Scholarly Journal Report

Pre/Text: A Journal of Rhetorical Theory
First published by Department of English, East Illinois University; now housed in the Department of English, University of Texas Arlington
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Editor: Pre/Text has remained under the editorship of Dr. Victor Vitanza since its inception in 1980, and his personal presence is clearly evident throughout each issue of the journal as well as its various offshoots. Clearly enjoying his reputation as a “bad boy” of academia, Vitanza sees Pre/Text as a cutting-edge forum for scholarship that would otherwise be excluded from the fields of rhetoric and composition studies. His own interests are in the areas of: History and Theory of Rhetoric (Greco-Roman, Early Modern, Modern, Postmodern); Historiography of Rhetorics; Stylistics; Design as Da Sein; Contemporary Composition Theories; Rhetorics of Composing and Reading; Rhetorical Invention; Technology and Writing. Vitanza was a member of the English Department at East Illinois University when Pre/Text was founded, but is currently in the English Department at UT Arlington and holds an additional post in the Rhetoric and Philosophy Department of the European Graduate School in Switzerland.

Associate Editors: James A. Berlin, Lynn Worsham, John Trimbur, Lester Faigley


Submission Policy: Although it has been almost a decade since the last print issue of Pre/Text, the journal is still accepting submissions. Vitanza suggests that potential contributors contact him in advance to find out the status of backlogged issues, his interest in the author’s topic and the way she/he addresses it. For this reason, he does not claim responsibility for manuscripts sent without his initial approval. All submissions are to be in MLA style, in triplicate, with a SASE.

If the text is accepted, the author is required to complete all rewrites as advised by the review board and to submit their final version in electronic form. At least three readers read each manuscript, which normally takes 3-4 months; at this point the author will receive an acceptance or rejection notice. The acceptance rate is one in four.
**Publishing Trends:** Four different academic projects currently fall under the Pre/Text banner:

- **Pre/Text (print version):**

- **Pre/Text: Electra(lite) (the online journal):**
  [http://www.utdallas.edu/pretext/index1a.html](http://www.utdallas.edu/pretext/index1a.html)

- **Pre/Text Reinvw (archive of online book discussions):**
  [http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/reinvw.html](http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/reinvw.html)

- **Pre/Text Issues (archive of general topics from the listserver):**
  [http://listserv.uta.edu/archives/pretext.html](http://listserv.uta.edu/archives/pretext.html)
  and (pre-1998):
  [http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/ptissues.html](http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/ptissues.html)

Of these four elements of the “Pre/Text Publishing Webwork,” only the latter two have been active in the past several years. However, recent discussion threads and book reviews posted online suggest that Vitanza and the other scholars involved continue to focus on recent scholarship in rhetoric and composition studies, critical theory (including poststructuralist, feminist, and queer studies), communications theory, pedagogical theory, and continental philosophy.

Despite the long state of dormancy following the Fall/Winter 1995 issue—Vitanza still claims there are new ones in the making—Pre/Text previously maintained a consistent, twice a year publishing schedule. At least one issue per year was devoted to a special topic. Some sample themes covered are: “Lacan and the Question of Rhetoric,” “Constructing Masculinities,” expressive writing (edited by Peter Elbow), and Marxism.

**Other:** Pre/Text is clearly designed for scholars who are well-versed in postmodern philosophy and critical theory; in other words, it features a lot of obtuse and jargon-filled prose. For example, the issue on “Virtual Rhetorics” confronts the reader with an article by Charles J. Stivale titled “‘@lrs’ [long-range-scan]: Rhizo-rhetorics and Protocols of ‘dis-placement’” alongside analyses of “cryoauthorship” (by Rebecca Howeard) and the “mythform of reality” (John Barber). However, this high-mindedness is always directed toward the more pragmatic goal of generating effective strategies for teaching composition. Ellie Ragland captures this novel aspect of Pre/Text in the title of her essay on Lacan, when she asks just “[w]hat are mastery and love doing in the classroom?”

Vitanza has also used the possibilities of online publishing in an innovative fashion. For example, the journal switched over to “collective” book reviews in 1990, in which a group of scholars/reviewers engage the author of the book in a series of online question and answer sessions. These dialogues are then archived at Pre/Text Reinvw:

[http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/reinvw.html](http://www.pre-text.com/ptlist/reinvw.html)