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## Legitimising dialogue as textual and ideological goal in academic writing for assessment and publication

### Journal Item

How to cite:

Lillis, Theresa (2011). Legitimising dialogue as textual and ideological goal in academic writing for assessment and publication. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 10(4) pp. 403–434.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

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Version: Accepted Manuscript

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:  
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1177/1474022211398106>

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**Published as**

Lillis, T. (2011) Legitimising dialogue as textual and ideological goal in academic writing for assessment and publication, *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*. 10, 4: 403 - 434.

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The version here is close to the final version and the page numbers indicated are those which correspond to the published version. For a copy of the published paper, please contact me, [t.m.lillis@open.ac.uk](mailto:t.m.lillis@open.ac.uk)

**PAGE 401****Legitimising dialogue as textual and ideological goal in academic writing for assessment and publication**

Theresa Lillis, The Open University, UK  
[t.m.lillis@open.ac.uk](mailto:t.m.lillis@open.ac.uk)

**Abstract**

The semiotic world that we inhabit (within and outside the academy) is fast changing in terms of the resources that are used and the practices in which many engage. Yet the institutional norms governing highly consequential academic texts – students' texts assessed as part of their disciplinary based activity and scholars' papers submitted for publication- lack engagement with this array of resources and, epistemologically, continue to drive a monologic stance towards academic meaning making. The aim of this paper is to argue for a reconfiguring of the *textual goal* of academic writing, through one simple yet transformative tool, that of *juxtaposition*. Textual juxtaposition is illustrated in this paper and its intellectual and ideological value discussed, drawing on Bakhtin's emphasis on dialogue, using several examples from published academic texts. The relevance to scholarly and student writing is explored.



**Introduction**

To state that we inhabit a semiotic world which is fast changing in terms of both the resources that are used- *most obviously, highly diverse with regard to language(s) and varieties of languages, the range of technological media and modes-* and the practices in which many people engage- *involved in more than one activity and with a number of people at any one time, rapid across time and space, locally and globally-* is to state nothing new. This fast changing and diverse semiotic world is foregrounded in research on everyday communicative practices and evident in academic theorisation through notions such as hybridity, play, meshing and multimodality (for examples of: studies and debates on diversity of literacy practices, see Cope and Kalantzis 2000; Ivanič et al 2009; for literacies and new technologies see Goodfellow and Lea 2007 ; for hybridity, see Bizell 2002; Luke 2000; Pennycook 2007; for multimodality see Kress 2010; Ormerod and Ivanič 2002; for meshing, see Canagarajah, 2006, Luna and Canagarajah 2007).

Yet at the same time, we also inhabit a world which has extremely powerful *centering institutions* (Blommaert 2006 75 ff, after Silverstein 1998) where the regulations governing what count as acceptable communicative practices are often rigid and lack engagement

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with the array of semiotic resources and affordances available. None are more rigid than the centering institutions regulating academic endeavour, whether of scholars writing for publication or students writing for assessment. Scholars' publications practices across the disciplines are increasingly being regulated by national and transnational systems of evaluation, through notions such as 'impact factor' and 'high status' indexes, such as those generated by ISI (see discussions in Lillis and Curry 2010 Chapter 1); students' writing is shaped by institutional assessment practices governed, most obviously, by ever increasing specification of learning objectives and learning outcomes (for discussions, see Barnett 2000; Hussey and Smith, 2002; Naidoo and Jamieson 2005).

Of course semiotic variety is not 'new'. Some obvious examples: whilst multimodality is currently the focus of much attention, the visual, bodily, acoustic etc have always been a semiotic resource: linguistic diversity/multilingualism/ multidialecticism have always been a feature of many people's experiences and practices around the world; technologies have always mediated and impacted on what/how/where communication happens. Of course 'new' technologies have powerfully –and in obvious ways- impacted on the collapsing of time and space in communicative practices (but unevenly, of course, across the world where access to different technologies are unequally accessible) ...

So in many ways, the current emphasis on diversity and semiotic mixing- in particular on hybridities –seems to be more a result of the analyst's lens than people's experiences (most of us have always inhabited 'hybrid' spaces...). What is interesting is the question of 'uptake' (see Blommaert 2005 Chapter 3): what/whose hybridity gets

**Comment [theresa1]:** Hmmm , exaggerating here? The 'none' is in part a rhetorical move to stress the tension between a potential wide array of semiotic resources and the limited resources we are expected to use in academia, which I think is a real tension. But of course such limiting/ constraining is evident in many institutions, not just academia.

[Note: The tension between the much commented upon (in academic writings) openness of semiotic resources/hybridity and the constraining influence of centering institutions became even clearer to me as I tried to articulate the pressure multilingual scholars were under to publish in (specific forms of) English, at a workshop exploring cross-cultural perspectives on writing research organised by Cinthia Gannett and Tiane Donohue (see <http://compfaqs.org/CompFAQsInternational/InternationalWritingStudies>)]

**Comment [theresa2]:** This is a tricky space to navigate in that specification is one important way of making visible the 'rules of the game' which so many educators have called for, particularly with regard to widening access. But there is something intellectually reductive in the way in which we manage such specification...I think one way forward is always to work with the notion of heuristics, ways of setting up, exploratory spaces for making visible conventions and practices. For an interesting example of using 'academic literacies' in this way, and of bridging the gap between scholars as writers and teachers and the student-writers they work with, see Creme and McKenna 2010.

And such systems are of course not independent of each other, with centring institutions regulating the former (scholarly publication) casting a long shadow over the latter (students' writing) in more and less obvious ways. At a broad level, there are concerns that systems of scholarly evaluation are shaping not just what academics (should) produce, but what the academy itself is (should be) (see for example, Hazelkorn 2009).

Centring institutions are both 'real' (that is tangible, as in for example research evaluations systems and their impact, e.g.

the research assessment exercise in the UK,

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<http://www.rae.ac.uk> and

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Research/ref/>) and part of the academic imaginary, that is what we (implicitly and explicitly) come to consider or imagine the academy to be. A key point about centring institutions – real and imaginary- is that they necessarily work towards normativity:

“This centring almost always involves either perceptions or real processes of homogenisation and uniformisation: orienting towards such a centre involves the (real or perceived) reduction of difference and the creation of recognisably 'normative' meaning” (Blommaert 2005: 75)

Concern about the limitations of a normative stance towards meaning making in the academy are evident in ongoing discussions around the nature and purposes of student disciplinary based writing in the academy and, often relatedly, the nature and forms of student learning and assessment (see for example Special Issue AHHE, 9, 2: 2010; Haggis 2009) . Such limitations are particularly evident in what is increasingly referred to as the field of Academic Literacies [Ref TO FOOTNOTE 1 HERE] where work makes visible the tensions between the 'centripetal pull' of dominant academic conventions towards

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homogenisation, in contrast to the centrifugal resources and practices (from, often, outside the academy) relating to students' desires for meaning making (see for examples, Carter et al 2009; Ivanič 1998; Jones et al

recognised as such? I come back to the same question later..

I think this is a fair representation but I'm also unsure as to how far scholars and teachers within my (UK) academic literacies frame of reference would argue for the value of a range of semiotic resources as a textual goal in meaning making- my concern here. I think this argument is made much more strongly by writers such as Canagarajah and Lu, foregrounding diversity of semiotic resources in the US context, and to some extent by Thesen and Van Pletzen and

1999; Lillis 2001; Thesen and Van Pletzen 2006). Similar concerns are raised in relation to scholars' interests, desires and resources for meaning making (see for examples, Canagarajah 2002; Casanave 2002; Lillis and Curry 2010; Schroeder et al. 2002). At the heart of work challenging normative stances towards meaning making is an (often unstated) ideological assumption that diversity (of language(s), modes, genres, voices) is/can be a semiotic resources for meaning making and intellectual work in the academy. I say 'often unstated' because, in disciplinary based writing, emphasis to date has largely been on the use and recognition of such diversity within *processes and practices* around text making rather than putting diversity at the *centre of the text* itself. The goal of this paper is to focus in on the text and in particular on the kind of textual unity currently privileged within academia. I want to argue for, and illustrate, a simple tool –juxtaposition–that can potentially reconfigure meaning making, by facilitating the inclusion of a wider range of semiotic resources, including those privileged currently

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(most obviously rational, verbal argument).

The general aim of this paper is to contribute to discussions across disciplinary areas about the intellectual value of specific forms of assessed textual practices. The specific aims are simple and threefold: 1) to argue for the legitimacy of dialogue as a textual goal in disciplinary based writing for assessment and publication, in addition to its legitimacy in writing and learning processes; 2) to offer one relatively simple yet potentially powerful tool for developing dialogic texts, *juxtaposition*; 3) to illustrate such juxtaposition in the writing of this paper and to offer an example of how students can be invited to engage in juxtaposition in assessed-essayist writing.

I should be clear that throughout this paper I am not focusing on 'writing designated spaces' (Brodkey 1996) which are institutionalised in some parts of the world, notably the US (i.e. freshman composition, basic writing, second language writing) but on writing as disciplinary based work, by both student and scholars. Furthermore, a key premise in this paper is that if as

colleagues in SA. But see English (forthcoming) who draws on a UK based study to tackle head-on the question of which semiotic resources should be used/allowed/encouraged in academia, arguing in particular for a practice of 'regenring'.

I got interested in Bakhtin when I was trying to articulate the experiences (pleasures, frustrations, dissatisfactions) of student-writers in higher education in the UK as they attempted to engage in academic writing in their courses. (*I also recognise that Bakhtin's own writings seem to appeal to me personally, at the level of style as well as content; they appeal to me for the same reason that they frustrate some readers- they are richly generative- I enjoy their evocative-ness*)

What I think Bakhtin's dialogic philosophy of language and meaning making offers is a theoretical articulation of, and the ideological justification for, this desire for 'and-ness' (con-vention), and as such holds out the opportunity to both understand and re think academic textual practices in

**Comment [theresa3]:** Using italics here for emphasis yet have always been told that this signals a weak use of language; if you can't indicate emphasis through your language/expression, then your language/expression isn't good enough. Mixed feelings about this- both when I'm writing and when I'm teaching...

<p>tutors and scholars we are dissatisfied with the texts that we feel under pressure to produce, we need to push the boundaries in our writing, to find ways to mean that seem generative and meaningful to us and which</p> <p><b>Page 407</b></p> <p>can then be explored with student writers, rather than simply (or only) working within default academic genres (after Womack 1993 who talks of the essay as the default genre) notably, the research article, the essay. By doing so, we open up not only our textual meaning making practices, but also make way for those (and it's hard to predict what these might be) of student-writers. The paper is grounded in Bakhtin's notion of dialogism as applied to the construction of written texts, and engages with what I see as a strong desire in students and scholars alike to find ways of meaning in writing which go beyond the kind of textual unity privileged within essayist literacy, towards texts that might serve to expand rather than (or, as well as) rein in our intellectual horizons . &lt;&lt;<u>When researching with student-writers I was most struck by their desire for "andness" at the level of wordings (formal and informal), genres (academic argumentative alongside poetry...), content (e.g. 'I want to say this even if it doesn't quite fit what you -the tutor- think is relevant to this discipline, area of study')</u>. <u>The frustration with what wasn't allowed, in contrast with what might be (in theory at least), reflected, it seemed to me, questions about the legitimacy of their participation in academia- their rights to be in academia.-(what you can say linked with who you can be (see Clark et al.1990 : Lillis 2001). Something akin to 'yes I</u></p> <p><b>PAGE 408</b></p> <p><u>want what academia has to offer – but I want that AND...' seemed to be going on. Surely it should be possible to respond to these desires and frustrations by pushing a little at the boundaries of textual practices'???</u></p> <p>&gt;&gt;</p> <p>That tutors often also desire this 'andness' is evident in the considerable pedagogic work around writing as I indicate below.</p>	<p>the academy in ways which might develop practices which explicitly reflect and support the more recent drives towards a higher education premised upon social diversity and inclusion.</p>
<p><b>[An aside...in this paper...not in discussions of pedagogies of writing ] Dialogue as process</b></p>	<p>At a fundamental level 'dialogue as a process'</p>

**Comment [theresa4]:** For those of us using pcs on a regular basis, there are some easy tools we can use for creating juxtaposed texts- here I'm using track changes and insert comments...These can be used as well as/instead of/alongside inserted texts in the margins and in the 'main' text...

**Comment [theresa5]:** This is a brief section because it's been touched on in other works and because the constraints governing the length of academic articles mean that only a certain amount of ground can be covered- so my choice here is to focus on dialogue as textual goal...

The importance of dialogue is often emphasised in writing pedagogies and research on writing; the former evident in much discussion of pedagogy in writing designated curriculum spaces, through ‘conferencing’ for example (for key writer within this tradition of work, see Harris 1995), the latter involving a focus on actual dialogue or talk-around-texts, between tutor-researcher and student-writer (see for overview Lillis 2009). The goals of such pedagogic and research oriented dialogue include the following: to familiarise student-writers with the conventions of academia; to generate opportunities and possibilities for contestations and challenge; to make language visible in text and knowledge making. As a combined research-pedagogic tool, talk around text is rooted in the need to avoid ‘reading off’ meanings from the

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text, but rather to place the text and its meanings at the centre of negotiation (for foundational US based text in this respect, see Shaughnessy’s *Errors and expectations* which has been both usefully critiqued and built on, e.g. by Lu 1991, 1995). Whilst the emphasis is often on face-to-face talk, the principles underlying the importance of creating dialogic spaces around texts and writing are applicable to any medium or mode.

There is more work to do in exploring the potentials of this dialogic space around text production- between students and their tutors, and more so perhaps with regard to scholars and their reviewers. However, at the same time, there is an urgent need to articulate what the *textual* goal of such dialogue might lead to; one unspoken assumption might be that dialogue should lead to making visible the conventions towards producing essayist texts and in this way facilitate access to both the resources that the academy values and thus the academy itself. This is indeed an essential goal in any design or pedagogy committed to access -to make visible the current ‘rules of the game’ and to ensure that many more people than currently can enact these. I take this point as a given in my work as teacher and researcher and therefore in the rest of the paper. And, in addition, I acknowledge that some spaces are being advocated and opened up within some disciplinary

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areas for textual practices that contrast with and

captures the nature of language and communication viewed through a Bakhtinian lens. “*The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue.* (1981: 276)

The pedagogic or design implication is a recognition that any use of, and interaction through, language is necessarily a negotiation over meaning. I see the emphasis on dialogue around writing (talk around text) as connected with a broader concern with talk in and for learning (e.g. and with different emphases, the work of Barnes, Britton et al., Mercer 1995, Maybin 2008), and at a critical level connected with the Freirian impulse to enable people to become ‘speaking subjects’, working at ‘naming the world’ (Freire 1985)

**Comment [theresa8]:** Does this even need to be quoted?- it’s a staple in any discussion of Bakhtin...But somehow the emphasis on utterance gets lost I think...I will pick this up later in this paper but there’s a lot more to be done yet to avoid glossing over the importance of ‘utterance’ ...

challenge essayist literacy (see for example work by Creme on the use of learning journals as a space for playing with ideas, knowledge and being [REF TO FOOTNOTE 2 HERE] and Eik-Nes 2008, 2009 who uses the term 'dialogging' to capture the 'backstage' dialogic practices in student logs in engineering).

But/And there is more to be done here. With regard to the textual products of academia, if we relegate the importance of dialogue to processes around texts, rather than also taking account of dialogue in our vision of texts, a very particular kind of text, and of specific concern here, textual unity, is left intact and at the centre of academic endeavour. By textual unity, I mean the combination of textual and social dimensions by which a 'text' is accorded its status *as* a text in a specific institutional context, here the academy (rather than for example a series of texts, or a mixture of texts, or an unrecognisable text). My specific concern here is that whilst there are a diversity of participants with a range of semiotic resources and interests seeking to engage in academia, the textual goal continues to be premised upon a particular kind of unity. It is this particular unity-a monologic unity- and a small attempt at opening up such unity that I want to focus on in the rest of this paper.

AB: *¿Todo esto tiene algún sentido? ¿Suena ridículo!*  
 GGM: *¿Que quieres decir ? ¿ si suena intelectualizao ?*  
 AB : *No sé, sí, rimbombante, pompous, quizas ..*  
 GGM : *No, no me parece ridículo..lo que hace muy fácil leerlo es el comentario de la derecha, y luego los otros comentarios. Eso le da mas sentido, para mí, y es más entretenido...*

**Dialogue rather than monologue as a legitimate textual goal**

*The monologic text*

A very specific kind of textual

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unity is valued in academic texts and is a key feature of essayist literacy. Textual unity is most obviously valued at the level of argument, underpinned by a notion of dialectic. Whilst this is a central dimension to the kind of textual unity currently valued in academia, it is not separate from other dimensions that are equally valued if

**Dialogue (rather than dialectic) as textual practice [REF TO FOOTNOTE 3 HERE]**

Whilst Bakhtinian dialogue/ism is often distinguished from monologism, the contrast Bakhtin makes between *dialogue* and *dialectic* is often ignored. But it is this

**Comment [theresa6]:** A comment on the importance of talk around my own texts- whilst working on my PhD I was worrying away about 'textual unity' and didn't even have the phrase articulated in my head. I came across work by Sally Mitchell on argument and saw some connections- I felt- with what I was worrying about..I contacted her and although she didn't know me, was on maternity leave, about to give birth very soon, she agreed to meet me. I can't remember the conversation- but I can remember where we met, that she took my vague ideas seriously ...[ Comment 18 below signals that we may even have discussed juxtaposition but I don't remember doing so..] Such responses/conversations/talk around ideas in progress towards texts (intellectual generosity) are as (or more) important to ensuring 'access' to those seeking to engage in academia- as any formal teaching or specific programme etc.. (for example of Sally's work, see <http://www.thinkingwriting.qmul.ac.uk/documents/SM%20background.pdf>)

**Comment [theresa7]:** And of course, snippets of everyday talk at home, to see whether the academic world you're living in makes sense to anyone else...

less visible. These include more obviously ideologically loaded dimensions, such as those listed in Figure 1.

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**Figure 1: Ways of (Western) academy=essayist literacy [REF TO FOOTNOTE 4 HERE]**

Privileges one specific....	
• kind of textual unity →	one key theme/argument (as dialectic)
• kind of relationship between reader and writer →	'anonymous', 'neutral' 'disembodied'
• kind of identity/ subjectivity →	rational, neutral, male?, middle class, 'centre' academic...
• kind of aesthetic value →	rational, logical, verbal
• form of language →	'standard', formal, monolingual
• language (globally) →	English
• kind of text →	linear, transparent
• mode →	verbal, written
	from novice to expert

Bakhtinian emphases on dialogic texts challenge the assumption that monologism textual unity should be privileged above others. Rather – and in keeping with dialogism as something to strive for - he argues that the ideal is to keep meaning in play.

“It is quite possible to imagine and postulate a unified truth that requires a plurality of consciousnesses, one that cannot in principle be fitted into the bounds of a single consciousness, one that is, so to speak, by its very nature full of event potential, and is born at a point of contact among various consciousnesses” (Bakhtin 1984: p. 81 and used in the editor’s- Emerson’s- notes to his introduction)

contrast between dialogue and dialectic that I think is central to reconfiguring what (should) counts as academic writing, and in particular, what counts as textual unity. So here are a few notes...

Clearly dialectic is part of Bakhtin’s theory of dialogue/ism where dialectic means tension, struggle, difference. However, he is critical of dialectic in a number of ways- and most relevant to me here - in relation to textual (and conceptual unity):

1) where the ultimate goal of dialectic is synthesis, through the progressive negation of one statement by another (thesis/antithesis). Here differences are subsumed into a unified, integrated position. Bakhtin’s interest, in contrast, is to maintain difference always in play; 2) where dialectic as process is conceptualised through a binary lens. Bakhtin eschews any simple binaries, emphasising instead difference and constant interplay of wordings, meanings, style and consciousness.

One of the few explicit comments he made- in note form- and where he is clearly pointing to the significance attached to

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One way (and close in some ways to Bakhtin's preferred genre, the novel) of doing this is through the use of explicit (real/reconstructed) dialogues, some examples of which are, in the field of academic literacies, Blommaert et al (2007), Hamilton and Pitt (2009), Ivanič and Weldon (1999), Street (1996). These published examples offer models which challenge the monologic default mode of the research article /essay/chapter etc..

However I want to argue that we can also work at explicitly polyphonic texts when 'lone' authoring (is a text ever singly authored?) by using juxtaposition to capture a range of meanings and to channel a diversity of resources and practices towards knowledge making in the academy. Why juxtaposition? Because it is a relatively simple yet potentially powerful way of both working within the strongly normative practices of academia whilst at the same time opening these up. It might therefore stand a chance of being taken up...

***A tradition of juxtaposition in published texts***

Whilst juxtaposition has recently come to the fore in discussions around hypertext and digital writing (see for example Rice 2003), it is important to

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acknowledge that juxtaposition in scholarly contexts texts has a much longer, tradition, notably in religious scholarly texts (for beautiful visual example, see <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/lindisfarne/accessible/images/page23full.jpg>). In his excellent and thought provoking overview which leads us into considerations of the intellectual and aesthetic value of juxtaposition, Lipking offers a historical tracking of these 'other' texts – notes, glosses, footnotes, citations- and illustrates clearly how these are/were not just 'secondary' but, depending on their use, serve to support, challenge, amplify or contest what is often considered the 'main' text. Writing of notes used by Paul Valery in his presentation of poems by Poe, Lipking explains how through their very marginality they challenge the monologic and fixed nature of the 'main' text:

abstraction in dialectics is as follows : "Dialogue and Dialectics. Take a dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonation (emotional and individualizing ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgements from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness- and that's how you get dialectics." (1986, p. 147)

Bakhtin's emphasis on the encounter between difference, on communication and knowledge making built on a dialogic both/and rather than a dialectic either/or stands in sharp contrast to much academic meaning making. Dialogue within this frame is not just the process of meaning making, but is rather the goal; difference always kept in play.

***The relationship between utterances, voices and genres in Bakhtin –***  
**-Genres refers to**

“The text furnishes the occasion, but its value begins and ends with the activity of the mind. Margins for Valery, exemplify the infinite extension of thought, the profound white space, forever waiting to be filled, that supplies the necessary condition of mental life. Even read, as we live, above all in the margins; in becoming, not in being”. (Lipking, p. 610)

This space for exploration around meaning making literally at the margins of the academy-as-page (or screen) seems to resonate with both

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student and scholarly desires to break out of the ‘straitjacket of genre’ (Hamilton and Pitt 2009). Interestingly, just as the shift in print technologies (and related costs) shifted practices away from marginal glosses to footnotes, and later to embedded citations (Lipking: 622; see also Graddol 2006), more recently technological changes have brought the possibility of inexpensive marginalia back to the page/screen: for example, ‘insert comments’ if you are already using word processing tools is easy to do (of course, it gets more complicated once this screen facility gets moved into hard copy within increasingly codified academic publishing practices). Whilst such tools are regularly used by readers- in many teacher-assessor responses to students’ writing and in reviewer comments on academic papers submitted for publication- they are scarcely used by writers in producing their texts as part of the textual goal of their texts.

The following are examples of juxtaposition in published texts I have noted. They are examples from published texts which are ‘scholarly-argumentative’ rather than explicitly ‘creative’/artistic’ and reflect the writer’s need to do something, in addition to essayist text (I have to admit that there has not been a lot of choice, as although I have looked out for some time for examples from my

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fields of interest, most academic writings seem to stick within the mould). I do not set these up as ideal models in any way; what I hope is that these examples drawn from the areas of discourse studies/writing-literacy studies illustrate that playing a little with textual unity is not (and need not be) the preserve of creative writing or

conventionally patterned, recognised and valued (in specific contexts) ways of using language. Whilst genres can be identified, they are fundamentally an abstraction ; **Voices** refers to the social, historical and ideological traces carried by all wordings and thus present in all language use (so any actual instance of language use carries traces of other and others’ voices); **Utterances** are actual situated instances of language use.

We need to find a way of talking about the relationship between all three, particularly between utterances and genres which really does work with dynamic rather than reified notions of language use and meaning making. The primacy of the utterance is clearly stated by Bakhtin- utterances are not subordinated to or contained within genres. *Focusing on mixing utterances- smaller, specific, and concrete than any proposals to mix genres – for example through juxtaposition, may be a more manageable way of opening up academic writing practices.*

specific areas of academic work (e.g. anthropology) and that it is possible and valid to produce more explicitly polyphonic scholarly texts. I offer brief thoughts on the juxtapositions using ‘insert comments’ But you may prefer to ignore these comments, at least until after you have read through the examples.

**Example 1: Extract from Kristeva, J. (1986)**

**Head reclining, nape finally relaxed, skin, blood, nerves warmed up, luminous flow: stream of hair made of ebony, of nectar, smooth darkness through her fingers, gleaming honey under the wings of bees, sparkling strands burning bright...silk, mercury, ductile**  
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**copper: frozen light warmed under fingers. Mane of beast- squirrel, horse, and the happiness of a faceless head, Narcissus- like touching without eyes, slight dissolving in muscles, hair, deep, smooth, peaceful colours. Mamma: anamnesis.**

**Taut eardrum, tearing sound out of muted silence. Wind among grasses, a seagull’s faraway call, echoes of**

Very soon, within the complex relationship between Christ and his Mother where relations of God to mankind, man to woman, son to mother etc. are hatched, the problematics of *time* similar to that of cause loomed up. If Mary preceded Christ and he originated in her if only from the standpoint of humanity, should not the conception of Mary herself been immaculate? For, if that were not the case, how could a being conceived in sin and harbouring it in herself produce a God? Some apocryphal writers had not hesitated, without too much caution, to suggest such an absence of sin in Marty’s conception, but the Fathers of the church were more careful. Bernard of Clairvaux is reluctant to extol the conception of Mary by Anne, and thus he tries to check the homologation of Mary with Christ...

**Comment [theresa9]:** The ‘main text’ is signalled through the use of standard font and the juxtaposed text by bold although both are interwoven on the main section of the page. In discussing the significance of time in relation to a specific problematic (the cult of the Virgin Mary/Mother and the meaning of motherhood ) conventional features of essayist literacy are easily spotted: a theoretical/ notional/abstract focus (time); use of reference to authorities; standardised sentence structure. In contrast the bold text in its clearly poetic/descriptive stream of consciousness offers a visual imaginary of mother(ing)(hood). The bold text is as evocative (opening up meanings) as the ordinary text font is reductive (closing meanings towards a central argument).

### Example 2: Extract from McKay (2003)

---Whereas most board members agreed that the maximum length [of articles] needed to be increased, some felt that by doing this we would reduce the number of articles that could be published in a year. Furthermore, some board members were reluctant to encourage prospective authors to submit qualitative research. Whereas I personally I was in favor of encouraging the consideration of qualitative research studies, I saw one of my roles as editor as

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providing a forum for the board members to share their opinions on issues and to then formulate a policy as a board. In short, I did not see my role as a decision maker in reference to policy development.

Again my initial rather objective account of this issue masked one of the real agendas behind this discussion. When [I] became editor there was great hesitancy among many in our profession regarding the wisdom of including qualitative studies in a journal

**Comment [theresa10]:** These juxtaposed texts are interesting because the 'main' text' signalled through standard font size is written in the first person and therefore already working on the margins of standard essayist prose. Yet the juxtaposed text in smaller font size takes us deeper into a personal account; whereas the first layer is-- albeit written in the first person- through a persona of an editor with roles and responsibilities, the marked juxtaposed text offers us a view of her personal commitment (and inevitable 'bias'), driving those editorial responsibilities...

### Example 3: Extract from Lillis (2001)

#### Desires for participation in HE

The question 'Who am I?' cannot be understood apart from the question, 'What am I allowed to do?'. And the question, 'What am I allowed to do?' cannot be understood apart from material conditions that structure opportunities for the realization of desires. (Norton 2000:8)

**Comment [theresa11]:** Here conventional essayist conventions are used, e.g. using a quotation to open a section and to pursue a line of argument emerging from that quotation. However, juxtaposed is a reconstructed dialogue from the writer's own experience which connects with the focus on the topic of the chapter, gender and desire. The spoken interaction between people constitutes a small narrative of lived identity in contrast with the abstract monologue of the argument.

#### Connections...

Teacher: (uninterested) *And what do you want to do then when you leave school?*

Me: (nervous) *er, I thought about studying Spanish and French at university*

Teacher: *University? Are you sure?*

Me: *Well I've got 7 O levels.*

Teacher: *Have you? (surprised) Let's have a look. Hmmm yes, I see (unconvinced). Okay. So have you thought about which university?*

Me: *er, Leeds.*

Teacher: *Why Leeds?*

Me: *er, I support Leeds United.*(popular football team in the north of England)

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Teacher: (perplexed) *Why? Have you got relatives there or something?*

Me: (perplexed) *No. I just support Leeds United.*

Making football, rather than academic study, the main reason for going to university, allowed me to convince myself that I had a right to go there. After all, I was going for the football, wasn't I? Going to football matches was also a way of maintaining some kind of connection with roots, a way of establishing allegiances with working class students (then not now) through talk about football and, probably more importantly, by providing a safe place to go on a Saturday afternoon. Safe from the middle class world of academia.

Whilst no formal prohibition exists in the UK against the participation of particular social groups in higher education, access to this privileged institution continues to be severely restricted. How such a restriction operates is a complex question but it is powerfully linked to structural inequalities enacted at a number of interrelated social sites.---

**Example 4: Extract from Leibowitz, B. (2000)**

**Comment [theresa12]:** Again font size marks the 'main' and juxtaposed text. The latter makes visible some of the decisions and choices surrounding the writing of the text and indicates a tentativeness about what might be most appropriate, meaningful, useful, in contrast with the authoritative persona invoked by the essayist text.

Educationists seeking to use writing as a gate-opener rather than closer, have adopted a variety of approaches, from one extreme of focusing on the product to the other, of focusing entirely on the process--- A more recent counter-response has been mainly, but not entirely, from Australia, from the genre theorists who argue for students to develop an understanding of written conventions for the purpose of use and/or ideological critique. This is a crude delineation of the possible responses, and there are many researchers who argue for a synthesis of aspects of the above approaches, for example, Elbow 1994.

*I could conclude this section of the chapter by saying simply that one must adopt a sensible mix of the above. But since a chapter of this sort is supposed to be useful, perhaps I should mention some of the traps I and colleagues have worked with have fallen into. Maybe this will save some readers a little wasted time and effort. Here goes...*

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**Example 5: Extract from Lea, M (2009)**

**Comment [theresa13]:** Here the juxtaposed text makes explicit the connections between the writer's ideas and another scholar's- note here the use of 'Roz'- signalling friendly, informal, personal connections- as compared with Ivanič- formal, distanced, authority. Furthermore, the ideas of 'Roz' are not subsumed into the argument of the writer, but rather left to their own existence, literally their own space on the page..

<p><b>Comment:</b> <b>Intertextuality</b></p> <p>Roz draws substantially upon the concept of intertextuality in her work, paying particular attention to this in relation to writer identity--- Methodologically, I think there are similarities between our work but slightly different positions in our approach to exploring intertextuality. My concern here is with the interplay between literacies and technologies---Roz's interest is in exploring students' interpretations of their own writing. I think this contrast raises interesting methodological questions around academic literacies research---</p>	<p>In online learning students have a set of choices to make about different elements of their message postings. These choices make a significant difference to the way their posting is read for the first time by others in the tutor group and also to the long term visibility of the message. There are a number of explicit uses of intertextuality which are evident in the data from the messages A-Q, presented and discussed below. These include the use of hyperlinks in 75 messages; the use of 'reply with quote' facility in 89 messages; the use of attachments in 32 messages; the use of Harvard referencing conventions in 96 messages.</p>	
<p><b>PAGE 421</b></p> <p><b>Example 6: Extract from Anzaldua, G. (1987)</b></p>		

**Comment [theresa14]:** Most obviously here the writer juxtaposes academic authority with vernacular truths (Kaufman/Mexican saying); the languages of English and Spanish, at the same time signalling that the labelling of language in these ways belies the mixing/meshing that Chicanos use/live. Interestingly the writer chooses to translate the text that is given authority (the Mexican saying) whereas assumes multilingual readership in the rest of her text.

“Identity is the essential core of who we are as individuals, the conscious experience of the self inside”

-Kaufman (9)

*Nosotros los Chicanos* straddle the borderlands. On one side of us, we are constantly exposed to the Spanish of the Mexicans, on the other side we hear the Anglos’ incessant clamoring so that we forget our language. Ourselves we don’t say *nosotros los americanos, o nosotros los espanoles, o nosotros los hispanos*. We say *nosotros los mexicanos* (by Mexicans we do not mean citizens of Mexico; we do not mean a national identity, but a racial one). We distinguish between *mexicanos del otro lado* and *mexicanos de este lado*---

“Dime con quien andas y te diré quien eres ».  
(Tell me who your friends are and I’ll tell you who you are).

-Mexican saying

**What kind of intellectual work does juxtaposition allow the writer- and reader-to do?**

Juxtaposition is a simple semiotic tool which offers a potentially powerful way of opening up essayist literacy to include more than one way (argumentation, logical, linear, standard, one language use) of engaging with a subject area in any discipline. Simply by allowing/enabling several ways of making meaning, juxtaposition can

- open up a number of avenues for engaging in/with a phenomenon, including the emotional and

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evocative, alongside the rational and reductive;

- facilitate the experiential, signalling the importance of sensory, descriptive and narrative dimensions to understanding and knowledge making;

Of course I’m picking perhaps the most

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitate layers of information, description and embedded argumentation by going behind the scenes of the 'main argument' or position being constructed, thus providing writers and readers with an additional lens on any particular issue in focus;</li> <li>• indicate that whilst linear (dialectic) argumentation is a powerful resource for intellectual work, it can be accompanied, deepened, contested through juxtaposition with other forms of meaning making;</li> <li>• allow several voices to be heard – voices of scholarly argumentation, poetry, narrative, voices of authority set against voices of uncertainty, fear, frustration, voices of the unmarked (male, neutral) academic writer alongside voices which are marked with locality, gender, ethnicity (signalling that such voices have legitimacy in academia...)</li> <li>• allow a range of languages, varieties, modes to be included</li> </ul> <p>It may be that only one of these particular dimensions is useful/ meaningful at any one moment in time and I am sure there are many more ways in which juxtaposition might further intellectual work. The point is to open this up for exploration...</p> <p><b>PAGE 423</b></p> <p>It should also be clear in the reading of this paper that juxtaposition requires a different kind of reading stance, one that demands more active (and perhaps troublesome) engagement from the reader. In opening up what the writer can do, I am inevitably calling for debate about what the academic reader should do too, an issue I can only signal here.</p>	<p>institutionally acceptable options for juxtaposition- using only the verbal rather than visual or other modal dimensions (sound would be good- I like the idea of suggesting the reader listen as well as read, whether to spoken interaction and/or music..)</p>
<p><b>Conclusion and a beginning...</b></p> <p>“...publication itself is a premature hardening, a betrayal of the mind’s flexibility” (Lipking p. 645)</p> <p>This marginal comment from Lipking reminds us of the danger of fixing the boundaries of our thinking to those</p>	

**Comment [theresa15]:** There are of course strongly normative multimodal traditions of academic meaning making, e.g. the use of diagrams in many disciplinary areas. How these traditions might be productively opened up to enable dialogic meaning making is an important area for consideration. For an interesting discussion in Chemistry, see Hoffman 2002.

**Comment [theresa16]:** I take some pleasure in 'elevating' a marginal comment to the authoritative position of a direct quote in the 'main' body of the text...

of the published page. In an academic climate which (increasingly) only prizes what academics produce (often over a relatively short period of research, writing and thinking time), we have to constantly remind ourselves not to slip into evaluating ourselves by those same measures. The interim products of our labour- academic publications- are just that, interim: a small part in our steps towards understanding. Creating dialogic texts which offer a unity whilst explicitly marking their openness, incompleteness and potential could be a useful textual

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reminder of their interim status to us all.

The same is true of student writing. As educators and students we know that the written assessment tasks central to institutional practices- particularly where (most commonly) a monologic textual unity is privileged - belie the diversity of resources, ideas, excitements, confusions that students bring to their learning and their texts. The monologic text is (often) marginal to the processes of learning, engagement and desire. Too early students and scholars have to fix a representation of their understanding and cancel out other possibilities of meaning. My goal in writing this paper is to open up debate about the kind of semiotic tools that should be valued in the academy, a debate which I see as equally relevant to publishing scholars as to students writing for assessment in their disciplinary areas; and I hope this paper in a simple way has both argued and illustrated the value of juxtaposition as just such a simple tool.

Much student writing is 'hybrid' in that it includes formal and informal wordings, and voices indexing a range of genres. One take on this hybridity might of course be to accept it as central to meaning making. There are two problems I think with this view, one is *strategic* and one relates to the importance of the *visibility of the semiotic resources* we use : 1) the institutionalised valuing of essayist literacy is so pervasive that it is difficult- if not impossible- to get this hybridity accepted as valid (but see work by Lu and Smitherman 2003 on published micro/sentence level mixing; 2) 'hybridity' itself needs to be made visible. What makes something hybrid? Who gets to recognise something as hybrid (as compared with a 'mess')? How can writers take control over their production of hybrid texts, and as importantly their 'uptake'?

'Marked hybridity' through textual juxtaposition of the sort illustrated here can engage with both concerns...to a certain extent...

**Comment [theresa17]:** The potential of juxtaposition in student writing is raised in Mitchell's 1994 discussion of an example of a 'split text'. Importantly for the argument being made here, the split text was not assessed. Mitchell notes: 'Ideas for change, including a recognition here of the {formative} value of experimental writing, are, it seems, in advance of institutional mechanisms for valuing them as such' (p. 178) {I'd add summative too}

<p>I want to conclude and begin with a tiny step towards making such a tool available to student-writers, by including a simple example from one institution within a disciplinary space where essayist literacy is the assessment norm (institutionally, pedagogically) and where therefore</p> <p><b>PAGE 425</b></p> <p>any small change in practice is difficult to negotiate. This instance illustrates some of the institutional hurdles to be faced even in making the smallest of shifts [REF TO FOOTNOTE 5 HERE].</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Email sent to students ...</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Experimenting a little with academic writing for your next assignment [Masters course in Education/Applied Linguistics]</i></p> <p>Most of the options in the etma [<i>an assignment written, submitted and assessed using e tools</i>] questions require an ‘essay type’ answer. As you will know the ‘essay’ involves a series of conventions, such as introducing what your focus will be, developing an argument through linking points, being critical. You will see the kinds of things that are considered to be particularly important if you look at the assessment criteria that we use to grade the essays, in the <i>Project and Assignment Guide</i> and these are the areas that I have commented on in your first assignments. What the essay (the final draft of it of course) looks like is a linear piece of writing with all the arguments neatly pinned down. Whilst you are expected to produce a critical argument or discussion in this</p> <p><b>PAGE 426</b></p> <p>academic style, and indeed I will be using the assessment criteria to grade your assignment, I also wondered whether in addition to engaging in this kind of academic commentary you might also like to include other kinds of comments in your</p>	<p>The email illustrates the powerful nature of the constraints within which the tutor (in this case, me) has to operate. Note the heavy hedging which is double-voiced: hedging to the students is intended to signify choice rather than prescription; hedging to the institution is intended to signify a) that this shift does not disrupt the assessment criteria (standards, values etc..) b) that students from this one tutor group will not be prejudiced because of the pedagogic whim of one tutor.</p> <p><i>In order even to send this email and intervene in a small way with assessment practices, I needed to have the approval of the external examiner ...</i></p> <p>The issue of using more than one language raised in the example from scholarly</p>
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**Comment [theresa18]:** Of course within any institutional space a suggestion quickly becomes a prescription- not least because most writing is assessed (certainly in the disciplinary areas in the UK). I can't see any way out of this except to work hard with students in discussions about the scholarly/intellectual value of different kinds of textual practices..what do you think this does for your intellectual work here? How? What other kinds of intellectual labour do you want the text to do with and for you? How do you want me as tutor to engage with this labour?

**Comment [theresa19]:** It is interesting to note that whilst new technologies are being used here (as in many courses), their role is restricted to delivering (via an e system) conventional essayist texts

**Comment [theresa21]:** In this university (as in most in the UK) the design, course content and assessment of courses are evaluated by academics from other institutions.

writing. Some research indicates that students would like to try out writing in different ways in addition to the conventional academic practice. One relatively straightforward way I think of combining the conventional academic with 'other' types of commentary is to literally add comments to different parts of your text. There is also a long tradition of marginal comments across all kinds of religious and academic texts and I thought you might like to try out taking advantage of the technology we have available to perhaps recapture elements of this practice to suit our own writing interests <here I am just inserting a comment using a different font but you could also use boxes, 'insert comments' etc> Are there some things, for example, that you might like to say, and include, which don't seem to fit into the essay structure? I have found that as well as producing academic argument some students would like the opportunity to add in other kinds of comments or thoughts. Here are some

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examples of the kinds of things I am thinking of:

**A comment on understanding.** *I'm not sure that I completely agree with this, but I think it is worth pursuing...*

**A comment on the language you are using.** *I think this is a useful way of describing what I mean but perhaps another way of saying this would be..*

**A more personal comment** *...This theory is driving me mad because I can't see how it adds anything ..OR I find this particular theory quite worrying because it seems to suggest that people like me struggle in education....*

**A more poetic comment...** *A poem is never finished; it is only abandoned*

**A more spontaneous reaction..** *I really enjoyed reading this...*

publication, was not even raised as a possibility by me-as-tutor with students...an example of realism or self-censorship??

I do not underestimate the new challenges around writing that such an invitation (to students and scholars) implies- not least we would have to learn how to craft meaningful dialogic texts. But I think it's worth a try...

**Comment [theresa20]:** INSERTED COMMENT IN EMAIL TO STUDENTS...Here I am using 'insert comment' to say one thing that I find problematic about my academic writing --I know I have only got so far in my thinking- so it's still in process-but I have to represent my ideas as if these were all sorted...

**A comment on the links with other ideas/courses/beliefs...***This is like the ideas of X in social psychology where she discusses the relationship between...*

**A critical comment...***My arguments works well up to here but after this I know I haven't quite made the links I somehow want to make...*

If you would like to add these kinds of comments- or any other ones- I would be happy for you to do so as I think it is worth experimenting a little with what we do in academic writing. **Note: I recognise that you may need**

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**more word length to add such comments to the conventional essay format- so you can add another 300 words to your word length if this is helpful.**

If you are not at all interested in the ideas above, that is of course absolutely fine. As I say, adding or not adding comments will not affect your grades in any way.

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FOOTNOTES TO BE INSERTED BOTTOM OF PAGES WHERE INDICATED IN  
MAIN TEXT

1. Academic literacies is a contested term but I am using it here to refer to a body of work which adopts a view of literacy as social practice and works through a transformative ideology. For discussion, see Lillis and Scott 2007.
2. It is interesting to note connections between the psychoanalytic work Creme describes, of Winnicott, and his emphasis on the importance of playing with/connecting inner/outer world and Bakhtin's emphasis on 'internally persuasive' and 'authoritative' discourses (see Bakhtin 1981, p. 342).
3. Here I'm drawing on a reading of Bakhtin, in particular 1981, 1984, and commentaries by Emerson, 1984, Hirschkop 1999 and Holquist 1990. See also Lillis 2003 for summary of discussion of dialectic and dialogue.
4. Essayist literacy is not the same as the essayist tradition with the former representing a narrowing of the latter in line with rhetorical practices informed by positivist approaches to Enlightenment Science. See Spellmeyer 1989 for interesting discussion of the importance of the essay as a 'transgressive form' and the emphasis, in Montaigne, on convention which signals 'a 'coming together' of dissonant perspectives in order to restore the lived world at the risk of imprecision and incongruity' (p. 263). For examples of critiques of essayist literacy from a feminist perspective from which this list is partly generated, see Campbell 1992, Frey 1990, hooks 1999, Lather 1991, Nye 1990, Stanley and Wise 1990.
5. Work by Canagarajah (1997) illustrates I think the need to develop simple tools for supporting the use of a range of semiotic resources in student writing. He shows how such resources do get used in the processes around learning and writing but get flattened and cancelled out once the written product is in focus. I think we need to find ways of encouraging use of this range which is both meaningful for the writers and relatively easy to introduced into disciplinary spaces (rather than in specifically designated writing programmes).