culture," or even "soul" (*Geist*). But now a darker version of *Bildung* applies. The ethos of the unknown is not a surplus that emerges from neo-Enlightenment knowledge, but instead a reserve held back precisely from such knowledge. In its everyday variant, it is what students and knowledge workers call "cool": a style, attitude, or object identification (constructed from elaborate

screens of music, fashion, technology, and so on) whose pure superficiality—or irony—creates a shield of unknowability.

Humanities and arts educators, I argue, must strive to lead such cool, if not into the light of knowledge (the fluorescent lights of the cubicle), then into some fuller, more humane spectrum of experience. Specifically, part 4 of my book concludes that humanities and arts disciplines can do so by exploiting their unique expertise in historical understanding to show, reciprocally, that “cool has a history” and “history can be cool.” In other words, if cool is the shrill, edgy treble of the “ethos of the unknown,” then the bass note—so deep that it might be heard even through the pedantic voices of parents and teachers as the voice of authenticity itself—is history. After all, postindustrial “creative destruction,” in economist Joseph Schumpeter’s phrase, is not the only kind of history we can use.<sup>1</sup> There are also many alternative histories—including contestatory or avant-garde histories of “destructive creation”—held in deep reserve. Think, for example, of the original cool of jazz or, again, of rhythm and blues. How much history is there behind *that*; and can the humanities and arts draw such history forth to change the tone of the age of cool?

To all of which Drucker answers (after summarizing in her own terms), “Huh?” Hayles is less pointed, but she also suspects there is a fundamental disconnect both in my essential diagnosis, which she thinks overstates the influence of corporate knowledge work, and in my prescription, which she believes focuses too much on aesthetic “critical destruction” at the expense of the historical awareness for which I call.

### New Media Bildung

I wish to reply to *huh?* not with narrow refutation (I will take my hits on that score) but instead in a manner as expansive as Drucker’s and Hayles’s intent. Indeed, I think that expanding the range of *huh?*—its blast zone, as it were—is the key to the impasse. If *huh?* does actually ventriloquize the mainstream response (the very riposte of the unknowing cool), then the danger is that not just my views about the humanities and arts but those of Drucker, Hayles, and many other thinkers and practitioners today will be *prima facie* moot.

To demonstrate, let me take the liberty of modeling Drucker’s own paradigm of the humanities, patching in as appropriate portions of Hayles’s ideal (less systematically developed in the present instance), in order to see how it fares against the *huh?* For reasons to be disclosed below, I will speak of this paradigm as a humanities “program.” The function calls, variable declarations, aggregation and transformation processes, and so forth of the program are quite complex; but for the sake of exposition they may be simplified (without the need for actual programming conventions) into the following compact, high-level representation:

*A Humanities Program*

1. Preservation + Interpretation =
2. Subjectivity + Social Engagement =
3. [Humanity] (“experience,” “embodiment”)

The full intelligence of this program is iterative, and will appear only if we run it twice. In the first run, we note that the program is highly traditional—in fact, no more than a slightly modernized version of the *Bildung* that since the time of Hegel has set the curriculum for developing (and self-developing) knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Program line 1 declares the foundational functions of the humanities to be *preservation* and *interpretation* (Drucker: “Simply put, the humanities preserve our cultural legacy—not as a collection of static artifacts, but as stimuli to acts of interpretation”). As in the case of traditional *Bildung*, the logic of these paired functions is dialectical: *preservation* conserves and curates, while *interpretation*—especially with its contemporary humanistic connotations of questioning or destabilizing (descended from the genealogy of Hegelian antithesis, the modernist avant-garde, postmodern punk, and so on)—critically reevaluates (Drucker: “how do we *have* experience, and how do we capture it from the stifling habits of normativity?”).

The second program line then processes the output of preservation and interpretation at a higher level into the classic result of *Bildung*: personal and collective identity. Such processing, or character building, used to be administered through what Drucker calls the “carbolic soap and castor oil” of “morally uplifting” “good work” and “virtuous efforts at self-improvement.” But in our post-psychoanalytic, post-identity-criticism, and post-cultural-criticism age, we swallow it more easily as “subjectivity” (Drucker: “We have to engage with new media as a way to extend humanities ideas: subjectivity”) combined with social engagement (Drucker: “How are we to shape art and humanities so that they engage with the experiences of contemporary life . . . ?”). Not Victorian moral uplift and the march of civilization, in other words, but post-Sixties “me” and outreach.

It is not inopportune to plug in here the most morally passionate parts of Hayles’s review, which I cannot parse as systematically as Drucker’s only because Hayles’s larger argument appears in her work elsewhere, most famously in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*.<sup>3</sup> Hayles’s review takes its cue more closely from specifics in my book than does Drucker’s review, but there are at least two moments where I think my book becomes (as it should) just the occasion, and she soars above it. One is her protest that I exaggerate the influence of the corporate worldview (an issue I return to below). The other is her keen concern with what I call “destructive creativity,” or the inclination of the arts to radicalize critique in a way that stands postindustrial “creative destruction” on its head. I refer to Hayles’s worry—illustrated with the rap sheet of the Critical Art Ensemble—that the line is perilously thin between

such critique and “vandalism” or “terrorism.” Hayles writes, “Liu acknowledges the problem but does not solve it when, in his introduction, he forecasts the seriousness of the issue by asserting, ‘Teaching the difference between such an ideology of critical destruction and terrorism . . . will be the special concern of both humanities educators and writers or artists in the future.’” In other words, whether or not moral uplift and civilization is best communicated in today’s idiom of subjectivity and social engagement, Hayles wants more of it. How can the humanities ameliorate the contest between the forces of “creativity” (now a code word for Western postindustrialism and economic globalism) and destruction or terrorism (now connoting both the avant-garde and fundamentalist critiques of innovation)?

With the aid of this plug-in from Hayles, we can now follow Drucker’s program through to its conclusion on line 3. The final output—though the term is rarely invoked and is definitely uncool—must be humanity. “Humanity” is the ghost in the machine in the present conversation between Drucker, Hayles, and me about the humanities and arts. Drucker synonymizes humanity in pseudo-pragmatist terms with “experience.” (“In a world as corrupt as ours, as fully administered, and as instrumentally managed, only the sheer act of nonfunctional, undirected artifice can register as an alternative, to counter the stifling regimes of conditioned behavior with an opening toward experience.”) Hayles synonymizes it in her work elsewhere with the potential for “embodied” experience even in the midst of “posthumanism.” And in my own book, “ethos of the unknown” is the name of humanity in the age of knowledge work. All of which is to say that humanist educators, unlike computer scientists, normally do not build actual programs. Instead, we build people. Insofar as we believe there is a program for the humanities, we also believe that its ultimate output is also its user: humanity.

But now a second run through the program will reveal its untraditional side (and the rationale for my “programming” conceit). For it turns out, of course, that Drucker, Hayles, and I are not just any random sample of humanists. We are also well known as part of the subset who direct or participate in projects, centers, and organizations that do in fact write programs, design databases, create Web sites, text-encode documents, and so on. This means that while we may subscribe to a more or less recognizable notion of *Bildung*, we also advocate a revisionary supplement that might be called “new media *Bildung*.”<sup>4</sup> In my representation of the humanities program above, the seemingly innocuous equal sign (=) is thus not neutral. It is mediational and, in particular, new mediational. That is, the processes it indexes do not just facilitate transmission in the manner of Claude Shannon, for whom *preservation* and *interpretation* would equate, respectively, with noiseless and encoded communication. Rather, the complicated tiers of hardware, software, and display mechanisms involved in new media have the potential to change *Bildung* from a transmission of cultural legacy into a “processing” of the legacy input that is more adaptively (or critically) responsive to

today's rhythms of personal and cultural development circumscribed by "technology development," "market development," "nation-building," and other late-capitalist developments. Or as Marshall McLuhan put it in his version of *Bildung*, new media of any kind has the potential to "alter sense ratios or patterns of perception," change "the scale and form of human association and action," and so develop an "extension of ourselves."<sup>5</sup>

The specific new media that interests Drucker, Hayles, and me is digital and networked media, which we would like to see supplement humanities programs in ways that question (not the same as determine) the received *Bildung*. Therefore, going through the above program lines again, we might ask the following questions prompted by new media: (1) What does *preservation* mean in a digital age when conserving a work requires periodically migrating or transforming it into wholly different technological structures readable only through revised, so-called software "interpreters" (a problem that Hayles and I have been thinking about in our involvement with the Electronic Literature Organization's Preservation, Archiving, and Dissemination [PAD] initiative)?<sup>6</sup> Isn't such preservation already *interpretation*? And in regard to *interpretation* itself: how might new media help humanists and artists break out of their claustrophobic stance of "critique" (which Drucker has recently taken to task in her *Sweet Dreams: Contemporary Art and Complicity*) to try out a range of other responsive or responsible stances—for example, the social immersion of role playing, performance, and improvisation encouraged by Drucker and Jerome McGann's Ivanhoe game of literary interpretation?<sup>7</sup> (2) How might online role-playing games, blogs, wikis, peer-to-peer networks, open-source developer communities, Creative Commons licenses, instant messaging, mobile computing, and so on help us rethink the notion of *subjectivity*? And, correlatively, what is *social engagement* when, as Drucker says, "Culturally: digital technology allows geographically distributed objects and persons to be aggregated in a virtual workspace"? In short, what might *Bildung* look like if reprogrammed so that it adapts to the principles of sampling, modularity, variability, automation, and so on that Lev Manovich, in his book of this title, calls the "language of new media"?<sup>8</sup> (3) There are at present no certain answers to the above questions, only further horizons of questions that tweak the final output of humanity. Might humanity, for example, turn out to be just sampled "patchwork" (to cite the counter-*Bildung* theorized in Shelley Jackson's hypertext fiction, *Patchwork Girl*, about which Hayles has written)?<sup>9</sup> Or, again, alluding to another of Hayles's interests (and my own current research on creativity theory), might humanity be a distributed, networked, complex, bottom-up "emergence" that obviates the need for *Geist*?<sup>10</sup> These questions are exciting enough to make "new media *Bildung*" the object not just of curricular but also of research programs.

But now the dreaded reality check: *huh?* Preserve the past in the age of boundless postindustrial innovation: *why?* Interpret and critically destabilize: *doesn't the creative destruction of the companies already do that?* Embodiment: *huh?*

New media: *do you mean browsing?* Ivanhoe game: *who's Ivanhoe?* Patchwork and emergence: *huh, huh?*

An anecdote may be useful here. In the past year, I have twice been on BBC radio shows to talk briefly about “cool.” The hosts wanted to discuss how cool Steve McQueen was, and—by contrast with McQueen, Marlon Brando, James Dean, and so on—whether, and which, women could be as cool. I wanted to talk about postindustrialism, knowledge work, and technology, though I offered (as a compromise) that Angelina Jolie was a cool female pop icon because (mediated by her Lara Croft role) she made an identity of handling guns and technology in a new-media milieu. That is, take the techno-macho of Steve McQueen riding that motorbike in *The Great Escape* or demonstrating his automatism by throwing a baseball against his cell wall; transpose those motifs in time and gender; and witness the technical cool of Jolie/Croft. But then again, remix the motifs one more time to see all the cool and sexiness collapse into the office cubicle, where knowledge workers who dream of being as cool as McQueen or Jolie watch bouncing screen savers on their computer screens with a strong resemblance to that baseball bouncing off McQueen’s cell wall.<sup>11</sup>

At this point in the radio shows, there was always an audible disconnect with the host that might be semaphored, *huh?* I do not think I would have done much better translating into Drucker’s terms of preservation, interpretation, subjectivity, and social engagement, or Hayles’s terms of posthumanism and embodiment. Even if I were better trained in the medium of talk radio, I do not know how much of research-level humanistic and artistic thought today would survive the *huh?* test.

But then again, what kind of anti-Turing test is this anyway, which asks educators to pass muster with an anti-intelligent, dumbed-down, broadcast-era mainstream that in fact *may not be* the mainstream (or at least no longer the only mainstream) of our knowledge society, where the cool are smarter than that?

### A Familiar Compound Ghost

Earlier I said that the solution to *huh?* requires expanding our sense of its reference. So far I have only widened the damage. Therefore, to salve the wound I now want to expand the discussion along a historical rather than contemporary axis by inviting into the conversation a ghost from the past who faced, and answered, the *huh?*

The familiar compound ghost I summon (as T. S. Eliot might have said) is Cleanth Brooks and, more generally, the New Criticism and formalism. Note how often Drucker’s review already summons up the specter of formalism in one variant or another (for example, “Denaturalization of received ideas has deliberate echoes of older, formalist notions of ‘epistemological defamiliarization’”; “One makes art in order to try to understand something about experience by making it into form”). Or, again, note how close Drucker comes to reciting “A poem

should not mean / But be” from Archibald MacLeish’s “Ars Poetica,” which became the anthem of the New Criticism (“The arts, I would suggest, have their strongest impact as embodied examples of a practice that has no purpose whatsoever except *to be*”). Similarly, my book invokes Brooks and formalism at strategic moments (for example, in my initial chapter on “The Idea of Knowledge Work” and on the final page before my epilogue, where I now realize Brooks is the last person mentioned). I am not arguing, of course, that everyone is still, or only, formalist. After all, my earlier work in the New Historicist vein—and my call in *Laws of Cool* for historical sensibility amid today’s “instant on” information—severely qualifies the formalist argument. There *are* real dissonances between formalist criticism and the hybrid formal, technological, social, aesthetic, and ideological analysis that I (and in different ways, Drucker and Hayles) attempt. My point is only that Brooks and his generation preceded us along the path of modernization, new media, and the desire for a new *Bildung*. They hacked a response to *huh?* that might guide our own.

I only ever shook Brooks’s hand once, a few years before his death. He was the respondent at the 1989 MLA convention in Washington, D.C., to a session on “Reassessing the New Criticism: Continuities with Contemporary Literary Theory.”<sup>12</sup> There must have been three hundred or more people in the audience. While the billed speakers in the session were excellent, their papers were in a sense moot. It was clear that the majority were there for a final audience with Brooks, whose response (as I recall) explicitly cited the “history without footnotes” subtitle of his chapter on Keats in *The Well Wrought Urn*, but reinterpreted it to mean that although his work had discounted footnotes (symbolic of a previous era’s emphasis on social, philosophical, religious, and historical context), nevertheless it had always taken note of history.<sup>13</sup> No one who has read the full scope of Brooks’s work, or that of other New Critics, would doubt his whole-soul engagement with historical, social, economic, and other broadly cultural issues, even if not all these concerns were visible in the same book or essay as his literary criticism except in the generalized name of “experience.” If Brooks’s response was in any way disappointing (and perhaps only to me), it was because it acknowledged the massive reaction against formalism at that time but did not engage with the cultural-critical methods of that reaction. (How, for example, did the New Criticism compare with New Historicism in understanding the relation between text and context?) I had the sense that Brooks and cultural criticism were two ships passing in the night: same ocean of human experience, oblivious to each other.

The really eye-opening event at this MLA session, however, came at its close, when a long line of well-wishers (mostly a generation older than myself) greeted Brooks. I joined that line, and what I overheard as others shook his hand or asked for his autograph stays with me now as the acme of humanistic achievement. People said to him things of a sort that almost no literary critic, or any other academic, ever hears from strangers—for example (a direct quote), “You changed my life.”



*You changed my life.* This is different from “you changed my approach,” “you changed my theory or method,” or even “you changed how I read literature” (though the latter comes closest). It is the exact opposite of *huh?*

How did Brooks change the lives of these people who were students in the 1940s–1960s during his time of greatest impact (and who later became educators passing on that impact in their own research and teaching)? He and others in the formalist moment did so by arguing that literature—and, by extension, the humanities and arts in general—could inflect the accelerating process of modernization. Southern agrarianism, from which the New Criticism emerged, had called such modernization industrial “Northernism”; and John Crowe Ransom, who bridged between agrarianism and New Criticism, had equated Northernism with “scientific” and “prose” discourse (mixed up with journalistic or mass-consumerist discourse).<sup>14</sup> For the New Critics, in other words, modernization meant essentially what the Frankfurt School called “technological rationality,” the “culture industry,” or the mass industrialization of sensibility. Correlatively, it also meant the analogue, broadcast new media of the time. (Explaining what modern poetry responded to in his 1949 “Irony as a Principle of Structure,” Brooks wrote: “there is the depletion and corruption of the very language itself, by advertising and by the mass-produced arts of radio, the moving picture, and pulp fiction. . . . Those critics who attribute the use of ironic techniques to the poet’s own bloodless sophistication and tired skepticism would be better advised to refer these vices to his potential readers, a public corrupted by Hollywood and the Book of the Month Club.”)<sup>15</sup>

In sum, when the New Critics so passionately argued that understanding poetry is different from understanding rational prose—nowhere more influentially than in Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s textbook *Understanding Poetry* (first edition, 1938)—they were protesting the colonization of sensibility by what we today call the information age. (From near the beginning of the 1938 introduction to *Understanding Poetry*: “As practical people going about our affairs, we ask directions, read road signs, order a dinner from a menu, study football scores or stock market reports. It is altogether natural, therefore, that we should tend to think the important and central matter in all discourse to be information.”)<sup>16</sup> Modernization said, “Here are your instructions: do steps A, B, then C,” or again, “This prose means A, B, then C.” The New Criticism protested that life was fuller than that; and poetry said so. Ransom spoke of poetry’s ability to render the total “ontology of being”; and Brooks and others in the second generation of New Criticism (the generation that came into prominence in the post–World War II years) spoke of poetry’s expression of the full “experience” of life. (Brooks from the “Heresy of Paraphrase” chapter in *The Well Wrought Urn*: “It is not enough for the poet to analyze his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts. . . . His task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as man knows it in his own experience. The

poem, if it be a true poem is a simulacrum of reality . . . by *being* an experience rather than any mere statement about experience.”<sup>17</sup> Or in terms of new media, the argument was: read closely, don't just be a passive consumer of mediated, mass-consumer experience.

All of this came out as what might appear an exaggerated argument against Northern industrialism—comparable to what Hayles says is my exaggerated brief against postindustrial corporatism. And the solution that the New Critics offered—which they named “ambiguity,” “paradox,” “irony,” or, most basically, “poetry”—certainly provoked the *huh?* response, even from other literary critics of the time who found it too “theoretical.” (My own argument about the historicity of cool and the coolness of history, or creative destruction versus destructive creation, is phrased paradoxically in this tradition.) To ventriloquize the mainstream: *we want to know what the poem means, but you only say it is ambiguous or ironical. Huh?* The wonder is that Brooks and the New Criticism converted *huh?* into *you changed my life*.

The secret is that Brooks did not take the mainstream *huh?* at face value. Rather, he believed in its fundamental educability. The means of education that “close reading” offered, with all its paradoxes and ironies, may have seemed counterintuitive. But the lesson of close reading, however unparaphraseable from the point of view of rational knowledge, was deeply felt human “experience.” Such experience was a precursor to Drucker's “experience,” Hayles's “embodiment,” and my own “ethos of the unknown.” Stripped to its barest, in sum, Brooks's lesson was: don't believe *huh?* Don't believe that its apparent superficiality (today's “cool”) cannot be educated in ways that bring out its inner depth—its smartness and humaneness—in ways that exceed explicit knowledge. Properly educated, *Huh?*—the epithet of the paradoxical, ambiguous, ironic, and unknown—might be the title of a very fine poem.

### Understanding Knowledge Work

The bottom line of my comparison between formalism and our own post-formalist, postindustrial, and new-media moment is practical. Brooks did not close the gap between *huh?* and *you changed my life* just through criticism or theory. He also needed his *Understanding Poetry* anthology or textbook. In this case, “anthology” and “textbook,” with their hoary connotations of dusty tomes, may be obsolete. Indeed, a fuller reconsideration of *Understanding Poetry* would note that its focus on the “poem in itself” (like the hyper-focus of early-twentieth-century Imagist poets or avant-garde graphic designers on words on a page or on a poster) already anticipated a move beyond the codex book. *Understanding Poetry* focused sharply upon how poems unbound from the codex might work in relation to the competing new media of photographic images, news flashes, advertisements, and so on. In other words, *Understanding Poetry* was not just criticism

or theory *about* new-media poetry (whether called “modern” or “metaphysical”); it was new media for its times. Or again, another way to describe the famous decontextualization of poetry practiced in *Understanding Poetry* (which broke the link between reading a poem and knowing everything en bloc about a poem’s social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical context) is to say that it made poetry what our digital age calls “interactive.” The experience of poetry is non-linear in a way that responds to the activity of the close reader. Or yet again, *Understanding Poetry* was what our new media age, in a strange recapture of Brooks’s phrase, calls “simulation.” As Brooks said, “a true poem is a simulacrum of reality . . . by *being* an experience rather than any mere statement about experience.”

My *Laws of Cool* is critical, theoretical, and historical, as is much of Drucker’s and Hayles’s best known work. Such work cannot by itself answer the *huh?* It can only do so when complemented by something like a new-media textbook/anthology for our times—a kind of “Understanding Knowledge Work.”<sup>18</sup> In fact, Drucker, Hayles, and I are all involved in projects that contribute components of such a new-media platform of humanistic instruction—for example, the Ivanhoe game or Drucker’s and McGann’s other Speculative Computing Lab and Applied Research in Patatcriticism projects at the University of Virginia; the “primer” on electronic literature that Hayles is now writing for the Electronic Literature Organization; and the University of California Transliterations project to “improve” online reading that I am currently directing.<sup>19</sup>

It remains to be seen whether such attempts toward “understanding knowledge work” can change the great, cool *huh?* of our times to *you changed my life*. But in the end, the aim should indeed be to say something of the sort that Brooks and Warren unabashedly declared at the close of their introduction to *Understanding Poetry*: “The question of the value of poetry, then, is to be answered by saying that it springs from a basic human impulse and fulfils a basic human interest. . . . [P]oetry is not an isolated and eccentric thing, but springs from the most fundamental interests which human beings have.” We might today replace “poetry” with “humanities and arts,” and “basic human impulse” with “emergent human impulse.”<sup>20</sup> But something like this forthright response to *huh?* I believe, is still what is at stake in humanities and arts education today. *Huh?* is not the limit, but the beginning, of education.

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

### Notes

1. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 83–84. The book was originally published in 1942.
2. In thinking about Bildung and its afterlife, I am indebted to my recent collaboration with Thomas Pfau at the conference of the North American Society for the Study of

Romanticism, in Montreal, on August 16, 2005, where we gave a workshop titled "Development, Creativity, and Agency: New Approaches." Pfau's paper was titled "Theses toward an Interdisciplinary Theory of Development (Bildung)," while mine was "A Forming Hand": Creativity and Destruction from Romanticism to Emergence Theory."

3. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
4. I speak without permission here in a collective voice. But, of course, Drucker, Hayles, and I are not the Borg in regard to new media or other issues. I apologize in advance for any simplifications that make their positions on new media generic with mine.
5. Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium Is the Message," in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 18, 9, 7.
6. See Alan Liu, et al., "Born-Again Bits: A Framework for Migrating Electronic Literature," version 1.1, August 5, 2005, Electronic Literature Organization, retrieved September 9, 2005, <http://www.eliterature.org/pad/bab.html>. See also the associated publication from the Electronic Literature Organization's PAD initiative, Nick Montfort and Noah Wardrip-Fruin, "Acid-Free Bits," version 1.0, June 14, 2004, retrieved September 9, 2005, <http://www.eliterature.org/pad/afb.html>.
7. Johanna Drucker, *Sweet Dreams: Contemporary Art and Complicity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). On the Ivanhoe game, see the Ivanhoe game home page, Ivanhoe Group, Applied Research in Patacriticism, University of Virginia, retrieved September 9, 2005, <http://www.patacriticism.org/ivanhoe>. The game is also associated with the Speculative Computing Laboratory at University of Virginia, which previously hosted its home page.
8. Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).
9. Shelley Jackson, *Patchwork Girl by Mary/Shelley and herself*, hypertext fiction on CD-ROM (Watertown, MA: Eastgate Systems, 1995). See N. Katherine Hayles, "Flickering Connectivities in Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl*: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis," *Postmodern Culture* 10.2 (January 2000), retrieved September 9, 2005, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/pmc/v010/10.2hayles.html>. A version of this article is included in Hayles's recent *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
10. For Hayles's interest in agent and emergence theory, see, for example, chapters 1 and 8 in her *My Mother Was a Computer*. My own budding interest in the topic is represented in recent talks such as "A Forming Hand": Creativity and Destruction from Romanticism to Emergence Theory" (previously cited); "Thinking Destruction: Creativity, Rational Choice, and Destruction Theory," Rational Choice Theory and the Humanities Conference, Stanford University, April 29, 2005; and "The Rout of Creativity: Destructive Art, New Media Art, and the Aesthetics of the New," Beckman Lectures, University of California, Berkeley, October 28, 2003. (These papers are part of a book in progress on destruction theory and creativity theory.)
11. The particular radio discussion I mention about cool, McQueen, Jolie, and so on occurred on BBC Radio 5 on a show hosted by Rhod Sharp and produced by Peter Karlson on November 16, 2004.
12. Session 735 in the MLA convention program for that year, *PMLA* 104 (1989): 1125.

13. The chapter by Brooks I refer to is "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," in Cleanth Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1947; repr. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).
14. See John Crowe Ransom, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate," in *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition, by Twelve Southerners*, introduction by Louis D. Rubin Jr., biographical essays by Virginia Rock (1930; repr. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977); and *The New Criticism* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1941).
15. Cleanth Brooks, "Irony as a Principle of Structure," in Morton Dauwen Zabel, ed., *Literary Opinion in America: Essays Illustrating the Status, Methods, and Problems of Criticism in the United States in the Twentieth Century*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1951); repr. in *Critical Theory since Plato*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005), ed. Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle, 1048.
16. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students*, 1st ed. (New York: Henry Holt, 1938), 1.
17. Brooks, *The Well Wrought Urn*, 212–13.
18. At the initial conference of the University of California Transliterations project on the "technological, social, and cultural practices of online reading," J. Hillis Miller alluded explicitly to Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* when he spoke of his dream that a technological tool might be built to enhance "understanding poetry" (UCSB Conversation Roundtables on Online Reading, Santa Barbara, June 18, 2005).
19. On the Speculative Computing Laboratory, see the SpecLab home page, University of Virginia, retrieved September 18, 2005, <http://eotpaci.clas.virginia.edu/speclab>. On Applied Research in Patacriticism, see the ARP home page, University of Virginia, retrieved September 10, 2005, <http://www.patacriticism.org>. Hayles's in-progress primer on electronic literature will follow Montfort and Wardrip-Fruin, "Acid-Free Bits," and Liu, et al., "Born-Again Bits" (previously cited) in the publication series of the Electronic Literature Organization's Preservation, Archiving, and Dissemination initiative. Transliterations (Research in the Technological, Social, and Cultural Practices of Online Reading) is a new University of California Multi-campus Research Group funded for 2005–2010; see the project's home page, <http://transliterations.english.ucsb.edu>.
20. Brooks and Warren, *Understanding Poetry*, 25.