

TEXT

The Journal of the Australian Association of Writing Programs

Editorial:

International Milestones

With Volume 6, Number 1 *TEXT* passes a number of milestones. Not yet in its teens (this is edition number 11) *TEXT* is nevertheless showing signs of maturity. For this issue:

- the two lead articles - by John Kinsella and Bill Manhire (keynote addresses from the 2001 AAWP Canberra conference) - focus on developments in writing schools in North America and New Zealand respectively
- the AAWP President reports on the Australian delegation to the New Orleans conference of the United States AWP
- we give notice of a special Canadian edition for April 2003 with guest editor assistance from Kevin Roberts
- the list of *TEXT* subscribers, now exceeding 800, has a significant number of overseas addresses, and
- 'The Guide' is now enhanced by information about more New Zealand university writing programs.

So there is an increased international flavour developing in *TEXT*. This reflects the growing international relevance of the AAWP and the maturing outlook of its members.

As editors, over the past 5 volumes of *TEXT*, we have noticed a greater concern amongst individual researchers to place the Australian experience of teaching creative writing in a global context. Chris Kelen's article on using creative writing in second language teaching in Asia, and Ken Chan's survey of literature about North American writing schools - both published in this issue - are further examples of this trend.

At the same time, the domestic focus of the AAWP and the journal continue to expand. With this issue

- there is announcement of the Australian Creative Writing Research Board and publication of its website - "The Archive" - with invitation for submission of research dissertations, exegeses, etc to be held for viewing on the site
- we give notice of a special feature for the October issue later this year to survey the non-university sector in Australia - especially the mentoring and TAFE programs that, in some cases, feed students into university writing schools, and
- a variety of articles concern local issues related to creative research recognition, the nature of the exegesis, quality control in teaching, and the writer as reader - each of these being further steps in national debates that have developed significantly in past issues of *TEXT*.

It is worth pointing out that in 11 issues *TEXT* has now published the following:

- 90 refereed academic articles
- 19 refereed creative works
- 10 non-refereed articles or addresses
- 3 interviews

- 37 reviews and
- 2 special issues.

The benefits of this publishing are highly significant. Apart from the thousands of dollars the refereed articles have brought into creative writing schools via Australian government research funding mechanisms - and the enhanced CVs of individual researchers (there are now significantly more writing academics in the professorial and senior lecturer divisions than when *TEXT* began) - there is also the sense of an academic culture having been established. We are aware of some schools where research clustering is focused around *TEXT* - where the journal is used as a focal point for teaching, discussion and publication by combined groups of staff and research students. These clusters form the foundations for teams of researchers with aspirations directed towards larger grant research funding bodies.

In other words, *TEXT* is going from strength to strength, reflecting the state of affairs nationally in creative writing research, and the ideals of the Australian Association of Writing Programs. The other key factor in the maturing of our research area is the AAWP membership's support for the annual conference. The conference has provided the vital forum linking and nurturing our research endeavours; from it has grown a sense of a national community of writing teaching and writing research.

We should not underestimate the significance of the annual AAWP conference to the 37 universities around Australia that teach professional and creative writing. Each of those universities has benefited from the national and international profiling given to the creative writing discipline via the conference. In hosting a succession of significant overseas speakers - from John Barth in Sydney in 1996 onwards - the conference has provided academic substance to the popular upsurge of creative writing enrolments in the 142 certificate, graduate and postgraduate awards now available.

But the conference does not have to be a fancy affair. A shoestring conference is just as useful to the discipline as is one with fireworks. The most important thing is the annual exchange of views: the confirmation and furtherance of the academic culture already established. The AAWP now has reputation and clout - such that it can, for example, institute a national research board in the discipline - and this clout (as peak national body) originates in the commitment to the annual conference. The conference for 2002 will be held in November at Melbourne University, hosted by the School of Creative Arts with Dr Kevin Brophy as Conference Director. Updates and information regarding the conference can be found at the conference web page

It is good to see also the publication of *The Writer's Reader: A Guide to Writing Fiction and Poetry*, edited by Brenda Walker and published by Halstead Press in association with The Centre for Studies in Australian Literature, University of Western Australia. This book draws together 26 writers from around Australia - university teachers and others, including many AAWP members - providing advanced-level discussion of topics in creative writing. The book will be reviewed in the next edition of *TEXT*.

On a sad note this editorial could not close without mentioning the loss we all feel at the death of our colleague Judy Duffy of RMIT. As an outstanding teacher of creative writing she will be remembered by many of her students. She will also be remembered by those of us who struggled to form this association - she was there at the front of our organisation supporting and encouraging - her good cheer and laughter coupled with her sound organisational skills will be greatly missed. An interview she conducted with Glenda Adams was published in *TEXT* in October 2000 and in this issue Antoni Jach of RMIT dedicates his paper to her memory.

Tess Brady
Nigel Krauth

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<http://www.griffith.edu.au/school/art/text/>

Editors: Nigel Krauth & Tess Brady

Text@mailbox.gu.edu.au