

**Deakin University**

**Robin Freeman and Karen Le Rossignol**

## ***Clarifying creative nonfiction through the personal essay***

### *Abstract*

*In a recent issue of TEXT, Matthew Ricketson sought to clarify the 'boundaries between fiction and nonfiction'. In his capacity as a teacher of the creative nonfiction form he writes, 'I have lost count of the number of times, in classes and in submitted work, that students have described a piece of nonfiction as a novel'. The confusion thus highlighted is not restricted to Ricketson's journalism students. In our own university's creative writing cohort, students also struggle with difficulties in melding the research methodology of the journalist with the language and form of creative writing required to produce nonfiction stories for a 21st century readership.*

*Currently in Australia creative nonfiction is enthusiastically embraced by publishers and teaching institutions. Works of memoir proliferate in the lists of mainstream publishers, as do anthologies of the essay form. During a time of increasing competition and desire for differentiation between institutions, when graduate outcomes form a basis for marketing university degrees, it is hardly surprising that, increasingly, tertiary writing teachers focus on this genre in their writing programs.*

*A second tension has arisen in higher education more generally, which affects our writing students' approaches to tertiary study. The student writers of the 21st century emerge from a digitally literate and socially collaborative generation: the NetGen(eration). From a learner-centric viewpoint, they could be described as time-poor, and motivated by work-integrated learning with its perceived close links to workplace contexts and to writing genres. They seek just-in-time learning to meet their immediate employment needs, which inhibits the development of their capacity to adapt their researching and writing to various genres and audiences.*

*This article examines issues related to moving these NetGen student writers into the demanding and rapidly expanding creative nonfiction market. It is form rather than genre that denotes creative nonfiction and, we argue, it is the unique features of the personal essay, based as it is on doubt, discovery and the writer's personal voice that can be instrumental in teaching creative nonfiction writing to our digitally and socially literate cohort of students.*

*Keywords: creative nonfiction, personal essay, creative writing pedagogy, NetGen learner*

### **Introduction**

In our teaching practice we have observed that an introduction to the creative nonfiction form is inclined to confound our students with semantics. The terminology used for discussing such works tends to conflate meaning as Matthew Ricketson (2010) has suggested, although as a journalist he cautions particularly against the use of terms such as 'fictional techniques' and

'narrative'. It is probably no surprise that coming, as we do, from the creative writing discipline, our concern is with descriptors related to journalism. It is with terms such as 'New Journalism', 'literary journalism' and 'narrative journalism', used over the past 35 years to describe the form, and more particularly in the use of classification terms such as 'feature', 'review', 'profile' and 'opinion' that we find most confusion among students. Such terminology influences our students' writing away from narrative storytelling and towards exposition. They suffer, too, from particular inhibitions about the integration of researched facts and dialogue into their work. Despite our differing diagnoses of the cause, it is problems associated with the progression of our students beyond the confusion of terminology and into the world of creative practice as meaningful and 'true' storytellers that engage Ricketson and the authors of this article.

The hybrid origins of the creative nonfiction form, coupled with changes to the learning strategies of the student body of the early 21st century have presented particular difficulties in teaching a form of writing that requires our students to combine fictional narrative techniques with a journalistic thoroughness in researching the factual basis of their stories.

Rather than an attenuated form of journalism, as suggested perhaps by its descriptive terminology and its research practice, creative nonfiction writing in the 21st century is more closely aligned with the practices, style and intent of the essayist. And far from a mastery of fictional techniques being a hindrance to understanding that style, we argue, as suggested by Aldous Huxley (1959: v), that the relationship between fiction and the personal essay may be used to acculturate students into the writing of more personally meaningful and engaging (in terms of content and style) creative nonfiction stories. Specifically, our article draws on our recent experience of teaching the essay form as a strategy for clarifying the writing process and encouraging our students' confidence in their own abilities. It seeks to generate further discussion about the teaching and assessment of creative nonfiction writing within the framework of the creative writing degree.

## Context

### *Hybrid origins of creative nonfiction*

It is generally accepted that the specific form of creative nonfiction, that adoption of creative techniques to portray a factual story, began when terms like 'New Journalism' were first coined to describe a change in the style of journalism in America in the 1960s. Tom Wolfe's essays defending the form, originally published in the *New York Magazine* in 1972 and later in *The new journalism: with an anthology*, provided the term with credibility, though Wolfe denies coining the phrase (Wolfe & Johnson 1975: 37). Wolfe wanted to create an illusion that the reader was an eyewitness to an event. He created scenes to tell the story. He used dialogue to establish character. To capture the 'subjective or emotional life of the characters', Wolfe interviewed his subjects not only about what happened but, importantly, how they felt about it (Wolfe & Johnson 1975: 35, 46-7).

Concurrent with the development of the form by journalists, fiction writers began seeking new markets as the demand for short fiction, created by luminaries such as Hemingway, Steinbeck and F Scott Fitzgerald, contracted during the post-war years. Emerging short fiction writers and even novelists like Norman Mailer sought to recapture what John Franklin has described as a 'widely read, intelligent audience' with their literary / subjective journalism

(Franklin 1986: 26). In 1965, following the publication of a number of short fictions and novels, Truman Capote wrote what he credited as the first 'nonfiction novel' *In cold blood*. Capote used narrative journalism to tell the story of a horrific murder committed in Midwestern America in 1959, claiming his work to be 'much harder than a conventional novel' because he had 'to get away from [his] own particular vision of the world' (in Weingarten 2005: 31).

Since the 1960s a plethora of writers with craft origins in fiction and journalism have written under the new / literary / narrative journalism banner. While writers like Wolfe and Capote wrote almost exclusively in the third person, using multiple points of view to create their stories, Hunter S Thompson – using his particular style of Gonzo journalism – projected the narrator into his stories. Famously, 'The Kentucky Derby is decadent and depraved', published in *Scanlan's Monthly* in June 1970, was apparently recreated from Thompson's booze- and drug-addled memories following the events it describes (Weingarten 2005: 219). Despite this, the longevity of this work as a scathing cultural critique attests to the fact that Thompson was in control at least of the message he wanted to convey in his written version of events.

During this period, Joan Didion also pursued the art of the personal essay. Because of the diversity and style of the magazines in which she was published, she failed to attract the public following of her male colleagues such as Wolfe and Gay Talese. This changed, however, when her first collection of essays, *Slouching towards Bethlehem* was published in 1968. The book was described by one reviewer as 'a rich display of some of the best prose written today in this country' (Weingarten 2005: 116).

#### *The personal essay*

Although one can reflect upon the Roman philosopher Seneca's letters as a form of personal essay, the personal essay had its formal beginnings with Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). His collection of *Essais* (meaning 'to trial', 'to test', 'to attempt') first published in 1580, combined an intellectually rigorous exploration of concepts with a form of autobiographical conversation which openly accepted doubt as a method of investigating opinion. In his preface to *Essais*, Montaigne declared that 'I desire therein to be dileneated in mine owne genuine, simple, and ordinarie fashion, without contention, art or study: for it is my selfe I pourtray' (Montaigne 1965: 15). He introduced personalised approaches that challenged formal style, and which have influenced writers and essayists from his time onwards.

In his preface to *The Norton Book of Personal Essays*, Joseph Epstein writes of the personal essay as a way of reasoning. 'What one discovers in writing such essays is where one stands on complex issues, problems, questions, subjects. In writing the essay, one tests one's feelings, instincts, thoughts in the crucible of composition' (Epstein 1997: 15). As an editor with *The American Scholar*, and an essayist of repute, Epstein explores the key elements of the personal essay through experience, using character, style and point of view. The essay, he suggests, becomes 'a distinct way of viewing the world', rather than the assemblage of a range of opinions (Epstein 1997: 21).

As discussed by Epstein, twentieth-century critics and thinkers such as Georg Lukacs and Theodor Adorno considered the essay form appropriate not only for a society and people less certain about the stability of key frameworks such as family, love and religion, but also more suited to a modern spirit retreating from 'the violence of dogma' (Adorno in Epstein 1997: 14). Thus the personal essay form is increasing in popularity during a time of uncertain values, of a society in transition, and where personal or autobiographical voice and a

methodology based on doubt not certainty can inform a viable learning process for student writers.

In the preface to his *Collected Essays*, Aldous Huxley suggests that:

Essays belong to a literary species whose extreme variability can be studied most effectively within a three-poled frame of reference. There is the pole of the personal and the autobiographical; there is the pole of the objective, the factual, the concrete-particular; and there is the pole of the abstract-universal. Most essayists are at home and at their best in the neighborhood of only one of the essay's three poles, or at the most only in the neighborhood of two of them. (Huxley 1959: v)

Although a growing number of prizes and awards for the form may well be recognition of the successful combination of the three poles postulated by Huxley, it is the personal and autobiographical that is most closely aligned with the present industry positioning of creative nonfiction writing. Indeed, Huxley contends that 'The most richly satisfying essays are those which make the best of ... all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist' (Huxley 1959: vii). Thus, while we advocate here that the personal form may convince students to trust their personal voice, it is also our intention to encourage this narrative voice towards one that 'seeks a larger truth than is possible through the mere compilation of verifiable facts' (Telese in Mills 1974: xii).

## Issues

### *The NetGen student writer*

The NetGen learner is socially connected, information overloaded and experiential through the use of social networks such as MySpace, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. Such sites not only provide a social network but also a potential convergence between social and intellectual engagement with a community of knowledge or practice (their writing peers), and an immersive learning environment where knowledge is created among them, not possessed. The NetGen or millennial learner sees experiences as more important than the acquisition of information (Oblinger 2008), and is thus well positioned to embrace the personal essay as a mode of expression or experience.

Today's NetGen learner constructs knowledge in a nonlinear way, starting from the known or concrete then moving informally through social networks and lateral connections to a personalised sense of owning that knowledge. Therefore the writing process may be more successfully transmitted to such students as a nonlinear or lateral one. Social networks are based in a community of writing practice that will discover information from a range of immediate or personal sources rather than researching more deeply through traditional resources. These students gain their information via print media and the internet, via blogs and *Wikipedia*, enabling them to discover instantaneous information from potentially dubious sources which they may not then test.

The ability to synthesise and to recognise patterns and connections is a valuable skill within any communications learning environment, and particularly so in creative nonfiction writing. Connectivist approaches to teaching and learning, according to researchers such as Siemens (2004), develop learning processes for connecting specialised nodes or information sources, and encourage learning and the acquisition of knowledge via a diversity of opinions, which

develop the student's capacity to explore further rather than focusing on what is already known. To be current, to have accurate, up-to-date and timely knowledge is the aim of the connectivist approach in which both the NetGen learner and the higher education course developer construct the capacity and the opportunity for student creative nonfiction writers to connect in lateral and layered ways.

### *Teaching and learning creative nonfiction*

'I am not a writer. I cannot write. I am 15 years old, 16 years old, 17 years old ... I am convinced of this' (Kamler 2001: xiii). In the preface to *Relocating the personal: a critical pedagogy*, Barbara Kamler vividly describes the feeling of distress associated with her inability to write the required essay. It is not the skills of grammar or spelling that baffle her. She cannot find appropriate words to convey her meaning: she lacks confidence in her own point of view, in her 'voice'. In adulthood, Kamler's pedagogy draws upon personal experience to create meaning via a first person narrative engaged with social, political and cultural realities. She discovers the 'narrator on the page strong enough to do battle for me ... her solid, limited self' (Gornick 2001: 23). The adult Kamler engages with a narrator who has 'become knowable enough in their broad outlines to behave "believably," at the same time as free willed enough to intrigue with surprises' (Lopate 2001: 38). While our own students do not articulate Kamler's fear of 'imprisoned words' (Kamler 2001: xiv) we are convinced that it exists, and it is demonstrated in their work.

Creative nonfiction is a complex form. '[M]any students,' Lee Gutkind reminds us, 'cannot understand the layers of research, reading and experience / immersion a writer must wade-through / endure before finding a good topic' (Gutkind in Brien 2000). Gutkind's statements have resonance with writing program teachers today. Our students' difficulties relate to their NetGen lifestyle and student experiences discussed above. Due to their just-in-time constraints, our students use a limited range of sources, preferring to interview family or friends rather than having to negotiate with strangers. They believe what they are told rather than cross-referencing and testing their sources. Dialogue drawn from interview transcripts becomes chunky blocks of quoted material rather than conversation that moves their story forward or creates characters from the people they have researched. The narrative structure of their work is linear. They incline towards a retelling of the 'experience' of an event, rather than the story that may be conjured from that experience. They become absorbed with the 'I' of first-person narrative which easily falls into a 'pit of confessionalism, or therapy on the page or naked self-absorption' (Gornick 2001: 10), but do not create from this 'I' a distinctive persona, an appropriate voice to convey their story, 'the one we can trust will take us on a journey, make the piece arrive; bring us out into a clearing where the sense of things is larger than it was before' (Gornick 2001: 23-24). They struggle to compose their work in ways that will reveal insight and universal meaning to engage the readership.

Within Kamler's review of her own journey as a writer she finds Brodkey's sense of locating the 'I' as important: '...the 'I' is a site whose memories of lived experiences of social and historical spaces are recounted as narratives of personal experience' (Brodkey in Kamler 2001: 3). In applied creative writing classes, the personal essay grows organically out of the exploration of our students' narrative doubts. 'The act of writing creates a space of representation where the personal is written and rewritten, but not confused with "the person"' (Kamler 2001: 171). Thus students and teachers search for that balance of intellectual and researched conceptual exploration and the personal voice that will give their writing resonance to the reader. This we understand as the personal essay.

It is worth returning to Huxley's three poles, as this is the journey of development we wish to achieve with creative nonfiction teaching practice. It is the combination of the writer's particular personalised point of view, awareness of the link between the writer's purpose and the reader's level of engagement, plus creative and imaginative engagement in storytelling, which have reinforced the exploration of the 'voice' of our creative nonfiction students.

#### *Creative nonfiction and the personal essay*

Philip Gerard, a memoirist, novelist and writing teacher, asserts that the best creative nonfiction writing contains an 'apparent subject and a deeper subject', both of which must engage the reader. It is narrative, timeless, while often sourcing a topical event as its apparent subject. Creative nonfiction, Gerard continues, demonstrates authorial reflection, as well as focusing close attention to the details of craft and of language (Gerard 1996: 7-11). We choose to highlight Gerard's definition because he has essentialised creative nonfiction writing within five characteristics that readily facilitate our students' intellectual engagement with the concept of creative nonfiction. Furthermore, each of Gerard's characteristics is useful when conceptualising the personal essay, which allows writers to interpret their personal stories: those stories that have personal resonance yet are defined by intention and engagement with culture, society or politics.

The essay, suggests Chris Anderson, 'seems more appropriate for beginning and struggling writers ... because it gives such students permission to dramatise the process of their thinking' (cited in Bishop 2003: 271). It is to the essay we have turned in search of a form that will specifically engage our NetGen writing students in their quest for the rewards of industry participation.

#### *Growth of creative nonfiction opportunities*

The 21st century has brought a plethora of publication opportunities for creative nonfiction writers in Australia and abroad. Indeed the commercial prospects currently appear happier for the student of creative nonfiction than they do for the poet or literary novelist. Encouragement to the creative nonfiction writer via awards is increasing: prizes for the personal essay include the *Australian Book Review's* Calibre Prize and, more recently, the young Calibre Prize for an outstanding essay by a writer under 21 years. A nonfiction prize is also included in the Australian Prime Minister's Literary Awards while the University of Technology, Sydney offers a prize for Literary Journalism awarded in association with the Sydney Writers' Festival.

Writers of creative nonfiction may now build their skills and their publication portfolios, as fiction writers have done in the past, through competitions and publication in literary journals. They are thus encouraged to imagine new ways of applying creative nonfiction techniques to the telling of history, the discussion of politics, and to the writing of memoir and the personal essay. To successfully engage our students with these opportunities, we need to deconstruct methodology and to teach the assimilation of research and inquiry into creative nonfiction storytelling.

#### *Value of the personal essay model*

The personal essay is strongly aligned with the exploration of an opinion made relevant to a wider audience such as the student writer's peers. Our approach to freeing the student's factual voice has been to provide a model that is playful and confident in its combination of researched evidence and an engaging story with the full range of creative techniques to captivate the imagination. The Calibre Prize essays provide a range of voices and styles for our students to consider. Students are then requested to stipulate the purpose and focus of their own stories (which are often autobiographical) briefly detailing why it is

important to them and to their readers. This has empowered the students to own the importance of their stories, to automatically blend the storytelling with their reflection on the actions they wish to engender in their readers.

In our writing program, the heady mix of creative storytelling techniques and a factual story has been a freeing exercise, as we work with our students to reinvigorate a form (the personal essay) that has been reduced to composition status throughout compulsory schooling. Importantly, our experiment with this form has engaged the students with its practice and their craft. One student recently indicated a greater interest in reader feedback on whether her writing had worked, rather than being primarily concerned with her actual mark.

Consideration of industry writers working through literary journalism or creative nonfiction techniques and style has led the authors of this paper to challenge the methodology of teaching creative nonfiction through feature articles or opinion pieces. The creative nonfiction pedagogy described requires an assessment tool which provides the opportunity to use a personal voice blended with a resonance of social, political or cultural musings. Using a winning Calibre Prize essay as the model, we challenged the student writers to establish the 'apparent subject and deeper subject' (Gerard 1996: 7-8) with a narrative, authorial reflection and some form of abstract-universal quality.

## Findings

This approach to teaching creative nonfiction via the personal essay has led to an identification of the key pedagogical qualities with much greater clarity. As Douglas Hesse stresses, creative nonfiction writing requires 'imagination ... to turn plain reality into art and ideas' (Hesse 2009: 18). Hesse too, has provided a list of qualities he expects of the form, being:

- a strong voice and authorial presence, with the writer figured as a teller or a character
- (usually) a strong narrative quality
- language that surprises and delights – that calls attention to itself as language, rather than shying into transparency
- surprising juxtaposition of facts, ideas, and experiences that lead to fresh insights; an often digressive, associative quality that, nonetheless, we find well formed
- an insistent and celebratory sense that, while the author is writing about the world as it is and life as it happens, this truth is filtered through a consciousness whose goal is to make us pay attention and care. (Hesse 2009: 20)

These objectives were provided to the students, and they have responded with 1000-word and 2000-word personal essays as assessment pieces. One of the most interesting results of the more focussed approach on personal essays has been the students' greater comfort and engagement with their writerly voice and point of view. As storytellers incorporating their personal exploration, students found they could more comfortably use narrative devices, interpolate the research (usually interviews and personal communications rather than academic journal reviews) and filter their point of view into the story more subtly.

Although not every student can reach a sophisticated blend of personal response and universal applicability, it is the ownership of voice that has been so interesting: our students' belief in the telling of their own story with its reflections and resonance. Resonance, as defined by Donald Blumenfeld-Jones,

is ‘the sense of commonality existing between an audience member’s life-experience and ... the teller’s narrative’ (Blumenfeld-Jones 1995: 32).

The workshops of both the proposals and draft personal essays were more deeply engaged in discussing the positioning of the reader. There was a greater belief, represented in the student writings, in the importance of the reader as an active and relevant participant in the process. When discussing writing, William Carlos Williams writes: ‘[T]he more palpable the connection between the story and the reader’s story, the better the chance that something will happen’ (cited in Coles 1989: 120). The student cohort had only read the initial proposals for the shorter 1000-word essays, so they were keen to see the full stories, provided in the form of a Personal Essay compilation booklet produced from the submitted assignments. Their interest as readers was engaged by the resonance of the storytelling with its ‘surprising juxtapositions’ and ‘insights’ (Hesse 2009: 20).

The connectivist approach required students to take responsibility for finding connections to their own work, through an online forum on creative nonfiction writing models. Students, through their higher level of engagement with the models, took risks with their own writing by adopting techniques beyond their comfort zones. They developed an online community of practice / knowledge, challenging each other’s responses and exploring the relevance of each model to their own personal writing. The just-in-time freedom of selecting when their responses were contributed and when they engaged with others is particularly appropriate to these learners. The deeper reflection was a marked contrast to the previous years’ classroom discussions which limped along depending on who had done the reading for that week.

The personal and autobiographical focus of this particular cohort of creative nonfiction essays resulted in a range of successful models which transformed doubt, discovery and the personal voice from the self-aware or self-absorbed to a more universalist resonance. Even those who lost themselves in a somewhat too self-conscious narrative were still aware of the need for, as Hesse states,

an insistent and celebratory sense that, while the author is writing about the world as it is and life as it happens, this truth is filtered through a consciousness whose goal is to make us pay attention and care. (Hesse 2009: 20)

## Conclusion

It is our intention that over the course of their three-year degree, our students will learn research and writing techniques that will enable them to produce the creative personal essays of which Aldous Huxley has written:

The most richly satisfying essays are those which make the best not of one, not of two, but of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist. Freely, effortlessly, thought and feeling move in these consummate works of art, hither and thither between the essay’s three poles – from the personal to the universal, from the abstract back to the concrete, from the objective datum to the inner experience. (Huxley 1959: vii)

The authors set out to revise and to reinvigorate a creative nonfiction course that was perceived as not adequately meeting the educational needs of our NetGen writing students. It was our intention to encourage students to work towards a seamless combination of fiction techniques with factual research, as



we had perceived was indicated in creative nonfiction publication opportunities and models. The revival of the personal essay as an autobiographical voice and story has successfully led student writers to consider how to make these stories resonate with their readers, and themselves.

Rather than a 'new' form, the personal essay has existed as a flexible and lateral approach to story and opinion writing since Montaigne's attempts / trials, or *Essais*. It is in the renewal of the form and its initial teaching at the level of personal autobiography, with some elements of universality or resonance with readers, that we have found a way to engage student writers in producing thoughtful and crafted assessment tasks. They have taken ownership and pride in their writing and reading, and the diversity of their responses is very satisfying; they are prepared to say 'almost everything about anything' (Huxley 1959: v).

## Works cited

- Biron, D 2011 'The death of the writer', *Australian Book Review* 331 (May): 36-44
- Bishop, W 2003 'Suddenly sexy: Creative nonfiction rear-ends composition', *College English* 65, 3 (January): 257-275 return to text
- Blumenfeld-Jones, D 1995 'Fidelity as a criterion for practicing and evaluating narrative inquiry', in JA Hatch & R Wisniewski (eds) *Life History and Narrative*. Falmer, London return to text
- Brien, DL 2000 'Creative Nonfiction: a virtual conversation with Lee Gutkind', *TEXT* 4, 1 (April): <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april00/content.htm> (accessed 27 March 2011) return to text
- Coles, R 1989 *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston return to text
- Epstein, J 1997 'The personal essay: a form of discovery' in *The Norton Book of Personal Essays*. WW Norton, New York: 11-24 return to text
- Franklin, J 1986 *Writing for story: craft secrets of dramatic nonfiction by a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner*. Plume, New York return to text
- Gerard, P 1996 *Creative Nonfiction: researching and crafting stories of real life*. Story Press, Cincinnati return to text
- Gornick, V 2001 *The situation and the story: the art of personal narrative*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York return to text
- Hesse, D 2009 'Imagining a place for creative nonfiction', *English Journal* 99, 2: 18-24 return to text
- Huxley, A 1959 *Collected Essays*. Harper & Brothers, New York return to text
- Kamler, B 2001 *Relocating the personal: a critical writing pedagogy*. State University of New York Press, Albany return to text
- Laurillard, D 2002 'Rethinking Teaching for the Knowledge Society', *EDUCAUSE Review* (Jan/Feb): 16-25
- Lopate, P 2001 'Writing personal essays: on the necessity of turning oneself into a character', in C Forché & P Gerard (eds) *Writing creative nonfiction: instruction and insights from teachers of the Associated Writing Programs*. Story Press, Cincinnati: 38-44 return to text
- Montaigne, M de 1965 'The author to the reader', in *Montaigne's Essays in three volumes* (trans J Florio). JM Dent & Sons, London return to text

Mills, N 1974 *The New Journalism: a historical anthology*. McGraw Hill, New York return to text

Oblinger, D 2008 'The Next Generation Learner', *Students, Technology and Learning: Strategies for Success – Proceedings, 2008 EDUCAUSE Conference* (14-15 July): <http://net.educause.edu/aascu08> (accessed 24 May 2011) return to text

Ricketson, M 2010 'Not muddying, clarifying: towards understanding the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction', *TEXT* 14, 2 (October): <http://www.textjournal.com.au/oct10/ricketson.htm> (accessed 13 March 2011) return to text

Siemens, G 2004 'Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age', *elearnspace*: [www.elearnspace.org/Articles/connectivism.htm](http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/connectivism.htm) (accessed 29 May 2011) return to text

Weingarten, M 2005 *From hipsters to gonzo: how new journalism rewrote the world*. Scribe: Melbourne return to text

Wolfe, T and EW Johnson (eds) 1975 *The new journalism: with an anthology*. Pan Books, London return to text

*Robin Freeman teaches creative writing in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University in Melbourne. She has worked in the Australian publishing industry as both publisher and book editor, and is currently undertaking PhD research in the area of the editing and publication of Indigenous writing.*

*Karen Le Rossignol teaches creative writing and freelancing skills for the arts in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University in Melbourne. She has extensive experience in developing communications texts and virtual world learning resources, and has collaborated with Robin Freeman in delivering the creative nonfiction program.*

---

**TEXT**

**Vol 15 No 2 October 2011**

**<http://www.textjournal.com.au>**

**Editors: Nigel Krauth & Kevin Brophy**

**[Text@griffith.edu.au](mailto:Text@griffith.edu.au)**