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## **Introduction: Writing dreams**

This Special Issue of *TEXT* explores the capacity of dreamscapes to function as powerful literary devices within an array of creative writing forms, while also informing and shaping creative arts practice more broadly. Its authors demonstrate diverse curiosities about creative practice as a kind of dreaming, where a practitioner's engagements might constitute a quasi dreamwork-on-the-page. In addition to this, creative thinking itself can pass via registers reminiscent of the dream and of its atmospheres and formation, broaching unconscious material, experiences, and paradigms. Suffice to say, an inherent connection between dreams, storytelling and the production of artwork more generally is tested and expanded upon in these articles. The unconscious processes that unfold during dreaming may harvest their contents and compositions from the conscious processes engaged and activated intentionally by established practitioners when working in literary, narrative and poetic forms, but also vice versa. The poetic strategies fundamental to crafting dream sequences for written forms entail far more than a simple duplication of any *real* dreams' narrative potential, associative chains, structures, or uncanny atmospheres: they require writers to translate dream-like elements into tangible sequences, rhythms, or scenes, to bring material substance to the oneiric.

Significantly, thinkers of the psyche across and beyond the 20<sup>th</sup> century have argued that dreams evidence unconscious processes associated with human psychic operations, economies and constellations of desire. If Freud's legacy has made it even clearer that creative efforts, especially writing creatively, can give access to unfoldings akin to what's surfaced in the close reading and listening of psychoanalytic work (through the manipulation of language, deliberate lapsus linguae, etc.), after Jung, it has become almost platitudinal that narrative structures

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intrinsic to dreams may provide insights into an individual's internal imbalances. It is no surprise then that dreams and dreamscapes in literature have often attracted interpretation and critical engagements which use a psychoanalytic lens.

While written dream sequences could be easily interpreted as re-presentations of *real* dreams, our interest here has been the contention that dream texts are like other literary texts and require significant creative effort and skill to be effectively crafted and realised for a reading audience. Akin to good dialogue, convincing literary dreams are artfully contrived for readers, practising an attention to detail, to tone and to arrangement that belies any surface appearance of contingent or lucky construction. Lacan's famous dictum, after, notes that the unconscious is structured like a language. It is not chaos 'in there', and our psychic work therefore, displays iterative, even algorithmic, cadences that can be closely followed and thought into. As Lacan said, in his teaching lecture 'The Place, Origin and End of My Teaching': "But in psychoanalysis, the unconscious is an unconscious that thinks hard" (2008, p. 7).

It could therefore be asserted that the written dream – even if based upon a real-life "dreamt" experience – cannot duplicate simplistically any process in the unconscious, but rather may complicate and extend such processes, counterpoint, and unsettle them. From this perspective, literary dreams are also closely related to the compositional manoeuvres and labourings of literary practices and literary knowledge; raw dreaming is only the beginning, an entwined, sibling phenomenon. If the unconscious of psychoanalysis "works hard", the authors and poets of this Special Issue have done likewise.

If – in the Freudian tradition – dreams conjure complex forums that allow our wishes to be fulfilled (covertly or otherwise), then dream-writing, dreamwork, and literary dreams with their particular logics speak to the role of desire, of wishes, of our ambivalences and our attitudes to the future, to making worlds in which our longings could become feasible. In other words, dream-writing dares to go beyond the mundanely possible, testing the implausible, the forbidden, the tender and the strange.

In the Australian context, the term "dreaming" has even broader resonances and a longer history, as the term "dreaming" was adopted as a shorthand term in the English, as Yunkaporta argues, for: "supra-dimensional ontology endogenous to custodial ritual complexes" (2019, p. 22). "Dreaming", therefore, for writers on Australian soil, includes not just what happens during sleep, but what we might have a chance of encountering, honouring, if we were to wake from a colonial stupor.

The contributors here explore the complex, contradictory, sometimes grief-laden and often evocative states awakened or recalled by dreamscapes, dreamwork and dream-writing. (The role of memory is also salient: passages of drifting in deep memory after all can feel like an experience of dreaming.) They have all taken a plunge into the strange profundities risked when

we drift away from conscious modes of being and behaving. As such, this issue contains a diverse range of scholarly and creative pieces, each of which has been informed, in some way, by psycho-emotional engagements, thought-processes and reflexive practices rooted in the oneiric.

Within the series of academic papers, readers will encounter insightful discussions concerning the role of literary dreams and how they might be “reconfigured” in innovative ways to evoke strong sensory responses within both readers and writers. Consideration is given, too, to the degree of influence that dreaming and “dream work” might have upon creative practices. Authors foreground their explicit deployment of dream-sourced intelligence for the composition of narrative, non-textual and poetic artefacts.

Hannan provides an in-depth analysis of the relationship between dream logic and narrative structures which unfold within *The Unconsoled* by Ishiguro. He eloquently accounts for how dream laws and logic (or illogic, as the case may be) can contribute to methods of unreliable narration deployed throughout the text. In her paper, Prendergast offers a rigorous account of her term “ideasthetic imagining”, offering inter-disciplinary insights into neurological connections between processes associated with both dreaming and writing.

Frank’s contribution, an interview-based paper, investigates Brisbane poet, Anna Jacobson’s, process of interweaving visions and memories in order to surface personal histories “lost through periods of mental illness”. This article accounts for the poet’s artful and intentional mining of dreams for the purposes of creative practice and healing.

Herbert-Goodall provides an analysis of the extensive range of effects generated by dream sequences within Winton’s 1988 Gothic novella, *In the Winter Dark*. She attends to Winton’s intimations and exploration of the dreadful histories experienced not only by individual characters, but more broadly to place itself, pursuant to Europeans’ arrival on this continent.

In their co-written paper, the Webb sisters, Jen and Lorraine, discuss the dream-like qualities of water, in conversation with the overlooked essay of French theorist, Bachelard, ‘Water and Dreams’ (1941). As they write: “The phenomenological perspective he offers on water and its oneiric properties aligns very well with creative practice-led research”. This paper offers a provocative take on conventional views on how and what dreaming might contribute to creative practice.

The editorial team were delighted to receive poetry and fiction submissions responding to the issue’s theme and preoccupation, offering tangible dreamy evidence of the way dreams, their atmospheres, and secret languages, make works we want to read. The creative contributions contained herein convey their dream-like aesthetics, structural logics and surreal contents in vastly different modes and voices, but in doing so, draw attention to the liminal spaces that

exist between dreamt content, acts of dreaming, and creative processes. Regarding the two poems submitted here by poet, Paul Collis, the anonymous reviewer wrote: “I know the places the poet is singing about, have lived there, and [these have] got that dirt and water in every line. ... There’s a particular kind of grief that you only find along the Darling River and I feel it same again in these poems.” We are honoured to have Collis’ work in the issue.

Gluskie, as a creative scholar preoccupied with the experiential driftings of humans within the blurred and fraught spaces of surveillance capitalism, activates aspects of its incursions and somniferous lullings in his wild piece set in some kind of medical facility, where nothing is unlikely – just as it is in our dreams.

Verga’s poem conjures the yearnings of ancestry, the juxtapositions of travel, urban dislocations, surreal observations and the people (real or longed for) who will have passed through our lives, often namelessly. His work tastes like dreams we know, carrying the reader nevertheless into wider, unconscious spaces that humdrum pressures and investments can too easily have us forget.

All these works provide a timely reminder that dreams – which we have in moments of resting, unguarded and less instrumentalist – can be a source of rich material for fiction, artwork and reasons for sharing what we do. On the flip-side (of your freshly-made bed, of your best pillow), creativity and scholarly engagements and practices inevitably nourish our dreamt experiences and the desires we dare to have.

We dedicate this issue to the dreaming that has always been happening on this continent and which always will happen. We thank sincerely all of our anonymous reviewers for their close and tireless efforts in supporting rigorously but kindly the development of scholarly and creative works.

## References

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- Yunkaporta, T. (2019). *Sand talk*. Text Publishing.