TEXT Volume 15 No 1 April 2011

Editorial

Provocative publishing

Hopefully this edition of *TEXT* brings you another wide-ranging set of provocative ideas, starting points for research, and reflections on both the past and the future. There are papers here that address important issues and questions related to writing practice and genre manoeuvres, and papers that reflect on the teaching of creative writing and on the emerging shapes of research and knowledge in the field of creative writing.

Nicola Alter and Dan Disney both take up phenomenological approaches to enduring questions. Nicola Alter raises her question in the light of science fantasy writing—the creation of other worlds (how much should character be the point, at the expense of description?)—and makes use of reader-response modeling to bring a new focus to this task. Dan Disney brings a writer's (in fact a poet's) response to Paul de Man's influential argument that the sublime is an effect of language, not experience.

In a piece that challenges the poetics of Creative Writing courses, Andrew Cowan, director of the University of East Anglia Masters in Creative Writing, asks three questions: What does Literary Studies know? What does Creative Writing know that's different? What might Literary Studies know that Creative Writing doesn't need to know?—and he proposes in an absorbing meditation that perhaps in embracing not-knowing creative writers have a model for their place in a theoretical landscape.

As if provoked into print by Andrew Cowan, Nigel Krauth brings the genre of the exegesis as part of the creative PhD under discussion. What kind of relationship has emerged between creative work and its academic exegesis, now such a common element of the PhD thesis? Has the umbilical cord been broken between the two, or has the exegesis been re-absorbed into its creative 'mother'?

Greg Nash follows up this discussion by bringing the question of methodology to the fore for those who are facing the task of writing an exegesis from within the incurably interdisciplinary and creative discipline of creative writing. In another twist on developing models for research in creative writing, David Azul blends the creative, the experimental and the theoretical in a fictocritical piece that is frankly in love with the voice.

Writing practice, this time life writing, is the concern of Victor Marsh, whose memoir is featured in a piece that argues for identity being a narrative construction. In his case, he speculates on the possibilities of queer writing and queer identity resisting and even re-shaping cultural assumptions and ossifications. Antonia Pont also makes use of autobiographical writing to bring together a remarkably elegant paper that exploits deconstructive approaches to reveal the paradoxical nature of the life both reported and invented in its writing. David McVey brings journalism and 'creative' writing together via a

bibulous dinner in 1898 followed by a drunken night-time stroll for Joseph Conrad and Neil Munro. This is a piece of remarkable history-writing and provocative thinking.

While an excellent group of reviews is published in this issue, you'll notice no creative work. We think it's due to the fact that, for the first time, *TEXT* policy asked for research statements to accompany creative contributions (in line with ERA arrangements recognising creative work as research). Creative writers weren't impressed by this imposition, and appropriate referees were bemused by the idea of reviewing peers' creative work accompanied by manufactured statements at the time of initial publication.

This situation indicates a dis-connect between creative writing and academic writing. How should academic creative writing present itself to the public? As 'academic' product? Or as 'normal' product? The *Weekend Australian* or *Wet Ink* won't publish your poem or story with a research statement attached.

Other Creative Arts disciplines (and even Journalism) are realising that an effective way to put forward creative occasional practice under ERA is not by individually-published item, but in portfolio form – by gathering together a group of published works into a single portfolio explained by a single research statement at the time of ERA submission. Thus, under ERA, we have to think of our occasional creative outputs in portfolio series – as a group of studies in an area of investigation.

The creative publication area of *TEXT* has one *fundamental* policy: that pieces published will interrogate writing, the teaching of writing, and the processes entailed. We are particularly open to the idea of series of studies by single authors on these issues. Surprisingly perhaps, many regularly-attracted creative writers in *TEXT* are from outside academia. For this cohort, ERA is simply puzzling. At the same time, few creative academics with well-known teaching and research profiles submit to regular issues of *TEXT* in creative form.

Under ERA, one might say we're out in the streets busting down academic and other barriers; setting sail to discover unknown worlds; plummeting to depths of culture, society, psyche, body, history, literature, etc, to dredge up the un-found, the un-mined, the untold ... The ERA parameters return us to what we always should be as writers: challengers of the status quo; investigators of new and better ways to see and do; critics of the moribund, the immoral, the unethical; opposers of the selfish who tread the world down. Publishers are generally not very interested in this sort of avant-garde material, but *TEXT* is. We relish writing that boldly investigates writing, the teaching of writing, and our ever-adapting processes as writers and teachers.

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