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Editorial

The academic journal editor's job … and a farewell to great friends

The academic journal editor's job

TEXT editors work closely with referees. We are deeply aware that referees do this work for the sake of their discipline and outside of their normal workloads. Each article published in *TEXT* is reviewed by at least two referees, and sometimes by as many as four if the re-writing is extensive and prolonged. It can be a painful experience for some writers to find their research put under the kind of scrutiny that is not possible to expect from friends and colleagues. We feel responsibility for not wasting referees' time by sending on to them articles that have such fundamental flaws that little expertise is needed to point out the inadequacies of the submission. The editor's role in these instances is one of gate-keeping, an uncomfortable position, but one that is part of the larger vision of keeping *TEXT* to the highest standards possible. *TEXT* is a journal particularly concerned to mentor and support both new and experienced researchers in the field.

Some difficulties and delicacies can arise when articles are in our opinion obviously flawed or not yet ready to be seriously considered for publication, but have been submitted by eminent scholars and writers who expect their work to be judged through the refereeing process and not by an initial pre-review gate-keeper. In these instances, we give the writer a choice of revising the piece or having it sent out as it is. Again, we are grateful to the referees for the detailed and constructive ways they deal with such papers unaware of the politics underlying the task.

We see also a number of submissions extracted from doctoral exegeses-in-progress, sent on the recommendation of supervisors. These papers are often relatively unfocused as research articles, biased towards a purely descriptive approach to the experience of writing the PhD or DCA, make little sense without the creative work alongside them, and are far too long to work effectively as research articles. These students have not looked closely at *TEXT* and considered the style of their work in the light of what *TEXT* publishes. Neither, it seems, have their supervisors done so. Could it be that the supervisors are hoping that the refereeing process will iron out difficulties that they cannot articulate to their students? Is this a cynical way of receiving editorial and scholarly feedback on a work in progress? Or is it that both the students and supervisors have not put serious thought into what a research article looks like in this field? The added problem here is that a student may receive a gate-keeping knockback that seems hurtful, but doesn't appreciate the potential of the work – a potential that simply needed further worked initially with the supervisors.

As well we see hopeful submissions based on successful doctorates that have not accounted for the difference between a doctoral submission and a research article. The higher degree submission is targeted at a readership of two or three examiners. The research article is targeted at the entire Creative Writing studies

discipline. There are differences between the two audiences. The first and most obvious is that the refereed article should not seem like, read like, or look like a doctoral submission. It should read like a research article – and to know what the possibilities and limits of this form of writing are, there is no better starting point than reading an issue of *TEXT*.

There is no doubt that much of the most important and exciting research in our field is coming out of recent doctorates. Nick Earls' article in the last issue of *TEXT* and Craig Bolland's article in the current issue, are examples of how new research by a PhD candidate, extracted from a thesis, can be successfully published. In the October 2016 issue there were two articles from students in PhD programs (Rees Quilford and Sophie Masson). And the list goes on back across the years. Though it might be relatively rare, and often does require extra time in reviewing and in later correspondence, research published from doctorates-in-progress is highly valued, and *TEXT* is always keen to know what the latest research directions are.

Along with encouragement and mentoring, the editor's role is, unfortunately, to let many writers know their work is not ready to go to referees – or to let it go to referees and allow the reports to inform them of ways they might make a research article out of an exegesis extract or chapter of a doctorate. Writers have generally acknowledged with grace the shortcomings of their pieces once these have been pointed out, but we wonder how it is that their supervisors thought it was worth putting them – and *TEXT* editors and referees – through a process that really should have happened earlier in discussions between supervisor and student.

And then, something like the current issue of *TEXT* arises! It reminds academic journal editors how exciting their job is! Here are seven Special Issues including 87 refereed papers plus reviews and creative works. Here are ten regular refereed articles. Here are nine creative pieces also doing thoughtful investigations, exploring the terrain of creative writing endeavour. In this array of more than 100 contributors, old hands and many new hands share the limelight.

This issue of *TEXT* shows there are bumps along the road in the refereeing process, but the destination is eminently attainable.

—Kevin Brophy and Nigel Krauth

Farewell to great friends

After many years of outstanding service, three *TEXT* editors are moving on. Following the publication of this issue, Professor Kevin Brophy, Professor Enza Gandolfo and Dr Linda Weste will vacate their editorial chairs.

Together Kevin and Enza have handled hundreds of submissions and organised the refereeing processes for them, along with the final copy-editing. Linda has handled the logistics and copy-editing for hundreds of reviews. The quality of insight, collegiality and commitment from each of these *TEXT* staff members has been exceptional.

Personally, I can say that I have thoroughly enjoyed working in such a supportive team with Kevin, Enza and Linda. On behalf of the Australasian Association of Writing Programs, I acknowledge the immense contribution these three academics have made to the discipline via *TEXT*.

Kevin, Enza and Linda will be replaced by Julienne van Loon, Ross Watkins and Julia Prendergast, the next generation of *TEXT* editors.

—Nigel Krauth

New special issues 41-47

Special Issue 41 *Romanticism and Contemporary Australian Writing: Legacies and Resistances*, edited by Stephanie Green and Paul Hetherington, explores a variety of ways in which the Romantic legacy is both meaningful and problematic for contemporary writers, particularly those who are studying and working within universities in Australia. Romantic ideas and assumptions were brought to Australia when the British colonised the continent, dispossessing the Indigenous communities who occupied it and sustainably managed its environment. Since colonisation, the Romantic legacy has always been invested in Australia with problematic ideas about culture, the land, and human rights. Such issues are part of Australia's literary heritage, too, and many historical and contemporary literary works are engaged with teasing out Romantic tropes and their Australian implications.

The aim of Special Issue 42 *Writing and Trauma*, edited by Bridget Haylock and Suzanne Hermanoczk, is to showcase a selection of papers from emerging and established Australian and international creative writers, educators, scholars and academics, with a strong emphasis on the complex creative/critical relationship when writing about and addressing trauma. The special issue presents a scope of current scholarship, textual reading and teaching practices regarding creative writing and trauma.

Special Issue 43 *Into the bush: Australasian fairy tales*, edited by Nike Sulway, Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario and Belinda Calderone, seeks to represent the diverse engagement with fairy tale that has been evolving in Australasia's writing and storytelling community, led by the Australian Fairy Tale Society. The papers gathered in this Special Issue explore critical approaches to Australian fairy tale traditions within the broader European context, as well as offering new interpretations and evolutions of creative work in this area, for both child and adult readerships.

Special Issue 44 *The exegesis now*, edited by Craig Batty and Donna Lee Brien, is sure to become an important collection of scholarly debate on current and emerging practices within the doctoral exegesis. Building on the foundation set in *TEXT* Special Issue 3 *Illuminating the Exegesis* (2004), and encompassing discussion over the past decade and more, the editors of this issue invited a series of key institutions and academics across Australia to reflect upon and provide experience-based views of the exegesis from the perspectives of both supervisors and candidates. As stated by Batty and Brien, an aim of this Special Issue is to not only appraise the current function of the exegesis, but also to consider where the form might go next.

Special Issue 45 *Writing death and dying*, edited by Donna Lee Brien, collates a range of articles originally presented at the second Australasian Death Studies Network (ADSN) conference in Noosa, Queensland in 2016. Continuing debates begun in Special Issue 35 *Writing Death and the Gothic* (2016), this collection explores the symbolic and representational possibilities of the processes of death and dying from a range of cultural, humanities and social areas, including the creative arts, popular culture and health. The articles published include writerly responses to death and dying, ethical considerations,

critical explorations of the representation of death, plus a complement of creative works exploring these themes.

Special Issue 46 *Prose Poetry*, edited by Monica Carroll, Shane Strange and Jen Webb, contributes to closing the current gap in scholarship on prose poetry, an emergent yet liminal form in Australia and internationally. This Special Issue presents a series of articles that respond to the uncertainty and permeability suggested by the name 'prose poem', its taxonomical context, and its ontological and axiological status. Also presented is an extensive collection of prose poems generated by the vigorous Prose Poetry Project (PPP), a group of independent and collaborative practitioners experimenting with and advancing the form.

Special Issue 47 *Ideas and realities: Creative writing in Asia today*, edited by Sally Breen & Sanaz Fantouhi, draws from the pool of participants from the Asia Pacific Writers & Translators' (APWT) 9th annual gathering in Guangzhou, China in November 2016. The issue compiles a selection of essays about the craft and pedagogy of creative writing and translation, alongside creative outputs in the form of fiction and personal essay. Inspired by the theme 'Ideas and Realities: Creative Writing in Asia Today', the conference brought together over 120 established and emerging practitioners and creative writing academics from the Asia Pacific region and beyond. This special issue highlights APWT's contribution to creating networks in the Asia Pacific region over the last decade; offers an insight into the various modes of creative writing teaching practices across some Asian countries and provides a platform for diverse creative voices from the region as well as the space for the literary exploration of various connections to Asia.

—Ross Watkins and Dallas Baker

In this issue

1
Suman Gupta, Professor of English Literature and Cultural History at the Open University UK, opens the issue with the question of what spaces Creative Writing and Literary Studies should occupy in the modern university. What institutional rationales have historically determined the relationship between these disciplines? After surveying the history of Creative Writing's assertion of itself via Myers and McGurl in the USA, Suman Gupta quotes Michelene Wandor's observation that in the UK the emphatic success of Creative writing as a university discipline means it could benefit from a trenchant critique of its principles and practices. Gupta goes on to suggest that in Australia Paul Dawson's call for Creative Writers to become cultural intellectuals has not gained purchase. Gupta brilliantly outlines the range of 'museless work' that universities require of their academics in the humanities. He follows the rise of professional associations, in particular the NAWE in Britain. Though Creative Writing might seem to be asserting a distinct professional and academic profile as a discipline, when it comes to research the drift seems to be heading back towards Literary Studies. This is an absorbing and provocative discussion of Creative Writing's continuing (and very present) history.

2
Without simplifying what can be an emotive and confusing issue, Jeri Kroll examines questions of the social contract between writer and reader, artists' moral rights, copyright, plagiarism, self-plagiarism and double-dipping for the benefit of students, writers, teachers, examiners, policy developers and

interested readers. All of this discussion is overshadowed by that luminous but cloudy term, *originality*. How do we achieve authenticity when what we write is inevitably 'a [Barthian] tissue of quotations'? Apart from the valuable information on legal questions of rights, there is the teasing proposition from Jay Perini that plagiarism is a sign of not trusting one's own gifts. Jeri Kroll's essay is replete with examples that will provoke you to further reading in this area.

3

From Lynch, McGowan and Hancox we have a brilliantly executed collaboration on approaches to transmedia writing. It is this kind of article that throws a new and possibly transformative light on Suman Gupta's historical overview of the relations between Creative Writing and Literary Studies. It is also an area of whirlwind change that can make questions of originality, authorship, copyright and authenticity even more problematic in the near future. Their collaborative domain is those narrative ecologies that incorporate print and digital elements. Their focus is upon the ways coherence can be managed across modes. With canny examples Lynch, McGowan and Hancox explore the phenomenon of iterative modality in transmedia writing.

4

In Australia one consequential element in the developing history of creative writing is the place given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait voices, stories and literature. Creative Writing as a discipline will eventually be judged on how, across the nation, this question has been addressed and answered. Paul Collis and Jen Crawford bring this question to the fore in their paper, 'Six Groundings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Story in the Australian Creative Writing Classroom: Part 1'. Their six groundings are ethical premises (or perhaps manifesto statements) that might underpin approaches in the creative writing classroom. The overarching principle they work from is that country and story, place and voice, are intertwined. With the emergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait writers who are also academics such as Tony Birch, Paul Collis, Jeanine Leane, Anita Heiss, Melissa Lucashenko, Kim Scott and others at Australian universities there are emerging opportunities for action on this front. One of the most enigmatic of the principles proposed is, 'There is no such thing as Indigenous story, and yet it can be performed and known'. The discussion of classroom practices that might re-shape understandings of 'story' in far more sophisticated, informed and culturally literate ways makes this paper enlightening and important to all creative writing programs. We hope to see more discussion and elucidation in further issues of *TEXT*.

5

In order to share with colleagues his ground-breaking experiment in teaching practice, Craig Bolland provides an account of his popular Stylistics course which is part of the Creative Writing major at the Queensland University of Technology. This paper argues that 'the natural synergies between the field of Stylistics and the field of Creative Writing can inform the teaching of literary technique to a cohort of undergraduate writers, and that Stylistics can be made to be a practitioner-facing example of literary theory especially when using a problem posing approach to instruction'. Creative writing academics will see from Bolland's pedagogy that Stylistics fills significant gaps in our understanding of how to teach writing practice. The article turns Literary Studies around to make it work for Creative Writing.

6

Are you a 'pantser' or a 'plotter'? I am not sure I would commit to either of these without more information. Brendan Ritchie, in 'Writing into the Dark', takes us into the world of the 'pantser' – those novelists who tend to write by

the seat of their pants, without plot and without road testing or map making. Is it a viable way to write novels? What are the advantages and pitfalls? Ritchie considers the definition, methodology and application of 'pantsing' through reflecting on the writing of his first two novels. Is it, as Katherine Heyman proposes, necessary to become utterly lost if one is to fully engage with the act of writing fiction? The definition of the term 'pantsing' turns out to be, unsurprisingly, via Blanchot, not straightforward. Ritchie will reveal to you how the process went for him, though of course this might not be how the process goes for you.

7
Liam Bell sets out to record that once-removed life of experience writers enter into when they self-consciously decide they need 'material' for a piece of fiction. In this instance it is the enticing possibility of learning what it might be like (for a fictional character) to travel overland by train and ferry from Scotland to Malta. The way Bell reflects upon his experiences, uses them, considers the ways this might be discussed in a creative writing classroom, and then weaves the politics of the present day with the politics of his historical novel-in-progress is gripping, entirely intelligent, and somehow both exemplary and a thing unique to itself.

8
Like Lynch, McGown and Hancox, Kathryn Knight is concerned with ecologies for narratives. In this instance it is the ecology that places the narratives of the mothers of disabled children in certain niches that overlap with mothers in general, that can be said to distill and magnify all that motherhood stands for, or that can force these narratives to the margins of a larger environment. And not all stories are stories, though they can be experienced and performed (as 'cultural scripts'). This article carries uncanny parallels to Paul Collis and Jen Crawford's manifesto on the teaching of Indigenous narrative. Both are enlightening and broadening discussions that take us deep into the complexities of what narrative can mean and do as it creates the conditions for its existence.

9
Since WG Sebald's integration of black-and-white photography into his bestseller literary works 30 years ago, experimental memoir has used more than text alone to provide personal accounts of a past which has for almost 200 years been recorded not only in text, but also in photographic images. In 'Eschatologies', Andrew Miller critiques processes of contemporary memoir writing through a multimodal work which combines text, graphic images, multi-strand narrative, personal writing, academic analysis, and the idea of treating the page as spatially-read, rather that linearly-read. In this engaging work, which is an example of 'new hybrid forms of life narrative for on-screen viewing rather than on-page reading', the academic and the personal combine to show the possibilities inherent in current technology for creative and academic writing.

10
In her paper 'Too, Too Many of us? Memoir as rogation in creative mentorship', Susan Bradley Smith raises more questions about the ecology of story, this time as an element in the formative (as opposed to assessment-based) experiences of writers who are students in creative writing classes. Bradley Smith argues for a more formal recognition of the educational worth of shared, informal stories 'from the writing life'. Bradley smith explores that territory a teacher might enter in trying to answer the student questions, *How did you do it? Could I become a writer too?* – without entering into 'the circus of Advice' or some haze of self-congratulation and exclusion that can only embarrass

everyone in the end. Bradley Smith teases out the possible mode of adopting the 'carnivalesque micro-memoir' as a response to these sorts of questions – which can come from Festival audiences, workshop groups, friends and strangers as much as they can come from students. With this article, not only are we in the presence of an intellectual worrying at an important question, but we find ourselves in the hands of a superb storyteller.

—Kevin Brophy and Nigel Krauth

Letter to the editor

I wish to thank Sally Breen for an overall extremely thorough and generous review of my edited collection, *Studying Creative Writing*, a text that is indeed meant for beginning creative writers just considering what it means to study in the field, how it works and what it can do for them.

I would like to challenge, however, her assertion, one that is frequently leveled against writers who also work in the academy and write about creative writing theory and pedagogy, that only one contributor has published a book of poetry and none have published novels, suggesting that creative writing is at the edges of our lives and not the center.

Of the eleven contributors to the book, one, Anna Leahy, has published several books of poetry, co-published a memoir*, Generation Next*, and has a forthcoming book of nonfiction, *Tumor*, coming out from Bloomsbury, as well as numerous personal essays. Garry Craig Powell has published a book of short stories, *Stoning the Devil*, which was longlisted for the Frank O'Connor award, and has published work in *McSweeney's*, *Best American Mystery Stories*, and elsewhere. Mary Ann Cain has published the novel, *Down From Moonshine*, and numerous short stories. Timothy Mayers has published the novel, *Intelligence Manifesto*. Many of these credits were listed in their biographies. Julie Platt has published the chapbook of poetry, *In the Kingdom of My Familiar*. Other contributors have published numerous creative works in literary magazines and journals, along with editing them, but are early enough in their careers that they have not yet produced full-length works.

In her otherwise considered review, Dr. Breen suggests that in recommending creative careers that will support their writing, the book does not encourage them enough to dream big, to become solely great poets and novelists. On the contrary, in providing suggestions for ways to support themselves as they write, I feel we are setting the stage for students, in an age where almost no-one is able to make a full-time living writing, especially at the start, to sustain writing lives in which publishing books will eventually be possible. It is also important to remind readers that a majority of the audience for this book (there is a companion version for UK readers edited by Sharon Norris) lives in the United States, where if one is not employed full-time, they will have no health care (even Obamacare is a struggle to afford without an income). Depending on their luck, lacking health care can either mean a death sentence or a direct route to bankruptcy that may haunt some of my students for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately, I see the consequences of this lack every day on social media. I cannot knowingly consign them to this future.

As for myself, I am taking a perhaps ill-advised break from a morning rewriting my second novel, which was long-listed for the Bath Novel Prize and the William Faulkner-William Wisdom Prize but which my agent and I feel needs substantially more work, to compose this letter. Admittedly, my first novel, which secured me representation, has not been published . . . yet. Prior

to that, I had written a collection of stories and another novel that I hope will remain where I have hidden them. I have, however, published a long list of personal essays and stories, dozens of essays about writing on my *Huffington Post* blog (now evolving into a book from *Bloomsbury*). In addition to teaching the subject to hundreds of students, creative writing is always at the center of my life, every single day. Like most writers, I sacrifice sleep, hobbies, and leisure time to do it, even though it is slow going and often discouraging, especially when the mere fact of my academic work is used to imply that creative writing somehow means less to me. Yet, my students see in my life what it means to be a writer, the hard work and the determination and the pure love of the craft. I hope it inspires them too, to dream big and to never give up.

Stephanie Vanderslice
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