



Configurations

Trevor Code

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A major scholar has recently pointed out the tendency, fuelled by Creative Writing courses, for an assumption that literary works, of any time period past or present, are inescapably autobiographical. After all, it is easier to gossip about the author's, or composer's, or painter's sex-life and deprivation than the work itself. As a poet, I am not writing autobiography. I don't think Shakespeare, Whitman or Dickinson were doing so either. And I don't find it particularly helpful to reduce the arts to "self-expression". I engage in an art which may be speculative, imaginative, philosophical, probing, subject to trains of thought, association of ideas - or even caprice. Like a mathematician, I grapple with symbols; unlike a mathematician I perceive, and sometimes play with, the inexact nature of the symbols or words which make up our language. Whitman said it was "a language experiment." I am not "I"; "I" is not I - or me. I place things on the page, objectively at times, but sometimes swept up in the emotions of the theme or the work. I hope that the reader might experience such emotion too - and hear it. I refer to the titles of two late volumes by Robert Lowell: Notebook, and History. They morphed into versions of the one book. I am engaged with the terrain and the climate, the daily events often of Dromana and the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria - but in my Irish poems I am heavily wrapped up in the traditions, history, ballads and fate mainly in Wexford. In *In Which Way the Wind* (2010) I argued that the reader completes the line and the poem. The book belongs to the reader. About the Author A pioneer in the teaching of Writing and Literature in Australia, Trevor Code was the chairperson of the ground-breaking first Literary Studies course team at Deakin University. He has taught in schools at all levels, lectured in English at State Colleges, and served as Head of Department at Geelong Stage College. He was an actor, director of theatre, member of senior level Education Department committees and the board of Victorian Association of Teachers of English, delegate for several years to the Federal Conference for Aboriginal Advancement, and an activist for human rights. He has taught creative writing at all levels, and a full range of Literary courses. In the United States, he served on the board of the Worcester County Poetry Association, was its vice-president for programming, and directed several major projects, especially in association with the Worcester Art Museum. He was a Professor of English at Worcester Polytechnic Institute university, where he taught a full range of creative, American and British courses, and he also taught at Clark University and the College of the Holy Cross. His poetry and other writings are prolific and wide-ranging. In 2004 he returned to live in Dromana on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria. He heads the Melbourne chapter of DLS, an organization for literary enthusiasts, of which he was the co-founder. He supports the Australian Poetry Centre, the Victorian Writers' Centre, and the Fellowship of Australian Writers. He has written study guides on Shakespeare and American Literature, and a Workshop Manual for writers. He has several books of poetry, the latest of which is *Configurations*. He is a director of Ódrerir Books. Reviews "... a strong Shakespearean influence that stretches the mind to deeper appreciations." "the poetry is a diverse and varied tapestry on themes tailored to an individual personal expression that is stimulating, emotive and thought-provoking...like a mature bottle of wine..." "I take great pleasure in the way the intellect and passion drives through each poem generating its imagistic sequence. "

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