Editorial

Writing in the Year of Reading

In the National Year of Reading, writing is in a variety of conditions in Australia. Up north, newly-elected premier Campbell Newman axed the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards, saying the state can't afford to recognise literary excellence. And plenty of Queenslanders supported his move. Victoria did better with its town of Clunes being named Australia's first International Booktown. The Clunes book festival has attracted thousands of book-loving readers in six highly successful years. Writing continues to attract students to study, and the Australian Research Council's acknowledgment of creative works as research lends a new dimension to the turmoil the publishing industry finds itself in – caught between the paper page and the ebook age. New writers have more ways to publish these days, and fewer involve paper. There is as much confusion as there is potential for emerging writers. It is timely therefore that *TEXT* Special Issue Number 13 should focus on current conceptualisations of creativity, how these fit into teaching and research, and how much creative writing can do to 'make things happen' and 'deliver knowledge outcomes'. Nigel McLoughlin and Donna Lee Brien have brought together a lively set of international perspectives in a multidisciplinary setting.

Many of us have spent the beginning of this year at work on the ERA 2011 submission for the 1904 code – questions of the value of creative works and of practice-led research foremost in our minds as we reviewed our own output and those of our colleagues, as we wrote research statements for novels, memoirs, creative nonfiction, poems, plays and short stories. University administrators, having learnt from the 2009 ERA collection, are keen to be more strategic about their submissions, and the pressure has been put on writer academics to articulate the creative work as research, to advocate its significance and contribution. While ERA is taken up in more detail in the special issue, the diversity of thinking, creative work and research in the discipline is evident in this edition of *TEXT*. There are papers here that address key issues and questions related to writing practice, to the teaching of creative writing and to research and knowledge in the field of creative writing.

Last year's AAWP conference, *The Ethical Imagination*, focused our thinking on ethics and writing, and the moral responsibilities of the writer. Professor of Children's Writing at the University of Winchester, Andrew Melrose, gave one of the keynote addresses at the conference. An extended version of the paper opens this edition of *TEXT*. 'The Hidden Adult and the Hiding Child in Writing for Children?' is an exploration of the nature and ethics of writing for children. While Melrose accepts the notion of the 'hidden adult' referred to in critical

studies on the '(im)possibility of writing for children', he argues here that it is the 'hidden child' that needs more attention.

For writers, editors, and publishers, understanding copyright issues is essential, but copyright related to digital publishing is complex. Franci Cantatore, a solicitor who has just completed a PhD in copyright law and authorship, engages with the multifaceted issues of copyright in digital publishing. Cantatore's article, 'Authors, copyright and the digital evolution' is grounded in an understanding of the legal framework, while exploring the issue from a writer's perspective.

The papers by Andrew Cowan, Craig Bolland and Lucy Neave are theoretically engaged discussions of writing pedagogy and they raise pertinent questions about the way we teach writing in universities. In 'A live event, a life event: The workshop that works' Cowan provides an important critique of the creative writing workshop, which is frequently referred to as the 'signature pedagogy' of our discipline. In 'A Freirian reading of online writing workshops' Bolland brings together two unexpected ideas – Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and online creative writing workshops – to provide new insights into online teaching. Neave, in her article 'Teaching Writing Process' uses examples from both professional writers and students to discuss the importance of the revision process and its vital place in the teaching of fiction writing.

There are ongoing debates and discussions around history and fiction and the ways contemporary writers can explore the voices and stories of those whom history has silenced or made invisible. These are explored in two papers: Glenda Banks and Martin Andrew's 'Migrating from nonfiction to fiction – a practice-led approach drawing on a literary journalist's notional tool-box', and Natalie Kon-yu's "'The Recounting of a Life is a Cheat": Unreliable Narration and Fragmentary Memory in Historical Fiction'. Banks and Andrew reflect on the use of journalistic principles and strategies to write historical fiction based on the lives of women in Victoria's mid-19th century goldfields. Kon-yu asks if revealing or recuperating the past is the most authentic way to write narratives about those people history has forgotten. She argues that while suppressed histories might be impossible to 'tell', through fiction much can be revealed about the impact of those histories on people of the times.

An earlier version of Michael Richardson's article, 'Who Speaks? Torture and the Ethics of Voice', won the Co-op Bookshop Postgraduate Prize for a paper delivered at the 2011 AAWP Conference. Richardson raises political questions about the use of torture by governments under the guise of protecting the state, and engages with complex questions of ethics, voice and the body. The body of the tortured, the torturer and the writer, and the implications of the writer's decision to write about trauma and torture, are examined.

Bernadette Brennan, in 'Frameworks of Grief: Narrative as an act of healing in contemporary memoir', challenges Andrew Reimer's questioning of the ethics of writing about death and grief for publication and his assertion that grief should be silent. Brennan, through a close reading of grief memoirs, explores the narrative strategies used by writers, and argues that the process of writing and shaping the narrative is not only 'healing' for the writer but allows for the experience of grief, private and often silent, to be communicated to others.

'Killing the conceptual: Knowing, research, and poetry for children,' is an interview/'conversation' between Michael Rosen and Jen Webb. Rosen is a poet who writes for young readers. Webb asks loaded questions, and creates the space for Rosen to give us insights into the poet at work – the development of

ideas, approaches and techniques that open up a space to write – and into Rosen’s understandings of how poetry can work as a generative educative domain for school children.

The main fare in this issue is rounded off with Donna Lee Brien’s review article, “‘First catch your Weka’: A tasting plate of recent New Zealand food writing’. *Bon appetit!*

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