EDITORIAL Issue 5

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In this issue, our five scholarly authors approach creative writing in conversation with other disciplines, other fields of knowledge and practice, from history to robotics. Firstly, however, we encounter the featured creative work of fiction writer, Kieran Stevenson, in 1.3tGL ('one point three trillion gigalitres'). This short but affecting piece amply demonstrates how creative writing can be a vehicle as (or more) effective than any other mode of communication to drive home the fact of our interconnectedness with and dependency on our environment. Arguably a dark cli-fi piece of experimentation, Stevenson's work—for us—masterfully activates the tools of the writer's craft to position the reader (aligned with the work's focalization) in a new, transformed and perceptually altered state. This character, the body through which the reader feels and sees and *is*, traverses a vast arc as its assumed anchors for being an organism are suspended, derailed, (re)instated...

The five scholarly works in this issue are respectively engaged with 'writing + something'. Our opening article, by Sarai Mannolini-Winwood, generously introduces the fields of geocriticism and literary cartography. In discussion with us, at *c i n d e r*, Mannolini-Winwood was encouraged to share her nuanced understanding of this way of working to welcome writers who are unfamiliar with these methodologies into their rudiments, and thus expand our shared grasp of how these approaches can enrich fictional and other works. This can ground ethical engagements with places marked across time in various ways, but in Australia, especially, by colonial legacies.

Kyle Mackenzie's article follows with its timely emphasis on the question of depictions of robots in literary works, focusing on McEwan's *Machines Like Me*. Offering a close study of how McEwan pulls off his activation of robotic tropes and characters, Mackenzie provides his readers with a clear and accessible way into using this thematic in speculative fictional works. Via a survey of important

works to date, we see how the use of alternative history settings can open ethical considerations as well as innovative turns for plot and characterisation.

Joanna Beresford's work engages creative writing beyond its own edges into the fields of pedagogy proper, autoethnography and history. It takes up questions pertaining to methodologies for the novel, in light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic and both its impact on learning spaces and its foregrounding of different learning styles. Beresford's work shares insights and innovations in doctoral project design, the latter informed by the preoccupations of the article and the pressures of recent times and geo-sociological phenomena.

The four authors at work in our penultimate article—Didem Caia, Clare Carlin, Emilie Collyer and Ruth Fogarty—welcome the reader along for a traversing of practice-led projects and some hints for navigating academia in difficult times *warmly*. Coming out of a multi-staged conversational model of collegial working and peer mentorship, this article is as much a document of how to *be* with others who also think and make, as it is about how to let this *being-together* improve and transform the ways individual researchers might engage their own fields and projects. For many, the doctoral trajectory is as much about stamina as it is about skill, cleverness or tacit know-how, and this article attests astutely and playfully to the ways in which models of reciprocal care can nourish wanting to keep going. All this, so that the making within academe can happen with less suffering and harm to self and others, and probably more flair and innovation.

In our final article, Amanda Beckett explores how writers of historical fiction 'broker an affective relationship between the reader and the protagonist of the text' (p. 64). This can be too often taken for granted as natural or evident, but creative writers—as Beckett shows—know that it is not a mere accident when it works. Exploring a suite of salient primary texts, Beckett's article is a skilful survey and analysis of the devices at work in these artefacts, which succeed in activating an immersive experience shot through with the reader's felt response. Such works bring historical characters, their situations and dilemmas vividly into our present context.

We are grateful always for the trust of authors in sharing their work (at various stages) with c i n d e r and with our team of tireless and supportive reviewers. The latter astonish us always with their patience with, interest in, and genuine care for emerging scholars in our discipline. Getting an article to a publishable stage is no easy feat for anyone, at any stage in their career—it is certainly easier and less straining when people pool their goodwill, knowledge and experienced critique. Thank you to *all* reviewers for this issue; you know who you are.

We would like to thank Deakin Library, and its Open Access Journal staff, as well as the publications team for support and encouragement for working in this platform. It's great to know that others also care about this mode of publishing. You all make it fun, stylish, and quite a bit punk to choose Open

Access despite all the pressures (and interests!!) which might prefer it to stay in the shadows. We would also like to thank the AAWP, and our sibling journal *TEXT*, for being a great example, companion, and source of advice when needed.

Thanks go to our intern for this issue, Aakanksha Sapre, for reading the articles for errors and adding an extra set of eyes to the editorial processes and its stumbling blocks.

c i n d e r respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which much of our work is done. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and to any First Nations people reading and authoring the works in our journal. Sovereignty was never ceded.