

September 2019

Greetings:

For me it has been an eventful half-decade since we issued the last volume of *Essays & Fictions*. In the last five years, I have gotten a paralegal certificate, initiated a career in communications, and renewed my passion and practice for horseback riding. I have not been doing literary work, focusing instead on legal and nonprofit fundraising writing where the use of language has felt “alive” in that I can see and measure its immediate impact.

I regret the good deal of confusion that surrounded E&F activity in its final years, as well as any adverse effect this may have had on our writers, colleagues, and collaborating partners. Most of this was the result of turmoil and upheaval of a private nature. As things have settled, a few E&F veterans closest to me (Amberly Jane Campbell, Greg Sanders) gently nudged me toward realizing the need to at least preserve the E&F work that was done in the past. Thanks to their support, I am happy to present an updated E&F archive, found online on its same old domain at **essaysandfictions.com**.

While it is not possible to recover or reimburse all of the value that was lost in E&F’s final days, it was reasonably possible to put some of the pieces back in place. Our old web site was defunct: it will not run on tablets or smartphones, and it was built in a format increasingly difficult to maintain on the modern internet. Thus, preserving the online archive and keeping it accessible required a re-imagining of the old work as well as an actual website rebuild.

When we started this journal twelve years ago, we chose PDFs as a way to secure design integrity while still delivering content to readers via the internet. At that time, print publishing was quickly declining, but there was not yet a clearly viable electronic replacement. I was vehemently opposed to the endless scrolling and left-justified paragraphs with jagged right edges that were the hallmark of online lit pubs of the day. Now, website design has caught up with the needs of magazine and journal readers who are as sensitive to publication aesthetics as I am. The tablet made electronic reading more pleasurable than tortuous, and at long last, contemporary web building platforms are as user-friendly as they are flexible, offering scores of drag-and-drop options as well as easily customizable themes.

The PDF format we designed in 2007 was meant to look like an open book that would be read on a desktop monitor. Today, this form, used in the first six issues, does not translate as easily to a tablet and is probably unreadable (too small) on a smartphone. However, linking the PDFs was the only way to get this work back up on the web in an efficient and timely manner. The subsequent six issues were uploaded in a single page format that are more conducive to today’s tablet and smartphone e-reader platforms.

For a time after releasing the final issue, I wondered to myself about the E&F concept: I knew it was compelling and intriguing, but had I overestimated its longevity and potential to provide

room in which to grow? As mentions of “fake news” trended in mainstream media during the Trump era, and questions of information literacy and credibility came to the forefront of cultural consciousness, I felt quietly satisfied with what we had done in our seven years of publication: simply asked the question, and explored it in both a substantive, rigorous and also a fun and whimsical, way:

Who decides what is “real” in cultural dialogue and written record?

*What exactly is the relationship between **form and truth value** in a text?*

What happens, and what do we learn, when we intentionally blur genre conventions and truth values in a literary text?

To move from seven years immersed in a project entirely devoted to literary distortions, into seven years of reading law for legal study, was a personal, but valuable, exercise in linguistic extremes. I realized that to be able to create, distort, or contribute to reality with manipulation of language is a kind of power that can harm when used recklessly or thoughtlessly, and as such credibility and perhaps even prestige is best contextualized against the actual integrity of a story, a brand, a message, or campaign.

How this is to be measured or assimilated is a question for another essay, or series of essays, but in this way, I feel comfortable concluding that E&F does indeed belong to a past, now-gone era. Our lives are much more transparent and surveilled than even ten years ago, arguably imbued with far less mystery as a result, so where does this leave the experience of the sublime, E&F’s other thematic preoccupation?

Personally, I now seek the transcendent through equilibrium, which I strive to create through integrated *be-ing* in all aspects of living. I have some new media projects in the works, all of which are all focused in one way or another on the elevated state of consciousness which is the result of unrelenting commitment to the painful process of confrontation, struggle, and integration. I believe that the emotional, psychological, and spiritual planes is where our unique humanity is found, and that successfully working these functions into a physical body that operates in material space is an ongoing challenge and highly motivating goal, fulfilling in its moments of breakthrough and success in a way that endlessly “taking things apart” never achieved for me.

These are my own views: not those of my E&F colleagues, but I wanted to share the spirit in which I affectionately rebuilt this site. I hope you enjoy perusing the archive as much as I enjoyed revisiting the memory of each of these pieces when selected for publication. There are just so many damn powerhouse pieces of literature in here, actually staggering and genuinely humbling to me when viewed in aggregate.

As for the future, I believe the E&F brand is best retired, but the occasional E&F Wire entry, merchandise opportunity, or social media appearance may pop up here or there: *You just never know when a corpse will decide to rise again, or for what purpose.*

With extra special thanks to the New School Creative Writing MFA program alumni, the Ithaca College Writing Department, Anthony di Renzo, Bill and Connie Pollock, Greg Sanders, Jeffrey Dene, Josh and Andrea Land, John Taylor, Blandine Longre and Paul Stubbs, Shaienne Osterreich, Brett Bossard and the Tompkins County Community Arts Partnership, Bob Proehl, and Jackie White; and

In sincere gratitude for all that every reader, intern, and writer brought and gave to this project during its tenure,

Danielle Winterton

Former Co-Founding Editor, Marketing Director, and Production Manager

Essays & Fictions

Essays & Fictions Press, 2007 to 2014