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2014-11-05
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An Alternative Academic Creative Writing Pedagogy?

The Research and Development of Theorised Teaching Principles and Processes for a BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing and an MA Degree in the Teaching of Creative Writing

Pieter Oberholzer

0218420H

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Johannesburg, 2014

Abstract

This study examines the available literature on creative writing as a discipline in higher education institutions and analyses a range of aspects relevant to its teaching, including its international and local origins; its development as a high-demand product of the higher education industry; its resultant position, form and role as an academic discipline; whether it can be taught and how it is influenced by its institutional location. This study then identifies and examines certain neglected components of the teaching and learning of creative writing, including the conceptions and expectations of student writers, the significance of creativity in teaching students to write creatively, and the role of the reader as textual participant. Having identified a paucity of formally developed creative writing principles and processes, this study undertakes to establish a theorised pedagogic platform by means of the research and analysis of pertinent aspects of creative writing and its teaching, including a broad selection of creative writing handbooks as a representation of formal, recorded creative writing pedagogy; creative writing theories and findings relevant to the pursuance of creativity in writing and relevant to its teaching environment; the significance of the reader and her textual criteria as co-creator and ultimate judge of textual quality; and the written responses of undergraduate students to the principles, methods, exercises and assignments experienced during their participation in a research based, four-year, creative writing workshop programme. The findings of the theoretical and experiential evaluations are merged, analysed and consolidated in the study's conclusions. These conclusions form a theorised, alternative academic pedagogic creative writing platform consisting of the teaching of creative writing as an experiential process, aimed at students as writers, focusing on creativity, the reader and on writing as a process and a craft, in an Arts-based, authoritatively neutral and creativity conducive environment. Derived from this alternative pedagogic platform, the study develops the framework of the syllabi of a BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing and an MA Degree in the Teaching of Creative Writing.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and that I have given acknowledgement to sources I have used. It is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Pieter Oberholzer
18th day of August 2014

Acknowledgements

My gratitude for support and encouragement go to Sandy, my wife and editor; to Pam Nichols, my ever patient supervisor; to the thirty five students, who so willingly shared their writing passions and experiences with me; and to the University of the Witwatersrand and the Harold and Doris Tothill Scholarship Fund for their faith and their financial assistance.

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APPENDICES

Note: The Appendices are contained in a separately bound document with its own table of contents listing the Appendices and their page numbers. All references to the Appendices in the thesis text will direct the reader to the relevant page in the Appendices book.

I. INTRODUCTION

When the objective for this thesis was compiled for insertion into the original thesis proposal, the objective seemed relatively straightforward, even after almost 2 years of preliminary reading and investigation. The thesis objective is a practical one with the requirement for tangible outcomes, namely the development of two creative writing programmes based on the findings and conclusions emanating from the literature research and the creative writing workshops research programme. However, it soon became apparent that what seemed to be simple and straightforward was to be a complex research and analysis process, as a result of the absence of any similarly shaped explorations and analyses. The literature, which forms the discourse surrounding creative writing as an academic field of study, is almost exclusively confined to commentary, reflection, suggestion and assumption. There is little specific methodological and empirical analysis of the subject's pedagogical, form, principles and processes, that one would expect from most higher education disciplines.

During the course of the research, analysis and compilation of this thesis there has been no evidence of any other similar efforts, or published records of a research study or even smaller components of a study, which seek to establish a methodologically and empirically sound foundation of knowledge and theory on which to base and implement creative writing degree programmes. With no companion or leader text to act as counterfoil or precedent, this thesis became a 'green fields' exercise, which had to develop its theories, findings and conclusions from scratch based on broad and in-depth readings on the subject of creative writing contained in the literature of a host of authorities over a broad period of time. Hence the detailed and annotated form of Chapter II. *The Literature Review*, which includes a list of the authorities and their credentials and the literature that was consulted in the development of the creative writing discourse foundation.

This thesis consists of four primary components: the first is the examination and analysis of the literature, which makes up the discourse on the subject of creative writing in higher education institutions, in terms of its origins, development and its assimilation as an academic field of study (Chapter IV. *The Origins and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing* and Chapter V. *Creative Writing in the Academy*). The second component

consists of the examination and analysis of aspects of creative writing, which would seem to be logically significant to the development of a creative writing pedagogy, but which by and large appear to be absent in the initial literature discourse on the subject. These apparently absent elements, include a creative writing handbook examination and analysis (Chapter VI. *Creative Writing Handbooks*); an analysis of selected research studies pertaining to creative writing students, focusing specifically on their conceptions and expectations of creative writing (Chapter VII. *Student Writer Conceptions of Creative Writing* and Chapter VIII. *The Student Writer*); an exploration of the reader and audience as a vital part of the writer, text and reader triad (Chapter IX. *Readers and Audience*) and the examination of creativity as a primary and significant element of the practice of writing creatively (Chapter X. *An Exploration of Creativity*). The third component is the results and findings of a workshop based student research programme, which provides a practical and realistic view of creative writing in a controlled environment and adds the invaluable, practice-based findings and conclusions to those drawn from the literature on the subject (Chapter XI. *Creative Writing Workshops Research Results and Findings*). The fourth element is the conclusions drawn from the composite research findings (Chapter XII. *The Conclusions of the Thesis*), which form what could be called methodologically and empirically developed creative writing teaching theory and principles to be used in the development and implementation of the two creative writing degree programmes (Chapter XIII. *The Honours and Masters Degree Programmes*).

A brief outline of the thesis chapters serves as a preliminary guide to the structure, content and issues addressed by the examination and analysis processes of this thesis.

1. Chapter IV. *The Origins and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing*

The examination commences with the origins and development of creative writing in the USA, UK, Australia and South Africa from its beginnings, as a new academic field of study, to its current status, as a high demand product of the higher education industry, with the USA and the UK leading the way in the increasing numbers of programmes being offered to keep up with the continual student demand for the subject. Such is the demand that it has taken on industrial proportions.

The demand for and growth of creative writing coincides with a decrease in government and public funding for academic institutions, which has forced institutions to adopt corporate commercial principles to survive and to embrace the demand for the teaching of creative writing in order to benefit from the revenue attached to that demand. The rate of expansion of creative writing instruction has also been a financial lifeline for English faculties, who have seen a general decline in the demand for their traditional courses and are under pressure to downsize their departments.

2. Chapter V. *Creative Writing in the Academy*

One of the questions asked of academic institutions is Can Creative Writing be Taught? There are few formally focused attempts to answer the question, but a composite perspective can be gained from an analysis of a range of responses to the question from a cross-spectrum of authorities.

The traditionally entrenched dominance of English Studies remains a feature of creative writing's absorption, as an academic discipline, with creative writing largely viewed as a supportive influence, particularly to the teaching of English Literature, and as being academically illegitimate because creative work is not scholarly work. The influence of English Studies on the form and characteristics of creative writing's pedagogy has also raised questions surrounding the discipline's ideal location in the academy's infrastructure.

The primary issues surrounding the academic assimilation of creative writing are its perceived illegitimacy and institutional measures to ensure its academic validity; the mass production of texts with publication becoming a professional validation; the predominance of the authority of the creative writing teacher; the idiosyncratic approach to the teaching and learning of creative writing, which may have caused its pedagogy to remain underdeveloped, untheorised and unacademic and an absence of focus on specific elements of creative writing, which could logically be considered as valuable and necessary elements of the development and implementation of creative writing pedagogy.

3. Chapter VII. *Creative Writing Handbooks*

An examination and analysis of a suitably representative range of creative writing handbooks may be the closest that an investigation into the teaching and learning of creative writing can come to identifying and establishing how creative writing has been, and is being, taught and identifying a theoretical pedagogic base from which to develop alternative creative writing pedagogies. The creative writing handbook analysis was based on a representative range of 27 handbooks.

4. Chapter VIII. *Student Writer Conceptions of Creative Writing*

In the analysis of the importance of the demand by students for creative writing instruction from higher education institutions, it was discovered that little attention has been given to the conceptions and expectations of students, as creative writers, and that there are very few empirically-based studies into student conceptions of creative writing. Of those that have been undertaken, the findings and conclusions have in any event been largely ignored. The creative writing teacher's authority and her assumptions seem to prevail in the teaching of the subject and when research is undertaken it tends to be institutionally focused.

Four student-focused research studies were sourced and selected for analysis from which to develop core components and principles for the establishment of a methodological pedagogic foundation.

5. Chapter IX. *The Student Writer*

In order to verify and support the findings of the research studies into student conceptions and expectations of creative writing and to augment the pedagogic principles drawn from those findings, corroborating evidence was sought from the work of a range of authorities, which included well-known and experienced writing teachers as well as authors, many of whom also had creative writing teaching experience.

6. Chapter X. *Readers and Audience*

The study of the available literature on the subject of reader and audience and the subsequent analysis provided a valuable theoretical framework for the concept of the reader, as an element in the development of a broad creative writing pedagogy. The readers of the student writer, include the creative writing teacher as reader, the traditional public reader, student peers as readers and ultimately the ideal reader, as the writer's companion, collaborator and co-creator.

7. Chapter XI. *An Exploration of Creativity*

The examination and analysis of the discourse surrounding the form and content of creative writing, as an academic discipline, reveals an institutional appropriation of the concept of creativity in order to ensure that the teaching of creative writing conforms to the requirements the institution sets for its academic fields of study. Creativity in its pure form is unacademic. It is mysterious, problematical, elusive, romantically nuanced, subjective and irrational. This tends to complicate creative writing pedagogy and its role as a subject within the academy alongside more established disciplines.

Given the logical link between creativity and writing in the teaching of creative writing,

> creativity and creative processes are arguably central to one's decisions about developing curricula and particular teaching approaches, facilitating student learning, providing feedback and making judgements about works (Paul Kleiman qtd in Morgan, 2012).

This Chapter, *An Exploration of Creativity*, contains a detailed examination of the concept of creativity in order to identify 'creativity positive' processes, methods, characteristics and environmental factors and to avoid 'creativity negative' ones.

8. Chapter XII. *Creative Writing Workshops Research Results and Findings*

Based on the participation of 35 students, as respondents, in a writing workshop research programme undertaken over a four-year period, the results and findings of that study represent the practical, experiential counterbalance to the literature-based findings and conclusions of the study and also compliments and adds a practical workshop dimension to the findings of the research into student conceptions of creative writing.

To ensure optimal levels of objectivity in the collection and analysis of the workshop research data, the data were restricted primarily to written student reactions, views, opinions and responses to workshop tasks, exercises, assignments, including all drafts and final versions of short stories, poems and plays; journal entries; email communications; feedback, both given and received; explanatory notes and reflexive essays produced by the participants.

9. Chapter XIII. *The Conclusions of the Thesis*

The conclusions drawn from the examination and analysis of the literature on creative writing, the findings of the research into student conceptions of creative writing and the results of the creative writing workshops research study, constitute an empirically and methodologically solid theoretical foundation on which to base the structural, procedural and theoretical framework of the syllabi for the Honours Degree Programme in Creative Writing and the Masters Degree Programme in the Teaching of Creative Writing contained in Chapter XIII. *The Honours and Masters Degree Programmes*.

A. The Thesis Objective

The objective of this thesis seeks to extend and build on the research foundation set by *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing*.

The objective is to design and develop a three year undergraduate creative writing programme and a one year postgraduate creative writing teaching course, based on the

establishment of the appropriate teaching aims, the teaching methods implicit in those aims and the most suitable assessment procedures. Two key components of creative writing teaching at higher education institutions will be researched and analysed, namely,

1. Undergraduate student responses to teaching methods utilised over a three-year period in a creative writing teaching and workshop programme; and
2. Creative writing literature in respect of teaching handbooks, writer processes and experiences and the experiences of creative writing teachers.

B. Rationale

1. Background

This thesis represents the second phase of an exploratory process initiated with the compilation of my Masters Research Report, *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing*, which examined the field of creative writing at academic institutions and researched the teaching of creative writing from the perspectives of inexperienced undergraduate students set against a review of the origins, growth and pedagogic development of creative writing in higher education institutions. The objective of the Masters Research Report was to establish a pedagogic foundation of principles and guidelines on which to base the design and content of future creative writing modules and programmes.

The general rationale of this thesis is the progression of the exploration and examination of creative writing pedagogy based on the findings of *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* into broader and more detailed aspects of the teaching and learning of creative writing and, based on the conclusion of the findings of that further exploration and analysis of the data, to establish clear theoretical principles and processes of creative writing pedagogy to be used in the design, development and implementation of the two creative writing degree programmes.

2. Student Focused Teaching

The first of the two primary reasons for the development and compilation of this thesis, is the requirement to focus on the needs, conceptions and expectations of students as writers.

In 1992 in his PhD Thesis, *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education*, Gregory Light identified the need for a "paradigm shift" in the teaching of creative writing with the student writer becoming the focal point of creative writing teaching and learning:

> In its simplest terms, it entails a shift from looking at creative writing courses in terms of product to looking at them in terms of student practice, a shift from focusing on teaching to focusing on learning, from teacher (as instructor, facilitator, expert, examiner) to the student as learner (1992:41).

Light emphasises that a creative writing pedagogy cannot be established, which facilitates or develops "the student/writer, without adequately examining the nature of the student's own 'lonely' enterprise" (1992: 40) and that "research into writing is remiss for not looking at those interests and conceptions, which result from [students'] 'love' and 'human concern' for writing" (1992: 41).

As this thesis will reveal there is a neglect of the expectations, conceptions and objectives of creative writing students in respect of their writing needs and their demands for writing instruction from higher education institutions. The students' needs in terms of their writing practices are embraced by the institutions, but diverted and responded to based on the institutions' pedagogic objectives and requirements. In fact the discourse on the teaching of creative writing in higher education institutions abounds with instances of the students being misled by the objectives and focus of the academic institutions' creative writing offerings to students.

Light identified that the institutions and courses he examined during his research process contained one of two "writing orientations" (1995b: 15). The 'intrinsically orientated' course focused the student on her own writing, while the "'extrinsic' course focused students on the writing of someone else: 'literature'" (1995b: 16). What Light discovered was that some institutions were teaching creative writing students extrinsically orientated, or to be more accurate, literature-focused courses, under the guise of teaching them creative writing.

George Kalamaras appears to blame this offering of extrinsically orientated, literature focused courses in response to student needs for creative writing instruction on the "blurring [of] discourses in [the] creative writing class" and he confirms, given the personal freedom focused writing motives of creative writing students, that they "often offer strong resistance to this model of teaching that is at once 'creative,' yet seriously academic and cultural" (1999: 82).

The objectives, conceptions and expectations of creative writing students appear to have been consistently ignored and their demand for creative writing instruction diverted towards the teaching objectives and needs of the English Faculty, where the subject creative writing has traditionally and continues to be located. As further examples of this, George Kalamaras warns students, that despite the title of the subject being 'Creative Writing,' they should not assume that "creative writing is 'creative'" (1999: 82). Katharine Haake bans the use of the word 'creative' in her creative writing classes (2000: 40), while she contemplates "how creative writing can be most productively situated within English studies" (2000: 46). Michael Green says that he does not consider the teaching of creative writing to undergraduate students to be a "direct attempt to produce 'creative writers'" (2005) and when Nigel Krauth goes on record as admitting that "writing creatively in the academic context is different from normal creative writing" (2008: 10), the logical question arises as to which *version* of creative writing students are expecting to be taught, *normal* creative writing, which the academic institution does not teach, or the *abnormal* creative writing, which it does?

With the students' demand for creative writing instruction clearly based and focused on the descriptor 'creative,' institutions and their personnel are also duplicitous when they avoid the concept of creativity in the creative writing classroom, as Madison Smartt Bell confirms they do:

> Creativity, the inner process of imagination, is not discussed … creativity is sealed in a black box … there is a tacit agreement not to open it in public … Everything of *primary* importance happens inside the black box … difficult and dangerous as it is to talk about it, it is the most important thing of all (1997: 9-11).

With the demand for creative writing being a purely student driven, and not industrially or culturally driven phenomenon, it is vital that a creative writing pedagogy and resultant modules and courses focus on student conceptions, needs and expectations. This is what this thesis has sought to do, unlike the passive authoritative participants in the discourse of creative writing, who are still asking "What do students expect?" (Woods, 2008); "what motivates our students …?" (Donnelly, 2012c: 97) and bemoaning the fact that there is an "absence of any analysis of the nature of student demand" (Brooke, 2010).

3. Lack of Pedagogical Focus and Development

The second reason for the development and compilation of this thesis is a response to the traditionally accepted lack of empirically focused and methodologically sound pedagogic principles in respect of creative writing as a field of study in higher education institutions. Authorities continue to comment that little has been done to develop the teaching of creative writing within the Academy, that there is a "relative lack of current public research on creative writing" (Harper, 2012b: 105) and that there is a "lack of empirical data and investigative studies into creative writing's teaching praxes …" (Donnelly, 2012c: 17)

The objective of the development of this thesis is to fill the "empirical data and investigative studies" (Donnelly, 2012c: 17) void, which is so frequently mentioned in the discourse, but seemingly never actively addressed.

There is a surreal illogicality about the academic inertia in the development of creative writing pedagogy. The demand for the subject surpasses the demand for all other academic disciplines; in America 20,000 students apply for admission to creative writing courses each year; 20,000 to 30,000 students have earned creative writing degrees during the past 10 years in the United States; in the United Kingdom creative writing programmes have almost doubled, from 230 to 442 during the last 10 years and in the US the number of programmes have increased more than tenfold in 35 years and yet academic institutions have seemingly en masse and globally refrained from and avoided any empirically and methodologically developed investigation, research or examinations into the pedagogy of creative writing, as an academic field of study. This avoidance has endured for the 75 years since it was first disseminated as a graduate course into universities in the United States.

Dianne Donnelly confirms that creative writing in higher education institutions is without theory, without standards and without empirical data (2010: 52) and Joseph Moxley remarks that "creative writing programs may be evolving at a pace that makes plate tectonics seem positively speedy" (2010: 235). He wonders why, after 20 years of criticism, creative writing programmes are still characterised as 'anti-intellectual' (Bizzaro) and 'anti-professional' (Cain) and why the writing workshop remains unrevised after 100 years (Bizzaro). Moxley concludes that this resistance to pedagogic development can be attributed to the collective institutional and departmental need to defend the *status quo* (2010: 232), which continues to be reinforced by the enduring popularity of the subject (2010: 235) and the "constraining force of the existing faculty reward system" (2010: 234).

4. Conclusion

This thesis has been undertaken with the explicit aim of filling the historical and contemporary vacuum in creative writing pedagogy with the primary focus on the objectives, expectations and conceptions of creative writing students and the establishment of pedagogic theory and standards derived from empirical data and investigative studies. In doing so this thesis will challenge the *status quo* by providing substantive alternatives and hopefully will make a significant contribution to the advancement of the teaching of creative writing in the form of empirically derived and developed pedagogic principles and processes, which provide the basis of the design of two Creative Writing Degree Programmes.

C. The Appendices

Given the number of the Appendices necessary to support the *Creative Writing Workshop Research* component of the study, the Appendices to this thesis are contained in a separately bound document and instead of naming the relevant Appendix in full in the main body of the thesis the reader will simply be directed to the specific page in the Appendices book, for example, Appendices p.10.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Introduction

As a relatively recent field of study, creative writing has little empirically researched pedagogy, but has instead been based on traditional teaching methods and processes, which have been passed down from one teaching generation to the next. Creative writing continues to carry a "pedagogical mystique" (Light, 1992: 21) and a "myth of unteachability" (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007: xvi). The discipline of creative writing is described as a 'new' field of study, as a "murky, still largely ill-defined world …" (Starkey, 1998: vi) with a "relative dearth of published material about creative writing pedagogy" (Coles, 2006: 2) with the result that the "lack of empirical data and investigative studies into creative writing's teaching praxes leaves much of what goes on in the creative writing classroom unexamined [and] untheorised" (Donnelly, 2012c: 17).

In the absence of an empirically researched pedagogy, it is of significant importance to identify and consult the relevant representative literature, not only on, but also around and on the fringes of the subject in order to provide a credible and solid theoretical base upon which to develop a more empirical and formalised creative writing pedagogy.

The range of literature consulted should be broad and reflect the traditional and temporary discourse surrounding the subject of the teaching and learning of creative writing, as an academic field of study.

Therefore this study is wide-ranging and includes the broader concepts of student research; the role and importance of creative writing handbooks in the development of creative writing pedagogy; the significance of the readers and audience in the teaching of creative writing and an exploration of creativity as a primary component of creative writing pedagogy.

It also includes an examination of the literature relevant to the development of the teaching principles, processes and exercises utilised in a student research based creative writing workshop programme.

As no previous exercise of this nature is evident from the large number of authorities consulted, this *Literature Review* accordingly provides a detailed list of all the authorities and publications consulted and will be categorised by Chapter and, where deemed necessary, will also focus on sections within Chapters.

B. Chapter IV. *The Origin and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing*

1. The Development of Creative Writing in Higher Education Institutions

The predominant authorities on the origins and development of creative writing, as a field of study, in higher education institutions in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia, were consulted.

(a) Books

The single-author books range from Hughes Mearns' *Creative Power* published in 1958 to Michelene Wandor's *The Author is not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else: Creative Writing Reconceived* published in 2012. DG Myers' *The Elephants Teach* provides the most detailed and in-depth examination of creative writing's development in the United States, while Paul Dawson's *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* provides an extensive rendition of the history of creative writing in the United Kingdom and Australia.

Mearns, H. *Creative Power: The Education of Youth in the Creative Arts*, 1958.

Aldridge, J.W. *Talents and Technicians: Literary Chic and the New Assembly-Line Fiction*, 1992.

Light, G. *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education*, 1992.

Myers, D.G. *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880*, 1996.

Singerman, H. *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, 1999.

Dawson, P. *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, 2005.

McGurl, M. *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing*, 2009.

Donnelly, D. *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline*, 2012.

Wandor, M. *The Author is not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else: Creative Writing Reconceived*, 2012.

(b) Essay Collections

The essay collections consulted, include Monteith and Miles' *Teaching Creative Writing: Theory and Practice* from 1992 through to editor Dominique Hecq's compilation, *The Creativity Market: Creativity in the 21st Century* (2012). Contributing authors to these essay collections over the period, include Janet Burroway, Stephanie Vanderslice, Patrick Bizzaro, Tim Mayers, Mimi Thebo, Graeme Harper and DeWitt Henry, with the latter two authors adding recent, further perspectives to the history of the teaching and learning of creative writing in their essays, "A Short History of Creative Writing in the British Universities" (Harper), and "A Short History of Creative Writing in America" (Henry) contained in editor Heather Beck's collection, *Teaching Creative Writing.*

Monteith, M. and Miles, R. eds. *Teaching Creative Writing: Theory and Practice,* 1992.

"The American Experience," Janet Burroway.

Harper, G. and Kroll, J. eds. *Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy*, 2008.

"'Sleeping With Proust vs. Tinkering Under the Bonnet': The Origins and Consequences of the American and British Approaches to Creative Writing in Higher Education," Stephanie Vanderslice. 2008

Donnelly, D. ed. *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?* 2010.

"Workshop: An Ontological Study," Patrick Bizzaro.
"Poetry, F(r)iction, Drama: The Complex Dynamics of Audience in the Writing Workshop," Tim Mayers.

Donnelly, D. and Harper, G. eds. *Key Issues in Creative Writing*, 2012.

"Reshaping Creative Writing: Power and Agency in the Academy," Dianne Donnelly.
"Hey Babe, Take a Walk on the Wild Side – Creative Writing in Universities," Mimi Thebo.

Beck, H. ed. *Teaching Creative Writing*, 2012.

"A Short History of Creative Writing in The British Universities," Graeme Harper.
"A Short History of Creative Writing in America," DeWitt Henry.

Hecq, D. ed. *The Creativity Market: Creative Writing in the 21st Century*, 2012.

"Creative Writing: The Ghost, the University and the Future," Graeme Harper.

(c) Journal Articles

Journals such as the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *Higher Education*, *TEXT*, *English Subject Centre* and the magazine, *The New Yorker* were consulted. Authors of the articles contained in theses journals, include DG Myers, Gregory Light, Graeme Harper, Miriam Sved, Steven May, Siobahn Holland and Louis Menand.

Journal of the History of Ideas

Myers, D.G. "The Rise of Creative Writing," 1993.

Higher Education

Light, G. "From the Personal to the Public: Conceptions of Creative Writing," 2002.

TEXT

Harper, G. "A State of Grace?: Creative Writing in UK Higher Education, 1993-2003," 2003.

Sved, M. "Fractured Writing: Creativity, the University and the Australian Culture Wars," 2005.

English Subject Centre

May, S. "Teaching Creative Writing at Undergraduate Level: Why, How and Does it Work?" 2003.

Harper, G. "Reading to Write, Writing to be Read: Project Report," 2003.

Holland, S. "Creative Writing: A Good Practice Guide," 2002.

The New Yorker

Menand, L. "Show or Tell: Should Creative Writing be Taught?" June 8 2009.

(d) Additional Literature

Additional literature for this chapter, included various notices, articles and commentaries from:

The Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP);

National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE);

Australasian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP).

Comments from the website of the University of East Anglia;

The results of an online survey of the outlines and curricula of the creative writing offerings of South African Universities contained in Pieter Oberholzer's research report, *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* (2005) as well as subsequent updates; and

Michael Green's grant-holder report, *Creative Writing at Tertiary Level* (2005), which describes the development of Creative Writing as a field of study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

2. Student Demand for the Teaching of Creative Writing

The nature and extent of students' demand for the teaching and learning of creative writing at higher education institutions was determined less from consulting the books and essay collections on the subject of the teaching of creative writing, but more by examining the active discourse found in the journal articles.

(a) Books

The two books, which address the phenomenon of the high levels of student demand for the teaching and learning of creative writing, are

Paul Dawson's *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* (2005); and
Stephanie Vanderslice's *Rethinking Creative Writing* (2010).

(b) Essay Collections

The authors, who contributed to the topic of the student demand for creative writing in essay form, include Graeme Harper, Steve Healey, Dianne Donnelly, Anna Leahy, Mary Cantrell and Thom Vernon. The following are the essay compilations consulted:

Donnelly, D. and Harper, G. eds. *Key Issues in Creative Writing,* Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012.

"Creative Writing Research," Graeme Harper
"Creative Literacy Matters," Steve Healey
"Introduction: Key Issues and Global Perspectives in Creative Writing," Dianne Donnelly and Graeme Harper.

Beck, H. ed. *Teaching Creative Writing,* 2012.

"Undergraduate Creative Writing in the United States: Buying In Isn't Selling Out," Anna Leahy.
"Assessment as Empowerment: Grading Entry-Level Creative Writing Students," Mary Cantrell.

Hecq, D. ed. *The Creativity Market: Creative Writing in the 21st Century*, 2012.

"Selling It: Creative Writing and the Public Good," Thom Vernon.

(c) Journal Articles

The authors of the articles in the Journals consulted include Tracy Daugherty, DW Fenza, Jeri Kroll and Jen Webb, Mike Harris, Alicita Rodriguez, Scott Brook, Chris Altacruise (pseudonym), George Garrett, Ron McFarland, DG Myers, Stephen Wade, Thomas Bartlett and Steve May.

The Writer's Chronicle

Daugherty, T. "Letter to a Prospective Writing Student," 2003.
Fenza, D.W. "Brave New World: Aliteracy in America," 2004.
Fenza, D.W. "The Words & the Bees: Advice for Graduating MFA Students in Writing," 2006.

New Writing: International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing

Rodriguez**,** A. "The 'Problem' of Creative Writing: Using Grading Rubrics Based On Narrative Theory as Solution," 2008.
Fenza**,** D. W. "The Centre Has Not Held: Creative Writing & Pluralism," 2011.
Kroll, J. and Webb, J. "Policies and Practicalities: Examining the Creative Writing Doctorate," 2012.

Writing in Education

Harris, M. "The Morning after the Night Before," 2006.

TEXT

Brook, S. "Managing creativity: practice-led research and training the person," 2010.

English Subject Centre

May, S. "Teaching Creative Writing at Undergraduate Level: Why, How and Does it Work?" 2003.

Chronicle of Higher Education

Bartlett, T. "Undergraduates heed the Writers Muse," 2000.

College English

McFarland, R. "An Apologia for Creative Writing," 1993.

Contemporary Review

Wade, S. "Accessing the Words: Creative Writing," 1998.

Lingua Franca

Altacruise, C. "Stepford Writers: Undercover Inside the MFA Creativity Boot Camp," 1990.

Sewanee Review

Garret, G. “Creative Writing and American Publishing Now,” 1992.

Journal of the History of Ideas

Myers, D.G. “The Rise of Creative Writing,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1993.

(d) Additional Literature

Information was also sourced from

The Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP); and
The Association of Departments of English (ADE).

3. Creative Writing as a High-Demand Product of the Higher Education Industry

The exploration of creative writing as a high-demand product of academic institutions within the higher education industry required a broader focus and resulted in the examination of a wider range of literature.

(a) Books

The single author books, which contain references to the subject, span the period between 1976 and 2012 and include the following texts and their authors:

Barthes, R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1976.
Kermode, F. *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction*, 1983.
Levy, A. *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story*, 1993.
Dawson, P. *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, 2005.
Vanderslice, S. *Rethinking Creative Writing,* 2010.
Donnelly, D. *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline,* 2012.
Morrison, M. *Key Concepts in Creative Writing,* 2010.
Haake, K. *What Our Speech Disrupts: Feminism and Creative Writing Studies,* 2000.
Kermode, F. *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction*, Cambridge, 1983.
Levy, A. *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story*, 1993.
Florida, R. *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
Pink, D. *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age,* 2006.
McGurl, M. *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing,* 2009.

(b) Essay Collections

The authors of essays, which include references to creative writing as a high-demand subject within higher education institutions, include Susan Sontag, Cathy Day, Graeme Harper, Michelle Cross, Dianne Donnelly, Pavlina Radia, Jeff Sparrow, Thom Vernon, Mike Harris, Mimi Thebo and Steve Healey.

These essays are contained in the following edited compilations:

Richter, D.H. ed. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, 1989.

"Against Interpretation," Sontag, S.

Leahy, A. ed. *Power and Identity in the Creative Writing Classroom*: *The Authority Project*, 2005.

"Where Do You Want Me To Sit?: Defining Authority Through Metaphor," Day, C.

Harper, G. ed. *Teaching Creative Writing*, London: Continuum, 2006.

"The Novel," Harper, G.

Ritter, K. and Vanderslice, S. eds. *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy*, 2007.

"Writing in Public: Popular Pedagogies of Creative Writing," Cross, M.

Donnelly, D. ed. *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?* 2010.

"Foreword: On Experience," Harper, G.
"Introduction: If it Ain't Broke, Don't Fix it; Or Change is Inevitable, Except from a Vending Machine," Donnelly, D.

Hecq, D. ed. *The Creativity Market: Creative Writing in the 21st Century*, 2012.

"Outlying the Point that Tips: Bridging Academia and Business," Radia, P.
"Creative Writing, Neo-Liberalism and the Literary Paradigm," Sparrow, J.
"Selling It: Creative Writing and the Public Good," Vernon, T.
"Creative Writing: The Ghost, the University and the Future," Harper, G.
"Creativity, Compromise and Waking Up with the Funding Devil," Harris, M.

Donnelly, D. and Harper, G. eds. *Key Issues in Creative Writing,* 2012.

"Hey Babe, Take a Walk on the Wild Side - Creative Writing in Universities," Thebo, M.
"Creative Writing Knowledge," Donnelly, D.
"Reshaping Creative Writing: Power and Agency in the Academy," Donnelly, D.
"Introduction: Key Issues and Global Perspectives in Creative Writing," Donnelly, D. and Harper, G.
"Creative Literacy Matters," Healey, S.

(c) Journal Articles

Authorities such as Tracy Daugherty, DW Fenza, Steve Healey, Paul Dawson, Graeme Harper, Alicita Rodriguez, Matt Thorne, Michael Green, Bob Perelman, Christine Owen, Sue North, Camilla Nelson, Enza Gandolfo and Nigel Krauth, Mike Harris and D. Segal contributed to this subject in a range of journals.

The Writer's Chronicle

Daugherty, T. "Letter to a Prospective Writing Student," 2003.
Fenza, D.W. "Brave New World: Aliteracy in America," 2004.
Fenza D.W. "The Words & the Bees: Advice for Graduating MFA Students in Writing," 2006.
D.W. Fenza, "Who Keeps Killing Poetry?" 2006.
Healey, S. "The Rise of Creative Writing & the New Value of Creativity," 2009.
Daugherty, T. "Deprogramming the Program Era," 2012.

New Writing: International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing

Dawson, P. "Historicising 'Craft' in the Teaching of Fiction," 2008.
Harper, G. "Editorial," 2008.
Rodriguez, A. "The 'Problem' of Creative Writing: Using Grading Rubrics Based On Narrative Theory as Solution," 2008.
Thorne, M. "A Comparison of Student Experiences in Focused and General Creative Writing MAs," 2009.
Weldon, F. "On Assessing Creative Writing," 2009.
Glover, S. "Cohort-based Supervision of Postgraduate Creative Writers: The Effectiveness of the University-Based Writers' Workshop," 2010.
Fenza, D.W. "The Centre Has Not Held: Creative Writing & Pluralism," 2011.
Glover, S. "Creative Writing Studies, Authorship, and the Ghosts of Romanticism," 2012.
Green, M. "Professing Silence: Imaginative Writing and the Academy (Inaugural lecture as Professor of Creative Writing)," 2012.

Writing in Education

Harper, G. "Creative Writing Research Today," 2007.
Harris, M. "Brave New Academy or Scholastic Dead End?" 2008.

TEXT

Perelman, B. "The New and its Reproductive Practices," 2004.
Owen, C. "Academic Research and Creative Writing: Redrawing the Map and Finding One's Allies (and avoiding the Corbett phenomena)," 2006.
North, S. "Creativity: The fire in the fennel stalk," 2006.
Nelson, C. "Research through practice: a reply to Paul Dawson," 2008.
Gandolfo, E. and Krauth, N. "Writing in the Year of Reading," 2012.

College Composition and Communication

Kalamaras, G. “Interrogating the boundaries of discourse in a creative writing class: Politicizing the parameters of the permissible,” 1999.

College English

Teichmann, S.G. “Teaching Creative Writing: That Is, Teaching Something Other Than the Craft,” 1993.

American Literary History

H. Lazer, 1999.

Kenyon Review

Hall, D. “Poetry and Ambition,” 1983.

The New Yorker

Menand, L. “Show or Tell: Should Creative Writing be Taught?” 2009.

The New York Times Magazine

Segal, D. “In Pursuit of the Perfect Brainstorm,”19 December 2010.

The Atlantic

Gioia, D. “Can poetry matter? Poetry has vanished as a cultural force in America. If poets venture outside their confined world, they can work to make it essential once more,” 1991.

The Atlantic Monthly

Moody, R. “Writers and Mentors,” 2005.

Journal of the History of Ideas

Myers, D.G. “The Rise of Creative Writing,” 1993.

(d) Additional Literature

Information was also drawn from the AWP, the AAWP and NAWE as well as from

Michael Green’s *Creative Writing at Tertiary Level*, 2005,

and the relevant books and essays relating to the nature of creativity and its role in the teaching of creative writing as a high demand product within higher education institutions:

Amabile, T. *The Social Psychology of Creativity*, 1983.

Pink, D. *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age*, 2005.

Dutton D. and Krausz, M. eds. *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art,* 1981.

"The Rationality of Creativity," Jarvie, I.C.
"Creative Product and Creative Process in Science and Art," Briskman, L.

C. Chapter V. *Creative Writing in the Academy*

1. The Authorities

In order to provide a credible, authentic, valid and legitimate theoretical pedagogic base for the subject of creative writing teaching and learning in higher education institutions, it is key that the authorities consulted are representative of the specialists in the field in terms of experience, seniority, authority and internationality.

For this chapter the work of 114 authors on the subject of creative writing was analysed. At the time of compiling this evaluation 68 of those 114 authors were located at academic institutions in the United States, 21 in the United Kingdom, 22 at institutions in Australia and 3 at universities in Canada.

The majority of the 114 specialist authorities consulted occupy senior positions of power and authority within their institutions with 68 occupying, or having occupied positions at Professor or Director level, or higher. Of these 68, 47 are based in American higher education institutions, 14 in the UK, 6 in Australia and 1 in Canada. The remainder occupy positions as Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, lecturers and PhD students.

The following is a list of the authorities consulted:

(a) <u>The United States</u>

(i) Professors and/or Directors

John W. Aldridge - Professor of English at the University of Michigan.
David Bartholomae - Chair of the English Department at the University of Pittsburgh.
Wendy Bishop - Professor of English at Florida State University.
Patrick Bizzaro - Professor of English at the University of Indiana Pennsylvania.
Hal Blythe - Co-Director of the Teaching and Learning Center and Foundation Professor of

English at Eastern Kentucky University.

Janet Burroway - Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor Emerita at Florida State University.

Frederick Busch - Professor of Literature at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York.

Mary Ann Cain - Professor of English at Purdue University, Indiana.

William E. Cain - Professor of English at Wellesley College.

R.V. Cassill - Professor of English at Brown University.

T. Coraghessan Boyle - Professor of English at the University of Southern California.

Katharine Coles - Director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Utah.

Tracy Daugherty - Distinguished Professor of English and Creative Writing at Oregon State University.

Peter Elbow - Professor of English at the University of Massachusetts.

Janet Emig - Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University in the Graduate School of Education.

David Galef - Professor of English at the University of Mississippi.

John Gardner - Professor at Harpur College of Binghamton University.

George Garrett - Henry Hoyns Professor of English at the University of Virginia.

Dana Gioia - Judge Widney Professor of Poetry and Public Culture at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Katharine Haake - Professor of English and Director of the Creative Writing Program at California State University, Northridge.

Donald Hall - Professor of English at Stanford University, Bennington College and the University of Michigan.

Graeme Harper - Professor and Director at the Honors College, Oakland University.

Burton Hatlen - Professor of English at the University of Maine.

DeWitt Henry - Professor Writing Literature and Publishing, Emerson College Boston.

George Kalamaras - Professor of English at the University of Indiana.

Hank Lazer - Professor of English at the University of Alabama.

Andrew Levy - Chair in English at Butler University in Indianapolis.

Gregory Light - Director of the Searle Center for Advancing Learning and Teaching and an Associate Professor in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University.

Ron McFarland - English Professor at the University of Idaho, Director of Creative Writing.

Michael Martone - Director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Alabama.

Mark McGurl - Professor of English at Stanford University.

Louis Menand - Professor of English and American Literature and Language at Harvard University.

Tim Mayers - Professor of English at Millersville University.

Donald Morton - Professor of English at Syracuse University.

Joseph Moxley - Professor and Director of Composition in the Department of English at the University of South Florida.

Joyce Carol Oates - Professor in the Humanities with the Program in Creative Writing at Princeton University.

Hans Ostrom - Professor of African American Studies and English at the University of Puget Sound, Tacoma Washington.

Bob Perelman - Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania.

Kelly Ritter - Professor of English and Director of the Undergraduate Rhetoric Program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Kate Ronald - Professor of English and Business Administration at Miami University, Ohio.

Mike Rose - Professor of Social Research Methodology in the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

Jane Smiley - Professor of English at Iowa State University.

David Starkey - Professor of English and Director of the Creative Writing Program at the Santa Barbara City College.

Wallace Stegner - founder of the Stanford Creative Writing Program.

Robert Stone - Chair in the English Department at Texas State University.

Charlie Sweet - Co-Director of the Teaching and Learning Center and Foundation Professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University.

Peter Vandenberg - Professor of English and Director of New Media Studies at DePaul University, Chicago.

Carl Vandermeulen - Professor at Northwestern College in Iowa.

Stephen Wade - Professor of Creative Writing in the Department of English at the University of Florida.

(ii) Associate Professors

Mary Cantrell - Associate Professor of English at Tulsa Community College.

Cathy Day - Associate Professor in the Department of English at Ball State University, Muncie Indiana.

Dianne Donnelly - Associate Director of the Composition Program at the University of South Florida.

Steve Healey - Assistant Professor of English at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

Gerry LaFemina - Associate Professor and English Department Director at the Frostburg Center for Creative Writing, Frostburg State University, Western Maryland.

Anna Leahy - Associate Professor of English at Chapman University, Orange California.

Alicita Rodriguez - Visiting professor of English at the Western State College of Colorado.

Stephanie Vanderslice - Associate Professor University of Central Arkansas.

(iii) Lecturers

Cindy Nichols - Senior Lecturer, North Dakota State University.

Tom Bailey - Lecturer in the Creative Writing Program at Susquehanna University, Pennsylvania.

Leslie Kreiner Wilson - Lecturer in Writing at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

Rick Moody - Lecturer at New York University.

D.G. Myers - Lecturer in English at Texas A&M University.

Linda Sarbo - Graduate Writing Assessment Coordinator at California State University, Long Beach.

Eve Shelnutt - Lecturer at Western Michigan University, the University of Pittsburgh, Ohio University and the College of the Holy Cross.

Evie Yoder Miller - Lecturer in Creative Writing and Composition at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Mas'ud Zavarzadeh - Lecturer in Critical Theory at Syracuse University.

(iv) Students

Mike McClanahan - MFA graduate from the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Michelle Cross - Doctoral student in English Literature at the State University of New York, Buffalo.

(b) The United Kingdom

(i) Professors and/or Directors

Terry Eagleton - Professor of English at the University of Oxford.

Steven Earnshaw - Professor in the Humanities Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University.

Robert Graham - Programme Leader of the BA (Hons) Creative Writing Course at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Michael Green - Professor in English Literature and Creative Writing at Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Philip Gross - Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Glamorgan.

Frank Kermode - Honorary Fellow, King's College, Cambridge.

David Lodge - Honorary Professor of Modern English Literature at the University of Birmingham.

Willy Maley - Professor of Renaissance Studies at the University of Glasgow.

Steve May - Professor of Radio Drama and Dean of the School of Humanities at Bath Spa University.

Nigel McLoughlin - Professor of Creativity & Poetics at the University of Gloucestershire.

Jane Rogers - Professor of Writing at Sheffield Hallam University.

Norman Schwenk - Convenor of Creative Writing at Cardiff University.

Robert Sheppard - Professor of Poetry and Poetics at Edge Hill University, Ormskirk Lancashire.

Raymond Williams - Welsh academic, novelist and critic.

(ii) Associate Professors

Heather Beck - Lecturer in Creative Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Dominique Hecq - Associate Professor in Writing at the Swinburne University of Technology's Faculty of Higher Education, Lilydale.

Moira Monteith - Principal Lecturer in Education at Sheffield Hallam University.

Matt Morrison - Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing in the department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies at the University of Westminster.

Michelene Wandor - Lecturer in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Lancaster University.

Mimi Thebo - Senior Lecturer in Creative Studies at Bath Spa University.

(iii) Students

Mike Harris - Lecturer in scriptwriting at Sheffield Hallam University.

Tim Jarvis - PhD in Creative Writing from Glasgow University.

(c) Australia

(i) Professors and/or Directors

Kevin Brophy - Professor and Head of Creative Writing in the Faculty of Arts, School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.

J.M. Coetzee - Honorary Research Fellow at the English Department of the University of Adelaide.

Jeri Kroll - Dean of Graduate Research, English and Creative Writing at Flinders University, South Australia.

Robert Miles - Professor & Chair of the Department of English at the University of Victoria.

Jen Webb - Professor, Creative Practice Faculty of Arts & Design at the University of Canberra.

Claire Woods - Professor of Communication and Writing in the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages, at the University of South Australia.

(ii) Associate Professors

Donna Lee Brien - Associate Professor of Creative Industries and Head of the School of Arts and Creative Enterprise at Central Queensland University.

Scott Brook - Assistant Professor, Writing Faculty of Arts & Design at the University of Canberra.

Nigel Krauth - Associate Professor of Creative Writing at Griffith University, Brisbane.

(iii) Lecturers

Paul Dawson - Senior Lecturer, School of the Arts and Media, University of New South Wales.

Marcelle Freiman - Senior Lecturer in English at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Enza Gandolfo - Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at Victoria University.

Chris Morgan - Lecturer and Curriculum Developer with the Teaching & Learning Centre at Southern Cross University, Queensland.

Camilla Nelson - Lecturer in Writing at the University of Notre Dame, Australia.

Christine Owen - Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at Murdoch University, Perth Australia.

Indigo Perry - Lecturer in Professional and Creative Writing in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University, Melbourne.

(iv) Students

Sue North - Research Fellow at University of Melbourne.

Jeff Sparrow - PhD in Creative Media at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and a Postdoctoral Fellow at Victoria University.

Miriam Sved - PhD candidate in the School of Creative Arts at the University of Melbourne.

(d) Canada

Priscila Uppal - Professor of English at York University, Toronto.

Pavlina Radia - Associate Professor, English, Nipissing University, Ontario Canada.

Thom Vernon - Creative Writing Instructor in the School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto.

2. The Publications

(a) Books

Eight single author books, which focus exclusively on the teaching of creative writing and have been published between 1983 and 2012, were consulted.

Gardner, J. *On Becoming a Novelist*, 1983.

Bishop, W. *Released into Language: Options for Teaching Creative Writing*, 1990.

Stegner, W. *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*, 1997.

Haake, K. *What Our Speech Disrupts: Feminism and Creative Writing Studies*, Urbana, Illinois: 2000.

Dawson, P. *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, 2005.

Mayers, T. *(Re)Writing Craft: Composition, Creative Writing, and the Future of English Studies*, 2005.
Vanderslice, S. *Rethinking Creative Writing*, 2010.
Wandor, M. *The Author is not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else*, 2012.

A number of additional books that provide alternative perspectives were also consulted. These texts deal with the concept of creativity; literary and writing theory; writing programmes; educational and academic institutional developments; the short story; art in the university; avant-gardism; anti-intellectualism and anarchistic theories of knowledge:

Coleridge, S.T. *Biographia Literaria*, 1817.
Nietzsche, F. *On the Future of our Educational Institutions*, 1872.
Hofstadter, R. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 1964.
May, R. *The Courage to Create*, 1975.
Barthes, R. *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1976.
Feyerabend, P. *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, 1978.
Williams, R. *Writing In Society*, 1983.
Cain, W.E. *The Crisis in Criticism: Theory, Literature, and Reform in English Studies*, 1984.
Boden, M. *The Creative Mind: Myths & Mechanisms*, 1990.
Aldridge, J.W. *Talent and Technicians: Literary Chic and the New Assembly-Line Fiction*, 1992.
Levy, A. *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story*, 1993.
Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, 1996.
Murphy, R. *Theorizing the Avant-Garde: Modernism, Expressionism, and the Problem of Postmodernity*, 1999.
Singerman, H. *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, 1999.
Day Late, Dollar Short: The Next Generation and the New Academy, Peter C. Herman, ed., 2000.
Eagleton, T. *After Theory*, 2003.
Sasser, C. *Magic Steps to Writing Success*, 2003.
McGurl, M. *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing*, 2009.

(b) Essays

Eighteen essay compilations published between 1983 and 2012 were consulted and the following essays were identified and examined:

Goswami, D. and Butler, M. eds. *The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning and Thinking*, 1983.

"Literacy and Freedom," J. Emig.

Rose, M. ed., *When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing-Process Problems*, 1985.

"Inventing the University," David Bartholomae.

The Paris Review Interviews, 1957, 1963, 1984 and 1988.

William Styron
Kurt Vonnegut
John Irving
Robert Stone
Ernest Hemingway
Marianne Moore

Monteith, M. and Miles, R. eds., *Teaching Creative Writing: Theory and Practice*, 1992.

"Creative Writing: A Historical Perspective," Moira Monteith.

Bishop, W. and Ostrom, H. eds., *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy*, 1994.

"Teaching Creative Writing if the Shoe Fits," Katherine Haake.

Neubauer, A. ed. *Conversation on Writing Fiction: Interviews with 13 Distinguished Teachers of Fiction Writing in America*, 1994.

T. Coraghessan Boyle
Jane Smiley

Starkey, D. ed. *Teaching Writing Creatively*, Portsmouth, 1998.

"What's the Use of Stories That Aren't True: A Composition Teacher Reads Creative Writing," Kate Ronald.
"Reading as a Writer, or What Happens When the Lights Go On: A Triadic Approach to Understanding the Development of Literary Values in Students," Patrick Bizzaro.

"The Situation of American Writing," *American Literary History*, 1999.

Frederick Busch
Jim Harrison
Irena Klepfisz
Hank Lazer
Michael Martone

Bailey, T. ed., *On Writing Short Stories*, 2000.

"Reading as a Writer: The Artist as Craftsman," Joyce Carol Oates.

Leahy, A. ed. *Power and Identity in the Creative Writing Classroom*: *The Authority Project,* 2005.

"Foreword," Anna Leahy.
"Reinventing Writing Classrooms: The Combination of Creating and Composing," Evie Yoder Miller.

"Afterword: The Reason It Is; the Rhyme It Isn't," Graeme Harper and Stephanie Vanderslice.
"Who Cares - and How: The Value and Cost of Nurturing," Anna Leahy.
"The Double Bind and Stumbling Blocks: A Case Study as an Argument for Authority-Conscious Pedagogy," Carl Vandermeulen.

Harper, G. ed., *Teaching Creative Writing*, 2006.

"Introduction," Graham Harper.
"Short Fiction," Katharine Coles.
"The Novel," Graham Harper.

Earnshaw, S. ed. *The Handbook of Creative Writing,* 2007.

"The Creative Writing MFA," Stephanie Vanderslice.

African Pens: New Writing from Southern Africa, 2007.

"Comment from Nobel Laureate," J.M. Coetzee.

Ritter, K. and Vanderslice, S. eds., *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy*, 2007.

"Introduction: Creative Writing and the Persistence of 'Lore,'" Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice.
"Figuring the Future Lore: and/in Creative Writing," Tim Mayers.
"Against Reading: Starting Out," Katharine Haake.
"Both Sides of the Desk: Experiencing Creative Writing Lore as a Student and as a Professor," Priscila Uppal.
"Creativity, Caring, and The Easy "A": Rethinking the Role of Self-Esteem in Creative Writing Pedagogy," Anna Leahy.
"Writing in Public Popular Pedagogies of Creative Writing," Michelle Cross.
"Putting Wings on the Invisible Voice, Authorship, and the Authentic Self," Patrick Bizzaro and Michael McClanahan.
"After Words: Lore and Discipline," Peter Vandenberg.

Harper, G. and Kroll, J. eds. *Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy*, 2008.

"Sleeping With Proust vs. 'Tinkering Under the Bonnet:' The Origins and Consequences of the American and British Approaches to Creative Writing in Higher Education," Stephanie Vanderslice.
"The Novel and the Academic Novel," Nigel Krauth.
"Creative Writing in the University," Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll.

Donnelly, D. ed. *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?* 2010.

"Workshop: An Ontological Study," Patrick Bizzaro.
"Re-envisioning the Workshop: Hybrid Classrooms, Hybrid Texts," Katharine Haake.
"Poetry, F(r)iction, Drama: The Complex Dynamics of Audience in the Writing Workshop," Tim Mayers.
"Wrestling Bartleby: Another Workshop Model for the Creative Writing," Leslie Kreiner Wilson.
"Afterword: Disciplinarity and the Future of Creative Writing Studies," Joseph Moxley.

"Workshopping and Fiction: Laboratory, Factory, or Finishing School?" Willy Maley.

Beck, H. ed. *Teaching Creative Writing*, 2012.

"Undergraduate Creative Writing Provision in the UK: Origins, Trends and Student Views," Steve May.
"Reflections on Reflection: Supplementary Discourses in Creative Writing Teaching in the UK," Robert Sheppard.
"On the Reform of Creative Writing," David G. Myers.
"Assessment as Empowerment: Grading Entry-Level Creative Writing Students," Mary Cantrell.
"A Short History of Creative Writing in America," DeWitt Henry.

Donnelly, D. and Harper, G. eds. *Key Issues in Creative Writing*, 2012.

"Reshaping Creative Writing: Power and Agency in the Academy," Dianne Donnelly.
"Holding On and Letting Go," Indigo Perry.

(c) Articles

The 28 articles, which contribute to this exploration, its analysis and findings, represent a broad range of multi-national authorities and subject matters:

College Composition and Communication

Bartholomae, D. "Writing With Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow," 1995.
Bishop, W. "Places to Stand: The Reflective Writer-Teacher-Writer in Composition," 1999.
Elbow, P. "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals," 1995.
Kalamaras, G. "Interrogating the boundaries of discourse in a creative writing class: Politicizing the parameters of the permissible," 1999.
Mayers, T. "(Re)writing craft," 1999.

College English

Hatlen, B. "Michel Foucault and the Discourse(s) of English," 1988.
McFarland, R. "An Apologia for Creative Writing," 1993.
Ritter, K. "Professional writers/writing professionals: Revamping teacher training in creative writing Ph.D. programs," 2001.
Garrett, G. "Review: The Craft So Long to Learn," 1993.

The Writer's Chronicle

Healey, S. "The Rise of Creative Writing & the New Value of Creativity," 2009.
Fenza, D.W. "The Words & the Bees: Advice for Graduating MFA Students in Writing," 2006.

New Writing: International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing

Gross, P. "Taken As Read?: Creative Writers and the Trouble with Reading," 2005.

Nichols, C. “Dear Students of Amy: Creative Writing, Writing Studies and the Department of Anguish - with Mumblings Here and There on the Post-Theory Lyric,” 2008.

Writing in Education

Munden, P. and Schwenk, N. “Associated Writing Programs Annual Conference,” 2000.
Graham, R. “The Iowa Writers’ Workshop,” 2001.
Harper, G. “Creative Writing Research Today,” 2007.
Harper, G. “Valuing Creative Writing,” 2009.

Writers in Education

Light, G. “Creative Writing in Higher Education,” 1995.

The English Subject Centre

“Creative Writing: A Good Practice Guide,” 2002.
Holland, S. “Appendix B,” 2002.
Wandor, M. “Appendix A: A Creative Writing Manifesto,” 2002.
Harper, G. “Reading to Write, Writing to be Read: Project Report,” 2003.
Blythe, H. and Sweet, C. “Creative Writing and an Overlooked Population**,**” 2005.

TEXT

Brophy, K. “Endings: Reproducing Originality,” 1998.
Dawson, P. “Writing Programmes in Australian Universities: Creative Art or Literary Research,” 1999.
Dawson, P. “Creative Writing in Australia: The Development of a Discipline,” 2001.
Freiman, M. “Crossing the Boundaries of the Discipline: A Post-colonial Approach to Teaching Creative Writing in the University,” 2001.
Harper, G. “A State of Grace? Creative Writing in UK Higher Education, 1993-2003,” 2003.
Freiman, M. “Dangerous Dreaming: Myths of Creativity,” 2003.
Freiman, M. “Writing/Reading: Renegotiating Criticism,” 2005.
Sved, M. “Fractured Writing: Creativity, the University and the Australian Culture Wars,” 2005.
Owen, C. “Academic Research and Creative Writing: Redrawing the Map and Finding One’s Allies (and avoiding the Corbett phenomena),” 2006.
Nelson, C. “Research through practice: a reply to Paul Dawson,” 2008.
Woods, C. “Literacies in transition: students and the journey in the discipline of writing,” 2008.
Jarvis, T. “‘Pleasure balks, bliss appears’ or ‘The apparatus shines like a blade’: Towards a theory of a progressive reading praxis in Creative Writing pedagogy,” 2011.
McLoughlin, N. and Brien, D.L. “Creativity: Cognitive, Social and Cultural Perspectives,” 2012.
Morgan, C. “Conceptualising Creativity in the Creative Arts: Seeking Common Ground,” 2012.

Kenyon Review

Hall, D. “Poetry and Ambition,” 1983.

The Hudson Review

Gioia, D. “Disappearing Ink: Poetry at the End of Print Culture,” 2003.

Lingua Franca

Altacruise, C. “Stepford Writers: Undercover Inside the MFA Creativity Boot Camp,” 1990.

The New Yorker

Menand, L. “Show or Tell: Should creative writing be taught?” 2009.

The Atlantic Monthly

Gioia, D. “Can poetry matter? Poetry has vanished as a cultural force in America. If poets venture outside their confined world, they can work to make it essential once more,” 1991.

Moody, R. “Writers and Mentors,” 2005.

Psychological Inquiry

Sternberg, R.J. and Lubart, T. “Investing in Creativity,” 1993.

Books in Canada

Glover, D. “Catcher in the Corn,” 1982.

Cultural Critique

Morton, D. and Zavarzadeh, M. “The Cultural Politics of the Fiction Workshop,” 1988-9.

Critical Inquiry

“The Subject and Power,” Michel Foucault, 1982.

High Ability Studies

Kaufman, J.C. and Gentile, C.A. “The Will, the Wit, the Judgment: the importance of an early start in productive and successful creative writing,” 2002.

Sewanee Review

Myers, D.G. “Strange Bedfellows,” 1989.

College Teaching

Shelnutt, E. “Isolationism in Writing Programs,” 1992.

Chronicle of Higher Education

Bartlett, T. “Undergraduates Heed the Writer’s Muse,” T. Bartlett, 2000.

Pedagogical Tools

LaFemina, G. “More than Just Mentorship and Modeling: Creative Writers and Pedagogy,” 2008.

LaFemina, G. “Demystifying and Demythifying the Workshop: On the Supposed ‘Lore’ of Creative Writing Pedagogy,” 2011.

Science

"Speaking of Science: Creativity: Can It Be Dissected? Can It Be Taught?" T.H. Maugh, 1974.

(d) Additional Literature

While not classified as books on the subject of creative writing, 3 important texts, which are of practical value were also evaluated. One originates from a British based university and the other two from two South African universities:

- *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education*, PhD Thesis, London: The Institute of Education, University of London, 1992 - Gregory Light's doctoral thesis containing the outcomes of an extensive research study into the conceptions of creative writing amongst students of higher education institutions;
- *Creative Writing at Tertiary Level*, NRF Grant-holders Report 2005 - Michael Green's grant-holder's report on an examination of the development and outcomes of the implementation of an undergraduate and postgraduate creative writing programme; and
- *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing,* 2005 - Pieter Oberholzer's Research Report containing the findings and conclusions of a qualitative research study into student conceptions and expectations of the teaching and learning of creative writing at university.

D. Chapter VII *Creative Writing Handbooks*

As a valuable adjunct to the exploration of *The Origin and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing* and the focused analysis of the form and characteristics of *Creative Writing in the Academy*, the in-depth examination and analysis of principles, processes and practices contained in a representative collection of 27 creative writing handbooks provides a third source for the development of pedagogic theory. The following criteria were used as a basis for the selection of the handbooks to be evaluated:

- A Range of Handbooks Over an Extended Period of Time
- Popularity and Longevity
- Craft Based
- Process Based
- Experienced Teachers and Authors and a Multi-National Perspective
- All-Encompassing to Functionally Specialised
- A Range of Target Audiences or Broad Reader Options

- Both Writing and Writer Orientations

The selected handbooks have been categorised according to their primary characteristics and features:

1. Student Writer and Writing Craft Focus with Extensive Support and Exercise Material

(a) American

Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft, Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French, 2007. (8 editions)
Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft, Janet Burroway, 2003. (3 editions)
The College Handbook of Creative Writing, Robert De Maria, 1991. (3 editions)
What If?: Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers, Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter, 1990. (3 editions)

(b) Australian

The Writing Book: A Workbook for Fiction Writers, Kate Grenville, 1990. (2 editions)

2. Student Writer and Writing Craft Focus with a Workshop Perspective

Fiction Writer's Workshop, Josip Novakovich, 1995. (2 editions)
The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts), Katie Wood Ray with Lester L. Laminack, 2001.
The Writing Workshop, Volume 1, Alan Ziegler, 1981. (Latest Printing 2007)
The Writing Workshop, Volume 2, Alan Ziegler, 1984. (Latest Printing 2000)
The Writing Workshop Note Book: Notes on Creating and Workshopping, Alan Ziegler, 2008. (Latest Printing 2008)

3. Student Writer and Writing Craft Focus with a Collection of Specialist Essays

(a) American

Gotham Writers' Workshop: Writing Fiction: The Practical Guide From New York's Acclaimed Creative Writing School, Alexander Steele, ed., 2003. (1 edition)

(b) British

The Creative Writing Handbook: Techniques for New Writers, John Singleton, and Mary Luckhurst, eds., 2000. (2 editions)

The Creative Writing Coursebook: Forty Writers Share Advice and Exercises for Poetry and Prose, Julia Bell and Paul Magrs, eds., 2001.

4. General Fiction Focus

The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers, John Gardner, 1991.
The Craft of Fiction, Percy Lubbock, 1968. (Latest Printing 2010)
Writing with a Purpose, James, M. McCrimmon, 1967. (8 editions)
Writing for Many Roles, Mimi Schwartz, 1985. (1 edition)

5. Writer and Writing Process Focus

(a) Prose Fiction

Becoming a Writer, Dorothea Brande, 1981. (1934) (14 Printings)

(b) General Prose

A Writer Teaches Writing, Donald M. Murray, 2004. (2 editions)
Writing Without Teachers, Peter Elbow, 1998. (2 editions)
A Community of Writers: A Workshop Course in Writing, Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, 1989. (3 editions)
Writing Alone and with Others, Pat Schneider, 2003. (1 edition)

6. Specialist Handbooks

(a) Collections of Short Stories and Essays

On Writing Short Stories, Tom Bailey, ed., 2000. (2 Printings)
The Art of the Short Story, Dana Gioia and R.S. Gwynn, eds., 2006.

(b) Storyline, Plot and Structure

Narrative Design: A Writer's Guide to Structure, Madison Smartt Bell, 1997.

(c) Revision

The Craft of Revision, Murray, Donald M, 2004. (5 editions)

7. Mass Market Author Perspectives

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft, Stephen, King, 2000. (2 editions)
Write Away: One Novelist's Approach to Fiction and the Writing Life, Elizabeth George, 2004. (Latest Printing 2005)

E. Chapter VIII *Student Writer Conceptions of Creative Writing*

The process of establishing a methodologically sound pedagogic foundation for the teaching and learning of creative writing in higher education institutions has, thus far, been based on an analysis of the literature, which represents the historical and prevailing discourse on the subject, and on an examination of the more tangible principles, methods and practices contained in selected published creative writing handbooks.

Given the extent of the demand of the students to be taught to write creatively, the research results of the conceptions, needs, expectations and objectives of the students underlying that demand should form the primary pedagogic objectives and principles of all creative writing modules and programmes. While it would, therefore, appear to be logical that there should be a relatively comprehensive range of empirically based and evaluated studies on student conceptions of creative writing, this seemingly crucial aspect of the teaching and learning of creative writing has and continues to receive little interest or attention.

Only four suitable research studies could be found. Two of these studies were undertaken in the UK, one in Australia and the most recent in South Africa. Three of the research projects are qualitative in format and the fourth is a quantitative study.

Gregory Light's research study forms the basis of his PhD thesis at the Institute of Education at the University of London and Pieter Oberholzer's research forms the basis of a Research Report towards his Masters degree in English Education at the University of the Witwatersrand.

The findings of the quantitative study undertaken by Steve Evans and Kate Deller-Evans are contained in an article published in the online journal, *TEXT*, and Steven May's research processes and outcomes are detailed in an essay he compiled for the *English Subject Centre*.

1. *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher* Education, Gregory Light, 1992.
2. "Teaching Creative Writing at Undergraduate Level: Why, How and Does it Work?" Steve May, 2003.
3. "True Lies? 1997 Survey of Creative Writing Students." - Steve Evans and Kate Deller-Evans, 1997.
4. *Student Conceptions of Creative* Writing, Pieter Oberholzer, 2005.

F. Chapter IX *The Student Writer*

The experiences and insights of a number of authoritative creative writing teachers and a number of experienced authors pertaining to the student as writer were evaluated. The texts and authorities, which form the basis of this analysis, include writing teachers such as Wallace Stegner, Nicolas Delbanco, John Gardner, Janet Burroway, Katharine Coles, Wendy Bishop, Joseph Moxley and Peter Elbow. The authors, most of whom have had creative writing teaching experience, include John Irving, R.H.W Dillard, E. B. White, Elie Wiesel and the poet, Philip Larkin.

Amato, J. and Fleisher, K. "Reforming Creative Writing Pedagogy: History as Knowledge, Knowledge as Activism." *Electronic Book Review* 12, 1989.

Bishop, W. *Released into Language: Options for Teaching Creative Writing,* 1990.

Brophy, K. qtd in Uppal, P. "Both Sides of the Desk: Experiencing Creative Writing Lore as a Student and as a Professor," in *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy,* 2007.

Burroway, J. "The American Experience," in *Teaching Creative Writing: Theory and Practice,* 1992.

Coles, K. "Short Fiction," in *Teaching Creative Writing,* 2006.

Cross, M. "Writing in Public Popular Pedagogies of Creative Writing," in *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy,* 2007.

Delbanco, N, in *Conversation on Writing Fiction: Interviews with 13 Distinguished Teachers of Fiction Writing in America,* 1994.

Dillard, R.H.W, in *Conversation on Writing Fiction: Interviews with 13 Distinguished Teachers of Fiction Writing in America,* 1994.

Elbow, P. "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals," *College Composition and Communication*, 1995.

Elbow qtd in Bartholomae, D. "Writing With Teachers: A Conversation with Peter Elbow," *College Composition and Communication*, 1995.

Epps, Jr, J. "Writing for Film and Television," in *Teaching Creative Writing,* 2006.

Gardner, J. (1983) *On Becoming a Novelist,* 1983.

Haake, K. "Teaching Creative Writing if the Shoe Fits," in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy,* 1994.

Haake, K. *What Our Speech Disrupts: Feminism and Creative Writing Studies,* 2000.

Haake, K. "Against Reading: Starting Out," in *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy,* 2007.

Harris, J. "Re-Writing the Subject: Psychoanalytic Approaches to Creative Writing and Composition Pedagogy," *College* English, 2001.

Hersey, J. qtd in Plimpton, G. ed. *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews,* 1988.

Kalamaras, G. "Interrogating the boundaries of discourse in a creative writing class: Politicizing the parameters of the permissible," *College Composition and Communication,* 1999.

Larkin, P. qtd in Plimpton, G, ed. *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Seventh* Series, 1986.

Leahy, A. “Creativity, Caring, and The Easy “A”: Rethinking the Role of Self-Esteem in Creative Writing Pedagogy,” in *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy,* 2007.

Light, G. “Avoiding the Issue: Student Perceptions of Creative Writing,” *Writers in Education*, 1995.

Miner, V. qtd in Moxley, J. “Preface,” in *Creative Writing in America,* 1989.

Moxley, J. “Preface,” in *Creative Writing in America,* 1989.

Perry, G. “Writing in the Dark: Exorcising the Exegesis,” *TEXT*, 1998.

Sarbo, L. and Moxley, J. “Creativity Research and Classroom Practice,” in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy,* 1994.

Stegner, W. *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*, 1997.

Uppal, P. “Both Sides of the Desk: Experiencing Creative Writing Lore as a Student and as a Professor,” in *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy,* 2007.

Vanderslice, S. “Workshopping,” in *Teaching Creative Writing,* 2006.

Weisel, A. qtd in Plimpton, G, ed. *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Eighth* Series, 1988.

White, E.B. qtd in Plimpton, G, ed. *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews, Eighth* Series, 1988.

Williams, R. *Writing In Society,* 1983.

Wood Ray, K., with Laminack, L.L. *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They’re All Hard Parts)*, 2001.

G. Chapter X. *Readers and Audience*

Having undertaken an empirical analysis of student conceptions, objectives and expectations of creative writing and having augmented the findings and conclusions of that analysis by reviewing the literature of a diverse range of authors and writing authorities, the exploration of creative writing shifts to include the readers as primary participants in the writing and reading process and an examination and analysis of the tripartite relationship between the reader, the text and the writer.

The range of authorities writing on the subject of the reader and audience can be segmented into the following specialist categories:

1. Creative Writing and Composition Teaching Theorists and Practitioners
2. Authors, Poets and Playwrights
3. Literary Critics and Theorists
4. Education Commentators
5. Psychologists

1. Creative Writing and Composition Teaching Theorists and Practitioners

Altacruise, C. “Stepford Writers: Undercover Inside the MFA Creativity Boot Camp,” in *Lingua Franca*, 1990.

Amato, J. and Fleisher, K. “Reforming Creative Writing Pedagogy: History as Knowledge, Knowledge as Activism,” in *Electronic Book Review* 12, 1989.

Bartholomae, D. “Inventing the University,” in *When a Writer Can't Write: Studies in Writer's Block and Other Composing-Process Problems*, 1985.

Bernays, A. and Painter, P. *What If?: Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers*, 1990.

Bishop, W. *Released into Language: Options for Teaching Creative Writing*, 1990.

Bizzaro, P. “Reading as a Writer, or What Happens When the Lights Go On: A Triadic Approach to Understanding the Development of Literary Values in Students,” in *Teaching Writing Creatively*, 1998.

Brown, R. *Conversation on Writing Fiction: Interviews with 13 Distinguished Teachers of Fiction Writing in America*, 1994.

Coles, K. “Short Fiction,” in *Teaching Creative Writing*. 2006.

Conroy, F. “The Writer’s Workshop,” in *On Writing Short Stories*, 2000.

Dawson, P. *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, 2005.

Dybek, S. “The Situation of American Writing 1999,” in *American Literary History*, 1999.

Elbow, P. “Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience,” in *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*, 1994.

Elbow, P. “Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals,” *College Composition and Communication*, 1995.

Elbow, P. and Clarke, J. *“Desert Island Discourse: The Benefits of Ignoring Audience*,” in *The Journal Book*, 1987.

Gardner, J. *On Becoming a Novelist*, 1983.

Freiman, M. “Writing/Reading: Renegotiating Criticism,” in *TEXT*, April 2005.

Garber, E. “Reflections on the Teaching of Creative Writing: A Correspondence,” in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy*, 1994.

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Gioia, D. “Can Poetry Matter?” *The Atlantic*, 1991.

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Federman, R. “Surfiction – Four Propositions in the Form of a Manifesto,” in *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature*, 1982.

Hayman, D. “Some Writers in the Wake of the *Wake,*” in *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature*, 1982.

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Pattee, F.L. *The Development of the American Short Story*, 1975.

Singerman, H. *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, 1999.

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Jung, C.G. *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, 1972.

Boden, M. *The Creative Mind: Myths & Mechanisms*, 1990.

H. Chapter XI *An Exploration of Creativity*

The examination and analysis of the discourse on the teaching of creative writing in higher education institutions contained in the chapters, *The Origins and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing* and *Creative Writing in the Academy*, demonstrate how the concept of creativity tends to be relegated in the discourse surrounding the pedagogy of creative writing and how its presence as a descriptor in the phrase 'creative writing' has largely been ignored by academic creative writing teaching authorities and institutions.

Literature on the subject of creativity abounds and it was, therefore, imperative to identify and consult only those texts, which could provide a practical and specific overview and insight into creativity, as it applies to creative writing as an art form and a field of study in academic institutions.

In their article, "Surprising the Writer: Discovering Details Through Research and Reading," in *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (1999) Lars Ryhammar and Catarina Brolin provide a very useful précis of the history of creativity research in which they identify creativity research as having four points of departure, namely "(i) the person who creates; (ii) the creative process; (iii) influential factors in the environment; (iv) the final product" (1999).

These four points of departure represent the framework within which the textual authorities for this chapter were selected. It is important to note that creativity, while seemingly appropriated by the field of psychology for many years, has now become a popular field and is now studied by a number of disciplines, including cognitive science, education, philosophy, sociology, linguistics, business studies and economics. The breadth of authorities on the subject of creativity is reflected in this literature review.

1. Authors by Field of Study

In addition to the many psychologists studying the subject, this exploration of creativity also includes a number of philosophers, a neurologist, a chemist, a polymath, a social economist, a historian, a number of general education specialists, a handful of writing teachers, who generally reject the importance of creativity in writing-teaching, and a handful of fiction and

non fiction authors, who explain their own experiences of creativity during their writing processes.

2. Books – General Evaluation from a Psychological Perspective

There are a number of authorities with a specific psychological grounding, whose books consist of an examination and evaluation of creativity, as expounded by a range of specialists over an extended period of time. These authors not only explain the history of creativity research, but identify the phenomenon in terms of the four points of departure outlined by Ryhammar and Brolin. These authorities evaluate research studies and their findings and provide specific creative principles, trends and guidelines. These specialists include Jane Piirto, Margaret Boden, Daniel Nettle, George Wallas and Rollo May.

Jane Piirto is unique amongst this list of authorities in that she is a qualified psychologist, as well as an author and a teacher of creativity. Her first book on the subject, *My Teeming Brain*, (2002) focuses on creativity in writing and it is followed by *Understanding Creativity*, (2004) which addresses the broader principles of creativity. Both books analyse and evaluate the works of all the major participants in the study, research and examination of the subject. These experts include DK Simonton, JP Guilford, B. Rhiselin, RJ Sternberg, Teresa Amabile, James Hillman, Albert Rothenberg and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Using her analysis of the results of the studies of these experts as a foundation, Piirto details the specific characteristics and attributes of creative individuals by including her own findings from her study of 7400 American writers, who are listed in the *Directory of American Poets and Fiction Writers*. Piirto's two books provide possibly the most extensive overview of creativity available and relevant to students of art and writing.

In *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms* (1990) the psychologist Margaret Boden, examines the phenomenon of creativity from the diverse perspectives of mathematicians, Henri Poincare´ (*The Foundations of Science*, Paris, 1908) Jacques Hadamard (*The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field*, 1954), of literary scholar John Livingston Lowes, poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, novelists, Charles Dickens and Frederick Forsyth and playwright and poet William Shakespeare.

In his book, *Strong Imagination: Madness, Creativity, and Human Nature* (2002), psychologist, Daniel Nettle, examines the "conundrum of creative achievement: is it about fiery leaps of inspiration, or a banal Calvinistic rationing of perspiration? Or both?" (141) Nettle combines an examination of the creativity and imaginative outcomes of the likes of William Shakespeare and Herman Melville with the outcomes of the biographical and autobiographical studies of the psychologists, Kay Redfield Jamison (*Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*, 1994), Arnold Ludwig (*The Price of Greatness: Resolving the Creativity and Madness Controversy*, 1995) and the findings of Nancy Andreasen (*The Creating Brain: The Neuroscience of Genius*, 2005) from her study of members of the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

In a similar manner, though much earlier, psychologist, George Wallas (*Art of Thought* (1925), examines the dichotomy of creativity — "habit keeping and that of habit-breaking … regularity and adventure" (15) and the creative process itself — "preparation ... incubation ... illumination ... verification ... procrastination" (80-88) — with reference to the works of John Middleton Murry (*Problem of Style*, 1922), William Shakespeare, Shelley, Mark Twain and William James (*Principles of Psychology Vol. I*, "Habit" (p. 14) Cosimo Inc. New York, 2007).

Psychologist, Rollo May, in his book, *The Courage to Create*, (1975) focuses specifically on the creativity displayed by writers such as Eugene O'Neill, William Shakespeare, James Joyce and artists like Van Gogh and Gauguin to illustrate how "creativity ... is the encounter of the intensively conscious human being with his or her world" (54). In his evaluations May incorporates the work of Henri Poincare´, Blok and Kierkegaard.

In her book, *The Midnight Disease*, (2004) neurologist, Alice Flaherty, provides an examination of the concept of creativity, which incorporates the perspectives and experiences of writers such as Roland Barthes (*Writing Degree Zero*), Balzac, Anthony Burgess, Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates, Proust, Trollope, TS Eliot and James Joyce. Flaherty also examines the works of Dean Simonton, Sigmund Freud, Ernst Kris, William James and Colin Martindale (*The Clockwork Muse: The Predictability of Artistic Change*, 1990).

3. Articles – Specific Evaluations from a Psychological Perspective

There are innumerable specialist articles appearing in a diverse range of psychology and scientific journals. The following were included in this exploration, because of their relevance to the subject of creative writing teaching.

Kaufman, J.C., and Gentile, C.A. "The Will, the Wit, the Judgment: The Importance of an Early Start in Production and Successful Creative Writing," *High Ability Studies*, 2002.

Maugh, T.H. "Speaking of Science: Creativity: Can it Be Dissected? Can it Be Taught?" *Science, New Series*, 1974.

Pear, J.J. "Introduction to and Discussion of Self-Control Techniques of Famous Novelists, by Irving Wallace," *The Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis*, Fall 1997.

Ryhammar, L. and Brolin**,** C. "Surprising the writer: Discovering details through research and reading," *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 1999.

Sternberg, R.J., and Lubart, T.I. "Investing in Creativity," *Psychological Inquiry*, 1993.

4. Essays – General Perspectives of Creativity

Only one specific book of essays has been used in this evaluation, due to its overall value and specificity to the subject of the teaching of creative writing. Most of its essays are by philosophers specialising in the study of creativity, but the views of one author and a polymath are also valuable inclusions. The book, *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art*, is edited by D. Dutton and M. Krausz (1981):

Briskman, L. "Creative Product and Creative Process in Science and Art."

Hausman, C.R. "Criteria of Creativity."

Jarvie, I.C. "The Rationality of Creativity."

Koestler, A. "The Three Domains of Creativity."

Krausz, M. "Creating and Becoming."

Polanyi, M. "The Creative Imagination."

5. Books – Fringe Perspectives of Creativity

There are also books, which sit on the edge of debates surrounding the nature and characteristics of creativity. While restricted in their relevance to the subject of the teaching

of creative writing, the following three books do contribute to investigations of creativity, as it applies to creative writing teaching.

Feyerabend, P. *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* 1978.

Hofstadter, R. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 1964.

Florida, R. *The Rise of the Creative Class*, 2002.

6. Education Specialists, Teachers and Authors

The following are the authorities, whose views, both positive and negative, have been incorporated in this exploration. The experiences of the authors included serve to substantiate and support a number of the characteristics, principles and processes identified by more scientific means.

Boice, R. "The Neglected Third Factor in Writing: Productivity," *College Composition and Communication*, 1985.

Coleridge, S.T. *Biographia Literaria*, 1817.

Dawson, P. "Creative Writing in Australia: The Development of a Discipline," *TEXT*, 2001.

Diakidoy, I.A.N. and Kanari, E. "Student Teachers' Beliefs About Creativity," *British Educational Research The Journal*, 1999.

Elbow, P. "Being a Writer vs. Being an Academic: A Conflict in Goals," *College Composition and Communication*, 1995.

Hawthorne, N. "The Artist of the Beautiful," in *Hawthorne's Short Stories,* 1946.

Kantor, K. "Evaluating Creative Writing: A Different Ball Game," *The English Journal*, 1975.

Light, G. *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education*, 1992.

Lodge, D. "Novel, Screenplay: Three Ways of Telling a Story," in *The Practice of Writing*, 1996.

Mauriac, F. *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews*, 1957.

Sarbo, L. and Moxley, J. "Creativity Research and Classroom Practice, in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy*, 1994.

Stegner, W. *On the Teaching of Creative Writing*, 1997.

Uppal, P. "Both Sides of the Desk: Experiencing Creative Writing Lore as a Student and as a Professor," in *Can It Really be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy*, 2007.

7. Books on Creativity Findings From Specific Research Studies

There are two specific books, which have had a significant bearing on the outcomes of this exploration into creativity as a fundamental aspect of creative writing pedagogy. The books are based on studies that are very different in terms of their research foundations and methodologies, but the joint outcomes of the two together in conjunction with all the other literature listed here, provide a firm basis for the adoption of specific principles of creativity in the design of creative writing learning and teaching initiatives.

Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi's book, *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, (1996) relates the outcomes of the in-depth analysis of his videotaped interviews with "ninety one exceptional individuals" (12). These 91 individuals were drawn from all walks of life and were qualified as exceptional by having made a "difference to a major domain of culture, one of the sciences, the arts, business, government, or human well-being in general" (12).

While the subjectivity and resultant limitations of the selection process are recognised, and the descriptions of the five exceptional 'writing' respondents certainly do not support their work and achievements as being extraordinarily exceptional, Csikzentmihalyi's creativity findings are of value when compared to and supported by the other creativity authorities.

Csikzentmihalyi's primary focus areas include the creative process (21), the creative personality (52), the flow of creativity (107) and creative ageing (211). He spends some time focusing on a number of specific fields of creativity, including "the domain of the word" (237) in which he explores the detailed results of his interviews with five writers — three poets and two authors.

The book, which proved the most valuable and relevant to the current study, is Teresa Amabile's *The Social Psychology of Creativity* (1983). While many earlier studies undertaken by eminent psychologists are focused on the creativity inherent in the personalities of creative individuals, Amabile's study focuses more broadly and inclusively on the individual, the creative product, social influences and the environment in which the creative act takes place. The results of the study are also pertinent and valuable, because

they all take place within higher education environments, include students as respondents and allow students and university participants to assess and judge the quality of the creative products of the research processes. Amabile develops sophisticated creativity evaluation processes and criteria within her research framework and does not rely on, nor unconditionally accept, externally allocated notions of creative quality. She establishes "Consensual Techniques for Creativity Assessment" (37), "Consensual Assessment of Artistic Creativity" (40) and a "Consensual Assessment of Verbal Creativity" (46), which is of particular value to the current exploration.

In defining creativity, one of Amabile's more valuable findings is that

> in the studies on artistic creativity, there is no clear superiority of artists over non-artists in average inter judge correlations ... it does not appear that non-artists were subjectively defining creativity in very different ways ... creativity may be something that is difficult for people to describe, but it is still relatively easy for them to identify with a good degree of reliability (57-8).

As an indication of the value offered by Amabile's work, the following is a list of the aspects of creativity examined by her. She provides a valuable focus on education type environments and social settings:

- The Components of Creative Performance
- Domain-Relevant Skills
- The Intrinsic Motivation Hypothesis of Creativity
- Impact of Evaluation Expectation
- Motivational Orientation
- A Replication with Artistic Creativity
- Effects of Reward and Task Constraint
- Negative Effects of Reward on Creativity
- Positive Effects of Reward on Creativity
- Choice in Aspects of Task Engagement
- Effects on Algorithmic and Heuristic Tasks
- Overall Classroom Climate
- Educational Environments
- Other Social and Environmental Influences
- Teacher Characteristics and Behaviour
- Peers
- College Environments
- Family Influences
- Societal, Political, and Cultural Influences
- Play and Fantasy
- Implications for Enhancing Creativity

With the majority of creativity research studies focusing on the individual's characteristics as a creative personality, Amabile's findings add value by not discounting the creative product, nor the role social influences play on creative processes and results. Her analysis of the study findings includes a "Review of Social Influences on Creativity" (1983: 194), which includes, "Choice … (194) Reward ... Motivational Orientation … (195) Modelling ... Stimulation ... Play and Fantasy ... Interpersonal Detachment … (195) Constrained Choice ... Reward ... Evaluation ... Peer Pressure ... Surveillance" (196).

Amabile's findings also touch on specific pedagogic elements and their effects on creativity: "Skills to Teach ... Teaching Methods ... Teacher Behaviors ... Peer Influences ... Dangers of Education … (197) Control …" (198).

I. Chapter XII *Creative Writing Workshops Research Results*

The Workshop Research component of this thesis balances the findings and conclusions drawn from the literature discourse based theory with the findings and conclusions from the student workshop programme using the empirical data emanating from the practical experiences, writing outcomes and written feedback and responses of 35 undergraduate student writers, who participated in the research programme over a period of four years.

1. Research Methodology

The research methodology selected as the most appropriate for this research programme is a qualitative research form known as Grounded Theory Methodology, which uses inductive analyses and draws categories, themes and patterns from the data from which the researcher develops theories grounded in that data. The following qualitative research authorities provided the foundation for the establishment and practical implementation of the Grounded Theory Methodology during and on the completion of the workshop research programme:

Morse, J. "Designing Standard Qualitative Research," *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, eds. N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 1998.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. "Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview," *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, eds. N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 1998, p. 159.

Janesick, V. "The Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodology and Mining," in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, eds. N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 1998, p. 35.

2. Workshop Programme - Preparation and Design

The outline, form, content, environmental factors, processes, techniques and principles taken into account and used in the planning and implementation of the workshop programme were extrapolated from the findings and conclusions drawn from the research into the literature on the subject of creative writing and its teaching. The 'theories' developed from the analysis of the research into *Creative Writing Handbooks*, *Creativity* and the *Readers and Audience*, coupled with the principles developed from the findings and conclusions of the research into *Students' Conceptions of Creative Writing*, also provided a valuable database for the design and implementation of the form and content of the workshop programme.

3. The Development of Writing Exercises

Many of the writing exercises given to students during the workshop programme were based on exercises contained in the 27 Creative Writing Handbooks, which were examined as part of this thesis, but certain creative writing exercises were spontaneously developed as a result of chance readings and random events, which took place prior to the commencement of the workshop programme and during the workshop activities themselves:

(a) *Sins, Virtues and* Graces - Characterisation and Storyline

The *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise emerged after a reading of Christopher Ricks' book, *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (2005), and the exercise was 'corroborated' by the discovery of S.D. Williams' book, *The Moral Premise: Harnessing Virtue and Vice for Box Office Success* (2005).

(b) *Sentences with Soul* - Writing Routine

The *Sentences with Soul* writing process and routine evolved from the need for students to establish a writing routine, which focuses on writing one sentence every day based on William Gass's notion of a Sentence with a Soul from his essay, "The Soul Inside the Sentence," in *Habitations of the Word* (1985: 113-140).

(c) Participant/Spectator - An Exercise in Perspectives

This task is based on an exercise developed by Dr Pamela Nichols from the references to the participant and spectator concept contained in Judith and Geoffrey Summerfield's

book, *Texts and Contexts: Our Contribution to the Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition* (1998).

(d) Plot and Storyline

Workshop activities relating to effective storyline and plot development were supported with reference to Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) and Christopher Vogler's modern adaptation of Campbell's books in *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (1998).

4. Examples of Writing Techniques

In teaching and exposing student writers to the common and crucial elements of fiction writing, it is important to make liberal use of examples, in the form of handouts, of how established writers have approached the various aspects of fiction writing, in order to analyse and explain what makes the particular author's technique successful:

(a) Subject Matter Range and Contrasts

"The Baby," Donald Barthelme, in *Forty Stories*, (1989: 244).

"The Shawl," Cynthia Ozick, in *On Writing Short Stories*, (2000: 207).

"Cocker at the Theatre," Ian McEwan, in *First Love, Last Rites*, (1975: 73).

"The Artist of the Beautiful," Nathaniel Hawthorne, in *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, (1946: 277).

(b) Examples of Opening Paragraphs

English Passengers, Matthew Kneale, (2000: 1).

Perfume: The Story of a Murderer, Patrick Suskind (1987: 3).

Welcome to Our Hillbrow, Phaswane Mpe, (2001: 1).

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce (1976: 7).

Enduring Love, Ian McEwan, (1998: 1)

To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf, (1975: 237).

London Fields, Martin Amis, (1991: 1).

Midnight's Children, Salman Rushdie, (1997: 9).

(c) Examples of Settings

A Passage to India, E.M. Forster, (1988: 138).

White Noise, Don De Lillo, (1999: 167-8).

Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert, (1950: 44-5).

Ways of Dying, Zakes Mda, (1995: 42).

Bleak House, Charles Dickens, (1996:13-14).

(d) Examples of Characterisation

"Mary" in *Watt*, Samuel Beckett (1998: 52-3).
"Mr Carker" in *Dombey and Son*, Charles Dickens (1985: 372-3).
"Leopold Bloom" in *Ulysses*, James Joyce (2000: 65).
"Sufiya Zinobia Hyder" in *Shame*, Salman Rushdie (1995: 122).
"Nicola Six" in *London Fields*, Martin Amis (1999: 16-17).

(e) Examples of the Effects of the Sounds of Words - Diction and Lyricism

"My Tongue Softens on The Other Name," Gabeba Baderoon.
"A Modern Man," George Carlin, *Life is Worth Losing*.
Lolita, Vladimir Nabokov, (2000: 9).

5. Short Story Booklets - Reading and Rating Exercises

In order to introduce students to the domain of the genre of the short story, as the primary genre they would be focusing on, it was necessary to expose student writers to a range of short stories representing the genre over a broad period of time and eras and from a range of different geographic locations, authors and publishing media. The authors and their texts were specifically selected to achieve this objective. The texts were reproduced and provided to the students in booklet form avoiding the need for them to source and acquire the texts themselves, thereby ensuring an optimum student reading response and participation. All texts were provided as anonymous pieces with the authors' names removed to ensure student objectivity and an avoidance of the possible influence of fame and celebrity. The students were required to rate each story between 1 and 10 with 10 being the best score possible. The following are the stories contained in the published booklets and the categories into which they were divided:

(a) Introductory Short Stories - Mixture of Traditional, Contemporary, Online and Unpublished

"Lamb to the Slaughter," Roald Dahl, (1995).
"The Duplicity of Hargraves," O. Henry, (1911).
"The Scarlatti Tilt," Richard Brautigan.
"The Ultimate Safari," Nadine Gordimer, (2004: 269-282).
"Death of a Son," Njabulo S. Ndebele, (2004: 201-213).
"The Rejection," Woody Allen, (2004: 263-267).
"Where Was I?" Pauline Olivia Wainstein, (2004: Unpublished)
"My Story," Aryeh Lev Stollman, (1999: 14).
"My Bear," Roger Rosenblatt, (2003).

"The Well," John Kinsella, (2002).

"Spider Salad," "Promise" and "Goggles," Liesl Jobson, (2005).

"Forgotten Son," Lisa Watkins-Nkosi, (2004: Unpublished)

"Desolation," Gail Jones, (2003).

(b) Novelists, Poets and O. Henry Prize winners

"Rocking-Horse Winner," D.H. Lawrence.

"The Open Window," Saki (H. H. Munro).

"Man From the South," Roald Dahl.

"Straight Fiction," Martin Amis (1999: 194).

"A Russian Beauty," Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 385).

"The Legacy," Virginia Woolf (1987: 379).

"The Use of Force," William Carlos Williams.

"Shooting an Elephant," George Orwell.

"Better Be Ready 'Bout Half Past Eight," Alison Baker (1993: 93). (First Prize O' Henry Awards 1994)

"The Storyteller," Saki (H. H. Munro).

"The Girls in Their Summer Dresses," Irwin Shaw.

"The Princess and the Puma," O. Henry.

"The Passenger," Vladimir Nabokov, (1995: 183).

"The Janitor on Mars," Martin Amis, (1999: 154).

"Nurse Lugton's Curtain," Virginia Woolf (1987: 217).

"The Dragon," Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 125).

"City Life," Mary Gordon (1996). (First Prize O' Henry Awards 1997)

"A Nurse's Story," Peter Baida (1999). (First Prize O' Henry Awards 1999)

"The Black Cat," Edgar Allan Poe.

"The Fifteen-Dollar Eagle," Sylvia Plath (1977: 65).

"Big Mama's Funeral," Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1968: 153).

(c) An American On-Line Magazine and Various American Literary Publications

"Devshirmeh," Miroslav Penkov, (2005: 479-492). (*The Southern Review*)

"The Second Sense," Nadine Gordimer, (2007: 268-276). (*The Virginia Quarterly Review*)

"Driver's Education," Paula Whyman, (2005: 241-254). (*The Hudson Review*)

"Revival," Ann Pancake, (2000: 711-720). (*The Virginia Quarterly Review*)

"Aqua Boulevard," Maile Meloy, (2001:20-28). (*The Paris Review*)

"Someone Else Besides You," Viet Thanh Nguyen, (*Narrative Magazine*)

"Cleanness," James Lasdun, (2000: 85-92). (*Ploughshares*)

"Great Men and Great Deeds," Janet Peery, (2005). (*The Kenyon Review*)

"Fourteen Feet of Water in My House," Allan Gurganus, (2006: 74). (*Harper's Magazine*)

"Towards a Language of Desire**,"** Carolyn Megan, (2006: 9). (*Massachusetts Review*)

"The Milk of Human Kindness," Saral Waldorf, (2007: 47-67). (*The Hudson Review*)

"Folie a Deux," William Trevor, (2006). (*The New Yorker*)

"Seminar," J. Wortman, (2005: 48). (*Massachusetts Review)*

"The Ghost Light," A.L. Presser, (2006: 213). (*Triquarterly*)

"Sans Farine," J. Shepard, (2006: 71). (*Harper's Magazine*)

(d) American On-Line Magazine Competition and African Writing Competition Winners

"Jungfrau," Mary Watson, (2004: 9-22). 1st Prize 2006 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Poison," Henrietta Rose-Innes, (2007: 1-10). 1st Prize 2007 HSBC/SA PEN/Literary Awards.

"At the Sound of the Last Post," Petina Gappah, (2007: 1-22). 2nd Prize 2007 HSBC/SA PEN/Literary Awards.

"The Museum," Lela Aboulela, (1999: 70-90). 1st Prize 2000 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Discovering Home," Binyavanga Wainaina, (2003: 9-26). 1st Prize 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Conversations You Have at Twenty," Maud Newton, 2nd Place *Narrative Magazine*, Love Story Competition.

"Monday Morning," Segun Afolabi, (2006: 9-18). 1st Prize 2005 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Interview with a Moron," Elizabeth Stuckey-French. 1st Place *Narrative Magazine* Love Story Competition.

"Blackout," Janet Burroway. 3rd Place *Narrative Magazine*, Love Story Competition

"Seventh Street Alchemy," by Brian Chikwava, (2003: 17-30). 1st Prize 2004 Caine Prize for African Writing.

6. The Experiences of Writers

The reading and discussion of the reflections of established authors about their writing processes and experiences as practising writers became an important feature of the workshop processes and routines. Prior to and during the workshop implementation phase 466 quotations were collected representing 139 authors and falling into the following 31 categories:

The Writer in Society	Writing Practice – Discipline
Writers and Their Livelihoods	Writing Practice – Methods
Writer Individualism	Writing Process
Writer Persistence	Writing Process – Thinking Time
Writer Routines	Writing Process – Voice
Writer Superstitions	Writing Process – Techniques
Writing Sacrifices	Writing Process – Beginning
Writing Realities	Writing Process – Characters
Writing as Art Form	Writing Process – Drafts
Writing Objectives	Writing Process – Revising
Writing Freedom	Writing Process – Audience
Writing Difficulty	Authorial Advice
Writing Courage	Criticism
Writing Quality	Publishing
A Writing Continuum	Creative Writing Teaching and Learning
Writing and Fame	

7. Research and Submission Guidelines - Literary Magazines and Journals

The student writers were tasked with the preparation and formatting of short stories for presentation to writing competitions and the development of a database of literary magazines and journals, including their submission guidelines, to whom the students could send their stories for publication. The list of magazines and journals include the following:

The New Yorker	*Playboy*
The Atlantic Monthly	*Tomorrow*
Harper's Magazine	*The Transatlantic Review*
The Saturday Evening Post	*Mademoiselle*
Harper's Bazaar	*The Yale Review*
Story	*Epoch*
Esquire	*Scribner's Magazine*
The Kenyon Review	*Pictorial Review*
The Virginia Quarterly Review	*The Paris Review*
Redbook	*Antaeus*
The Sewanee Review	*The American Mercury*
Ploughshares	*Century Magazine*
The Hudson Review	*The Gettysburg Review*
Southwest Review	*The Missouri Review*
Collier's Magazine	*Boston Review*
The Southern Review	*Indiana Review*
The Antioch Review	*Iowa Review*
The Massachusetts Review	*Prairie Schooner*
Partisan Review	*Antioch Review*
TriQuarterly	*Chicago Review*
Cosmopolitan	*Harvard Review*
Shenandoah	*Michigan Quarterly Review*
The Georgia Review	*New England Review*
McCall's	*Absinthe Literary Review*
The North American Review	*African American Review*
Exquisite Corpse	*The Ontario Review*
Fiction	

J. Chapter XIII *The Honours and Masters Degree Programmes*

Having determined that the novella would be the ideal genre as the fictional text to be created by the students as their creative product for reading, assessment and grading by a group of individual and anonymous readers, it was important to read and select a suitable number of novella, which represented a range of authors, eras and geographic locations, to

be read by the students as effective examples of what has and can be achieved with the novella as fictional text. The following are the 25 selected novellas:

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, 2004.
Daisy Miller and Other Stories, Henry James, 1994.
Pafko at the Wall, Don DeLillo, 1997.
Anthem, Ayn Rand, 1946.
The Loved One, Evelyn Waugh, 1977.
Notes From Underground, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, 2006
Tumble Home: A Novella and Short Stories, Amy Hempel, 1998.
The Lesson of the Master, Henry James, 2008.
Welcome to Our Hillbrow, Phaswane Mpe, 2001.
Rape: A Love Story, Joyce Carol Oates, 2003.
Brokeback Mountain, E. Annie Proulx, 2005.
The Comfort of Strangers, Ian McEwan, 2006.
Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad, 1973.
Animal Farm, George Orwell, 1989.
The Metamorphosis and Other Stories, Franz Kafka, 1996.
The Final Solution: Story of Detection, Michael Chabon, 1999.
Breakfast at Tiffany's, Truman Capote, 1958.
The Lifted Veil, George Eliot, 1995.
The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird, D.H. Lawrence, 2006.
Ward Number Six and Other Stories, Anton Chekhov, 1998.
Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, 1983.
Where Three Roads Meet: Novellas, John Barth, 2005.
When William Came, Saki, 2009.
Dusklands, J.M. Coetzee, 2004.
Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck, 1978.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for this study is demarcated by its chapters. Chapter IV, *The Origins and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing* includes sections on the subject's Development in Higher Education Institutions, the Student Demand for the Teaching of Creative Writing and Creative Writing as a High-Demand Product of the Higher Education Industry.

Chapter V, *Creative Writing in the Academy* covers creative writing teaching aspects such as Whether Creative Writing Can be Taught, the Influence of English Studies on Creative Writing and the Institutional Influences on Creative Writing Pedagogy.

Chapter VII, *Creative Writing Handbooks* is an analysis of published examples of creative writing pedagogy, with its philosophies, principles, structures, processes, routines and exercises and textual examples.

Chapters VIII and IX, *Student Conceptions and Experiences of Creative Writing* and *The Student Writer*, highlight the creative writing needs and objectives of the students, who are often considered to be both the subjects and objects of the academic teaching of creative writing and whose creative needs are a neglected component of the creative writing teaching and learning process.

Chapter X, *Readers and Audience* and Chapter XI, *An Exploration of Creativity,* represent two pedagogically neglected, yet very significant, components of the practice of creative writing.

Chapter XII, *Creative Writing Workshops Research Results and Findings*, is the practical component of the study and consists of the findings from a creative writing workshop based research programme, which involved 35 students over a four year period. Chapter XIII, *The Conclusions of the Thesis*, is a composite summary of all the research findings and Chapter XIV, *The Honours and Masters Degree Programmes*, sees those conclusions assimilated and expressed in the broad design of the two creative writing programmes.

IV. THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING OF CREATIVE WRITING

A. Introduction

In this chapter the historical development of the teaching of creative writing in American, British, Australian and South African higher education institutions will be examined. The effect on that development as a result of the extent of student demand for the teaching of creative writing and the resultant academic responses to the teaching of creative writing, brought about as a result of creative writing becoming a high demand product at higher education institutions, will also be explored.

In a thesis such as this, which seeks to establish a theoretical foundation for the future development of pragmatic creative writing teaching philosophies, practices and methodologies, it is important to provide a historical bedrock in which to root the emergence and creation of those pedagogies. Each of these countries has, over different periods of time, had their own peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, which have influenced the regulation, funding and structure of the teaching of creative writing as an academic discipline in that country. This chapter provides a skeletal framework supported by the notation of the various authorities and their texts, which can be further explored, as and when required.

During the last ten years a richness and depth of historical complexity and detail have been added to the record of the teaching of creative writing as it has been portrayed over the last hundred years. DG Myers (*The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880,* 1996) has been recognised as the primary (almost a lone voice) authority on the development of creative writing in the United States. In recent times a number of British and Australian authorities have joined the debate and have provided a valuable contribution to the evolving story of the development of the teaching of creative writing.

Not only have these authorities added their findings and conclusions to the fabric of creative writing's evolution, they have also been actively criticising the history, as it has traditionally been portrayed. For example, writing in the online journal *TEXT*, Miriam Sved pointed out

that

> Myer's study effectively cuts off in the 1970s, after the establishment of the Associated Writing Programs which is a telling end-point. The absence of enquiry about creative writing's contemporary status allows a progressive, even vaguely revolutionary aftertaste to linger, unalloyed by current critiques of creative writing. (2005)

Authorities such as Stephanie Vanderslice concur with Sved's view arguing that "Creative Writing in American Higher Education has been traced back, in a vast oversimplification of the work of DG Myers, Wendy Bishop and others, to courses in essay writing at Harvard and in verse-making at the University of Iowa in the late 19th century" (Vanderslice, 2008: 66-7).

And similarly, Graeme Harper has been critical of renditions of the history of creative writing in higher education institutions in Great Britain, which depicts it as beginning in the 1960s "as if it is connected with an American influence, like the hoola-hoop" (2012: 15). Harper remarks that the traditional history of creative writing in the United Kingdom appears to link its origin to a single institution, which "has given the impression that Creative Writing in British higher education has relatively little history [when] nothing could be further from the truth" (2012: 16).

Quite clearly, contemporary creative writing teaching discussions and debates have introduced new perspectives and an examination of the subject's distant and more recent history suggests that there still is an evolving dialogue about the origins and development of the teaching of creative writing. This is evidenced by Patrick Bizzaro's claim that "there are still very few reliable histories of creative writing" (2010: 38).

B. The Development of Creative Writing in Higher Education Institutions

1. The United States of America

It is generally accepted that the first degree-conferring graduate writing programme was offered in 1936 by the University of Iowa in its Iowa Writer's Workshop. As the first director of what was called the *Program in Creative Writing*, Wilbur Schramm was credited

with the establishment of the programme, but it was not until 1944 when he was replaced by Paul Engle, that the University of Iowa became the "global power in the field" (Menand, 2009) and the Iowa Writer's Workshop, a symbol of the turning point in the study of fiction and poetry writing in America. Engle's simple premise was that practising writers should teach writing and that the university should offer writers a home in which to do so. His ambitious goal was to legitimise the making of literature by incorporating it into the academic stream (Burroway, 1992: 60).

After the Second World War, as a result of the enactment of the "Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944," which afforded returning war veterans financial assistance to undertake degree programmes, universities converted their modular creative writing courses into degree programmes in order to benefit from the substantial cash injection on offer. More than 2 million veterans accepted this education fee assistance. Writing seminars were established at Johns Hopkins in 1946, Stanford and Denver in 1947 and Cornell's creative writing programme commenced in 1948 (Menand, 2009).

Creative writing programmes were subsequently offered by an increasing number of American academic institutions during the 1950s, but the growth really surged during the 1960s when a significant expansion in higher education in the United States took place. Creative Writing programmes flourished and "writing as a recognisable course of study, a major, or field, or concentration appeared in a growing number of private and state universities" (Burroway, 1992: 60) throughout the country. The degrees conferred by these programmes included the MA, the MFA, the DA and the PhD.

The Associated Writing Programs (AWP) was founded in 1967 as an academic organisation to coordinate and provide professional services to creative writing programmes and their graduates. The AWP was established by 15 writers representing 13 creative writing programmes and it showed rapid growth, as its development mirrored the student demand for creative writing teaching and learning.

The 1980s represented a reversal of the aggressive expansion of creative writing programmes within the American education sector. This reversal was primarily due to a "dwindling of public funds," which forced university administrations to "develop executive

models based on the private business sector." As a result, the 'corporatised,' "Enterprise University" (Dawson, 2005: 13) came into being, which compels a higher education institution to "adapt to a growing culture of managerialism and economic accountability, as well as responding to the demand for vocational outcomes for students and a declining job market for academics" (Dawson, 2005: 4).

This 'corporatisation' of academic institutions commercialised creative writing instruction and led to the professionalisation of the writer, who had to become "credentialled ... by virtue of acquiring agents, securing publishing contracts, being reviewed, selling books and winning prizes and grants, as well as gaining membership of professional organisations ..." (Dawson, 2005: 192-3). The writer's text was no longer required to be a work of art for it now had more value as a commercial product, or as Dawson concludes "[t]he aesthetic, or the literary value, is thus an economic commodity" (2005: 93).

The development of the AWP mirrored the exponential growth in creative writing with an increase in the number of registered graduate programmes from 13 in 1967 to 335 in 2010 and from several hundred members to a current membership in excess of 30,000 writers, teachers and students. In fact, so extensive has the teaching and learning of creative writing become in American academic institutions that "[c]reative writing is now taught at most of the 2400 departments of literature in North America" (AWP).

This academic assimilation of creative writing teaching and learning appears to have come at the expense of artistic objectives, which may previously have been attached to the act of writing creatively, with creative writing being transformed into a field of study, which "reconstructs artistic practice as an academic discipline" (Singerman, 1999: 203).

While the AWP hailed the extent of the academic assimilation of creative writing as "an amazing experiment in democratic participation in higher education and the arts" (AWP), in 1982 at the AWP's 15th Anniversary Conference, the organisation's founder, RW Cassill, proclaimed that the education institutions had "corrupted" creative writing teaching and that the AWP should be disbanded: "We are now at the point where our writing programs are poisoning, and, in turn, we are being poisoned by the departments and institutions on which we have fastened them" (qtd in Menand, 2009). Cassill objected to writers being

> complicit in the academic logrolling and the gamesmanship of publish-or-perish ... using other people's money — grants from their universities and from arts agencies — they devised ways to get their own and one another's work into print and then converted those publications into salary increments … They wrote poems to get raises (Menand, 2009).

According to Cassill "the academic system was corrupting, and it was time for writers to get out" (Menand, 2009). However, the AWP disregarded Cassill's protestations and insinuations, changed the organisation's name to The Association of Writers and Writing Programs and proceeded to aggressively promote creative writing teaching at academic institutions increasing their creative writing programme membership from 79 in 1982 to 822 programmes in 2009 (Menand, 2009).

When the number of programmes is extrapolated into monetary terms, it becomes clear how creative writing as an academic discipline, in conjunction with all its ancillary activities, has emerged as a financially significant and professionally lucrative educational phenomenon. Even the AWP boasts about the economic extent of the academisation of creative writing:

> In the United States, AWP has helped to establish the largest system of literary patronage the world has ever seen. A conservative estimate of our programs' support for writers exceeds $250 million in annual expenditures on salaries, *honoraria*, lectures, readings, library acquisitions, conferences, and publications (AWP).

The continuing demand of students for creative writing instruction has led to the financial success of what the AWP calls an "experiment in democratic participation in higher education and the arts" (AWP).

This mass democratisation of creative writing and its consequential system of patronage has resulted in academically trained writers, which has had a significant effect on American literature generally. In 1992 John W. Aldridge identified that, as a result of the volume of writers being produced by the academic system

> [t]he newer writers now beginning to become known for their first work ...

> belong to the first literary generation in ... any history — ever to be created almost exclusively through formal academic instruction in creative writing (1992: 15).

The milestone in the history of creative writing in American academic institutions, which Aldridge identifies, appears to be the first phase of a phenomenon DG Myers famously termed the "elephant machine" (1996: 146). Due to the volume of writers being produced by the universities, the literary market is not able to practically and profitably absorb the material created by the large numbers of graduating authors forcing those writers to rely on the teaching of creative writing as an alternative means of earning their livelihood (Myers, 1996: 149). Hence, Myers' concept of the "elephant machine" — "creative writing programs became a machine for more creative writing programs" (1996: 146) establishing an educational training chain in which accredited creative writers teach and produce creative writers who are not writers, who would go on to produce more creative writers, who are not writers.

In 2012 in his essay, "A Short History of Creative Writing in America," DeWitt Henry corroborates Aldridge's view of the impact the academy's broad assimilation of the teaching of creative writing will have on future creative writers and on contemporary American literature. Henry points out the fact that academic institutions have reached the stage where they have produced "fourth generation MFA degree holders (that is taught by an MFA, who was taught by an MFA, who was taught by an MFA)" (2012: 19).

A comparison of the development of the number of creative writing programmes in American academic institutions shows the impact and the dominance of the phenomenon in the United States:

American Universities' Creative Writing Courses 1975 to 2010

Year	AA	BA/BS Minor	BA/BFA Major	MA	MFA	PhD	Total
2010	12	347	157	115	184	36	851
2009	11	318	147	145	150	37	797
2004	7	320	86	154	109	39	708
2002	8	283	70	151	99	41	644

1996	6	298	12	134	74	28	546
1992	6	274	9	137	55	27	502
1984	4	155	10	99	31	20	315
1975	0	24	3	32	15	5	79

Source: The AWP Official Guide to Writing Programs, www.awpwriter.org

In the United States, in the 35 years between 1975 and 2010, the number of creative writing programmes increased by more than 10 fold. In the development of creative writing there has been a number of historical perspectives and opinions about the nature and form of its development, but it is the growth in the number of programmes based on the continuing student demand that provides empirical evidence of the history of the growth of creative writing, as a subject in higher education institutions.

The discipline's governing body, the AWP, revels in the size of the creative writing bubble, boasting that most of the 2400 literature departments in North America are teaching creative writing and that the AWP's literary patronage realm is the largest in the world (AWP), what the AWP describes as the democratisation of creative writing in higher education and the arts. Given the magnitude of the numbers, this democratisation could perhaps be more accurately described as a commodification or system of mass production. This fits neatly with the corporatisation of universities, as mass production is the key to system efficiencies and profitability. These characteristics of educational mass production and popularity are far removed from and alien to the concept of creative writing as an art form.

The role and effect that the demand by students for the teaching of creative writing has had, and will continue to have, on the subject as a field of study will be further empirically extended when the programme and student numbers are extrapolated in the later section of this chapter, *Student Demand for Creative Writing*.

2. The United Kingdom

The history of creative writing in British universities could be said to date as far back as 1776, when authors such as Laurence Sterne were studying at the 'ancient universities.' JM Barrie received his MA from the University of Edinburgh in 1882 and Lewis Carroll's time

as a lecturer in Mathematics (1855–1881) at Oxford University may suggest a "pattern of British universities providing a platform for the learning undertaken by creative writers ..." (Harper, 2012: 12).

It was not until the 1960s that creative writing, albeit in a highly informal manner, entered British higher education institutions. In 1981 in his report, "Writers in education, 1951-1979," Alan Brownjohn described how "a few writers, temporarily and rather accidentally, found teaching posts in another sector of higher education: the teacher training institutions or Colleges of Education" (qtd in Wandor, 2012: 11).

In 1970 Angus Wilson and Malcolm Bradbury founded the first degree programme, the MA in Creative Writing, at the University of East Anglia. They established their writing programme in the "belief [that] there are a good number of young writers of originality and potential who would welcome the chance to develop their work in a postgraduate course" (UEA).

During the 1980s other academic institutions began to dabble in creative writing teaching and learning, initially, in the form of single modules "within existing courses [created] by individuals motivated by political, social or personal principles" (May, 2003). In 1982, after a seminar on "The Arts and Higher Education," the Verbal Arts Association was established, which called for "urgent reforms ... in the teaching of English ..." (Wandor, 2012: 14). The Verbal Arts Association evolved into the Northern Association of Writers in Education in 1987, which in 1991 became the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE) with its journal, *Writing in Education*. In 1991 Middlesex became the first university to offer a full Creative Writing undergraduate degree under the title of "Writing and Publishing" (Wandor, 2012: 19).

The 1990s saw the growing popularity of and demand for creative writing instruction and a shift in emphasis "towards institution-led initiatives based on the recruiting power of writing courses" (May, 2003). With their popularity and commensurate financial attractiveness, the emergence of creative writing programmes in British Higher Education Institutions, during the period between 1993 and 2003, was described as "phenomenal" with the rapid growth of the field being ascribed to two primary factors:

> [t]he founding of the 'new universities' — those polytechnic institutions 'renamed' as universities in 1992-3 and thereabouts — and by the general decrease in student applications for what might be called 'traditional' English Literature degrees (Harper, 2003b).

The academic creative writing programmes offered evolved gradually to include courses across all levels, from undergraduate to PhD, with programmes becoming "increasingly free-standing and independent" (May, 2003). As an academic discipline in British higher education institutions, Creative Writing has been described as "a flourishing discipline within the Academy" (Holland, 2002) and one that "has become increasingly part of the *formal* UK university system ... to an extent that few other Arts and Humanities subjects, if any, can equal" (Harper, 2003b).

In response to the demand for and growth of creative writing as an academic subject, in 2003 the creative writing specialist publication, *New Writing: International Journal for the Theory and Practice of Creative Writing*, was launched.

Relative to the growth of academic creative writing programmes in the United States, in the UK programmes offered by universities grew more rapidly over a shorter space of time. The following diagram provides a numeric representation of the growth and extent of creative writing programmes in the UK during the period 1990 to 2009:

British Universities' Creative Writing Courses 1990 & 2009

	1990	2009
BA Single Honours	87	134
BA Combined Honours	53	134
MA	70	133
PhD	20	41
TOTAL	230	442

1990 – (Dawson, 2005: 158)
2009 – (National Association of Writers in Education, www.nawe.co.uk)

Over a relatively short period of 19 years there has been almost a doubling of the courses on offer across all degree levels. In 2009 British universities offered more Creative Writing

PhD programmes than their American counterparts, where the MFA is still adjudged to be the terminal creative writing degree for teachers of the subject.

When viewed in relation to the size of the general populations, the number of students and the number of academic institutions, the number of creative writing programmes offered by British universities, when compared per capita, would suggest that creative writing as an academic discipline is now a proportionately larger field of study in the UK than it is in the United States.

The seemingly similar continually growing demand for creative writing teaching and learning at tertiary level by students in both the United States and United Kingdom suggests a universally shared passion to be able to write creatively, a passion which has fuelled the subject's growth at a rate not recently experienced by the academy's more mature and traditional fields of study.

3. Australia

Similar to its evolution in the United Kingdom, it was not the traditional Australian universities that embraced the assimilation of creative writing as a field of study and were responsible for its growth. It was the Colleges of Advanced Education, the Australian counterparts of the British Polytechnics.

Given the traditionally close ties "Australian universities have enjoyed with British literary education" (Dawson, 2005: 127), interest in creative writing instruction at tertiary level soon followed developments in the UK. In 1962 creative writing started to be recognised as a "valid area of study in universities" (Dawson, 2005: 135).

In 1970 the Canberra College of Advanced Education (now the University of Canberra) began offering a diploma course in Professional Writing (Dawson, 2005: 145). In the same year Macquarie University became the first Australian university to offer classes in creative writing, offering a course entitled "Literary Craftsmanship" based in the School of English Studies (Dawson, 2005: 151). In 1974 a three-year degree course, Professional Writing, offered by Curtin University (originally the Western Australian Institute of Technology) was

described as “the first three-year major course of study of its type in Australia” (Dawson, 2005: 145). In 1978 Deakin University (Victoria) established classes in its Literary Studies stream and the University of Wollongong became the first university to offer an undergraduate major in Creative Writing and a postgraduate degree based on the submission of a work of fiction, poetry or drama (Dawson, 2005: 152).

In 1981 the University of Melbourne became Australia’s “first Sandstone University to offer any form of Creative Writing” (Dawson, 2005: 154) and it soon became clear that creative writing pedagogy would always have to include counter checks and balances in order to “assuage complaints that it lacked academic rigour” (Dawson, 2005: 155).

In the early 1990s, in an effort to secure additional government funding, the other Sandstone Universities followed the University of Melbourne’s lead in the establishment of postgraduate research and coursework degrees in Creative Writing. Paul Dawson is in no doubt as to the role the commercial attractiveness of offering creative writing, as an academic subject, had on their decisions to embrace this new discipline:

> In one sense this process can be seen as something of a bandwagon approach — a response to the pecuniary benefits of student demand, the possibility of garnering prestige through student publication and a nod towards the pressures of vocationalism (2005: 157).

In 1996 Australia’s creative writing teaching ‘profession’ formed its own professional body, the Australian Association of Writing Programs, (AAWP) quite obviously mirroring and suggesting a credibility enhancing association and relationship with its more established American counterpart. The AAWP recently expanded its member base to include other Australasian countries and the organisation is now called the Australasian Association of Writing Programs.

In the same year members of the AAWP established the online journal *TEXT*, “an independent refereed journal that publishes a wide range of research, reviews and debates on creative and professional writing and the teaching of writing in academic and industry contexts” (AAWP). *TEXT* is now an AAWP sponsored journal.

A recent evaluation of the outlines of the creative writing courses of 39 Australian universities serves to illustrate the current size and spread of creative writing courses offered by the Australian academic institutions.

Australian Universities' Creative Writing 2009

Year	BA Minor/Major	BA Named	Honours	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma	MA	PhD	Total
2009	8	17	3	11	14	26	8	87

Unlike the standard degree-based creative writing courses in the USA and United Kingdom, Australian universities also offer Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma courses and, interestingly, in 2009 only 9 of the 39 universities offered no creative writing teaching whatsoever.

Masters degrees in Creative Writing and 'named' BA Creative Writing degrees predominate, and while the majority of Creative Writing programmes are located in English Studies departments, 9 universities have focused on establishing Creative Arts degrees almost exclusively at Masters and Doctoral levels, which affords students the opportunity to select their specialisation from the fields of Fine Arts, Music, Drama, Film Making and Creative Writing. This shift suggests that there are alternative perspectives, which do not reflect the traditionally held notion that creative writing teaching is necessarily restricted to the domain of English Studies departments.

The AAWP provides a list of the Doctoral degrees available to students under the "Creative Arts" banner: (AAWP)

Doctor of Arts
Doctor of Creative Arts
Doctor of Creative industries
Doctor of Fine Arts
Doctor of Music
Doctor of Musical Arts
Doctor of Professional Studies
Doctor of Visual Arts
PhD on Creative Art Topic
PhD with Creative Artifact
Professional Doctorate by Publication
Professional Doctorate by Research

4. South Africa

When compared to the origins, development, the entrenched nature and extensive undergraduate and postgraduate creative writing programmes available at American, British and Australian academic institutions, the field of creative writing at South African universities is in its infancy, both as regards the number of universities providing creative writing programmes and also with regard to the relatively old fashioned composition of the courses, particularly when compared to the recent developments in Australia.

It was only during the mid 1990s that creative writing emerged as a subject at South African universities with some institutions only recently starting to offer Creative Writing 'named' MA degrees.

The popularity of creative writing modules and programmes at American, British and Australian universities is clearly reflected in the South African trends, but there appears to be a reluctance on the part of some institutions to develop creative writing programmes to meet the obvious student demand. This will be demonstrated by the evaluation of the number of creative writing modules and programmes on offer at universities in South Africa.

As a general indication of popularity, during 2004 at the University of the Witwatersrand the number of students enrolled in postgraduate creative writing modules/degrees represented twice the number of students enrolled in postgraduate English literature modules and courses. Despite clear evidence of this growth trend and the increasing student interest in creative writing as a university subject, there appears to be no South African literature, besides Michael Green's *Creative Writing at Tertiary Level* (NRF Grant-holders Report, 2005) and Pieter Oberholzer's Masters Research Report entitled *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* (The University of the Witwatersrand, 2005), which records the history or development of creative writing, or considers the need for the pedagogical development of creative writing programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level at South African academic institutions.

A brief analysis of the current creative writing courses offered by the universities, as

contained in their course and programme outlines, follows.

For the purposes of this study South African Universities have been split into three official categories, namely Traditional Universities, Comprehensive Universities and Universities of Technology (wikipedia). Each category and its component institutions are listed as follows:

Traditional Universities

University of Cape Town	University of Pretoria
University of Fort Hare	Rhodes University
University of the Free State	University of Stellenbosch
University of KwaZulu-Natal	University of the Western Cape
University of Limpopo	University of the Witwatersrand
North-West University	

Comprehensive Universities

University of Johannesburg	University of Venda
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science
University of South Africa	University of Zululand

Universities of Technology

Cape Peninsula University of Technology	Mangosuthu University of Technology
Central University of Technology	Tshwane University of Technology
Durban University of Technology	Vaal University of Technology

Based on the results of a university outline survey undertaken in 2009, the following table provides a numeric breakdown of the creative writing courses offered by these South African academic institutions at that time.

South African Universities' Creative Writing Offering 2009

Year	BA Minor/Major	BA Named	Honours	Postgraduate Modules	MA	PhD	Total
2009	5	2	2	5	6	1	21

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has the most established creative writing teaching faculty with the majority of the staff consisting of published and experienced writers. UCT offers undergraduate creative writing as a Bachelor of Arts major and its Masters in Creative Writing is highly respected, particularly for the quality of the teachers, which have included JM Coetzee and Andre P. Brink. The University's School of the Arts has also recently secured prestigious funding from the Gordon Institute and it has established "The Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts," which promotes collaboration between the disciplines of Music, Dance, Fine Art, Drama, Film and Media, and Creative Writing (Gordon Institute).

This type of progressive initiative sets the University of Cape Town apart from most other South African universities, as a serious exponent of the teaching and learning of creative writing. Many of the other institutions, with the possible exception of the Universities of KwaZulu-Natal and Pretoria, are still in the early stages of the development of creative writing programmes for their students.

The most aggressive of the universities is the University of Pretoria, which in a single year (2008) began to offer a BA with a creative writing major, with creative writing modules in all three undergraduate years, an Honours level creative writing degree, as well as a Masters in Creative Writing. The University of Pretoria appears to offer a PhD in Creative Writing, but the description of the course outline seems to indicate that the programme is still in its development phase: "On doctoral level the unit expect [*sic*] a dissertation with a sound theoretical and research base. Creative inputs may be considered, but the focus will be on research" (UOP).

While still dominated by the needs of the English Studies department, the University of KwaZulu-Natal has a well planned creative writing initiative with second and third year

undergraduate modules and modules at Honours and Masters levels, as well as a Masters in Creative Writing degree course (UKZN).

The University of the Witwatersrand has been offering creative writing modules at Honours and Masters levels since the late 1990s and the Masters in Creative Writing degree for the last 9 years. This institution offers no specific undergraduate creative writing teaching and learning except in the School of the Arts where screen- and playwriting are available to Arts students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The School of Literature and Language Studies has developed an Honours degree in Creative Writing, which has been on offer since 2010 and consists of a choice of existing multi-department writing and literature modules coupled to a compulsory core course and a long essay, which can consist of a creative text "(fiction or non-fiction, prose only) of 7000 words, accompanied by a shorter research essay (3000) that explores theoretical questions in relation to the creative text" (Wits). The University of the Witwatersrand has also recently introduced a PhD in Creative Writing, which "comprises a creative project … plus a dissertation that illuminates, contextualises … and defends the originality of the work" (Wits).

North West University provides creative writing instruction at first and second year levels only (NWU). Similarly the University of Stellenbosch provides two undergraduate modules and it only offers its MA in Creative Writing in Afrikaans.

Rhodes University's Drama department offers a script and play module entitled Creative Writing for the Theatre and more recently has added an MA in Creative Writing course located in its Institute for the Study of English in Africa (ISEA). The MA programme consists of a combination of coursework and an "extended 'thesis' — a book-length creative work … a novel, non-fiction work, play script, short story collection, or poetry collection" (RU).

While the University of the Free State has been offering a Masters Degree in Creative Writing since 2003, it appears that this course has now been withdrawn (UFS).

Of the 11 Traditional Universities only 7 offer some form of creative writing teaching and learning, while only 3 of the Comprehensive Universities have creative writing modules

and/courses.

The University of South Africa (UNISA) has developed a Bachelor of Arts with a Specialisation in Creative Writing, as well as the second of the only two 'named' BA degrees in Creative Writing available in South Africa. These degrees are offered and taught under the auspices of UNISA's Theory of Literature department (UNISA).

The University of Zululand provides three Honours level creative writing modules: Travel Writing, Autobiography, and Writing Topics. (UZ) The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University offers second and third year modules, (NMMU) while none of the other three Comprehensive Universities, including the University of Johannesburg, offer any creative writing related subjects at all.

Of the 6 Universities of Technology only Tshwane University provides any form of creative writing teaching. Its Faculty of the Arts offers a four year course in Scriptwriting.

With the exception of Rhodes University and the Tshwane University of Technology, all the creative writing modules and courses are located in and controlled by the English Studies departments of the universities. South African universities appear not to have assimilated creative writing as a field of study, or as an academic subject, and creative writing teaching and learning is certainly not at a stage where the universities are exploring the pedagogical structure, location and methods most suited to the subject and the teaching and learning needs of the students.

C. Student Demand for the Teaching of Creative Writing

The one irrefutable element of creative writing's past, present and future, which has been, and will continue to be, the energy source and constant force in the growth and development of creative writing teaching and learning, is the extent of the student demand for creative writing instruction, and the extrapolation of that demand into financial value. This has been the primary driver of the subject as a field of study in higher education institutions.

It is important to emphasise the number of Creative Writing programmes on offer to students, as it in turn affects the number of graduates, writers and texts that are being

generated on an ongoing basis. In America the number of creative writing programmes offered by higher education institutions has increased from 77 in 1977 to an estimated 900 in 2012 (Vernon, 2012: 180), a more than tenfold increase in 35 years. In the United Kingdom growth in Creative Writing courses offered by tertiary institutions reflects an almost doubling in growth in the 19 years between 1990 and 2009 from 232 to 442 programmes. Whilst the number of available Creative Writing programmes represents the academy's response to student demand for the subject, it is the number of student applications and the oversubscription of programmes — the number of willing students versus the availability of space on the programmes — which is a measure of the students' passion and desire for creative writing teaching and learning.

On an annual basis more than 20,000 students apply for admission to creative writing courses at American universities (Rodriguez, 2008: 167; Daugherty, 2003). As practical examples of over-subscription, at the University of Iowa in 2008 600 aspiring fiction writers applied for 25 slots in the writing programme (Wade, 1998: 25). At Oberlin College they "have three times more applications for positions for [their] course than ... available spaces" (Bartlett, 2000: 27) and the MFA programme at the University of Oregon has seen a 300 percent increase in applications with "nearly 300 students applying for the dozen vacancies" (McFarland, 1993: 33).

Under the heading "Embrace the Swarm" DW Fenza confirms that

> [b]etween 20,000 to 30,000 students have earned graduate degrees in creative writing during the past 10 years. This spring another 2000 to 3000 graduates will join their ranks. Each year about 900 new books of poetry are published in North America. Each year, across all genres, as many as 200,000 new books were published in North America. Although many writers stopped writing and publishing, others soon take their place (2006).

In 2004 DW Fenza extrapolated the magnitude of the American demand for creative writing teaching and learning by quoting the results of an NEA survey conducted by the Census Bureau, which found that across "all grade levels and venues, both academic and nonacademic ... 27.3 million Americans had taken classes in creative writing in 2002, or 13.3 percent of the population (2004).

In 2011, as Executive Director of the AWP, writing in *New Writing: International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, Fenza establishes the significance of the numbers to the existence and future of writing as a profession and an academic discipline when he highlights the numeric size of the AWP and justifies its role as an organisation:

> … creative writing programs are among the training grounds for some of the most earnest practitioners of literary writing. In North America, creative writing programs provide hundreds of millions of dollars for the education and livelihood of writers. Each year about 34,000 writers, teachers and students participate in the member programs of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP), and 9000 people attend our conference and book fair each year. (2011: 206)

The numbers seem to have grown radically over a period of two years with the AWP being quoted in 2013 in Wikipedia as providing "support, advocacy, resources and community to nearly 50,000 writers, 500 college and university creative writing programs, and 125 writers' conferences and centers" (Wikipedia).

Fenza's words, "others soon take their place" (2006), are telling because they point to one of the primary outcomes of the development of creative writing programmes in response to student demand, which is the 'mass production' of the large numbers of 'qualified' writers, which feed DG Myers' "elephant machine." In his article, "The Rise of Creative Writing," Myers contends that in the United States at MFA level, since the inception of American writing programmes, "75,000 ... Official writers" (1993: 277) have been produced. Chris Altacruise visualises "the number of people in all those programs ... figure a conservative twenty heads per program and you have some idea of just how much creative scribbling is going on ..." (1990: 18).

In order to illustrate the pressures on creative writing and its development in the academic institutions, it is important to understand the extent of student demand for creative writing instruction. In the United States the numbers associated with student demand for creative writing teaching and learning have reached such proportions that it has become associated with notions of 'industrial' and 'mass production:' "Universities, for better or worse are gradually taking over the supply side of the fiction business: turning out writers from MAs and PhDs on an academic production line" (Harris, 2006), with institutions and students

sometimes being referred to as producers and consumers (Vernon, 2012: 180).

What started out in Iowa in the 1930s as a graduate degree programme for a small number of talented students, taught by successful writers with the purpose of adding literary and artistic value to the texts of the students, specifically, and American literature, generally, has since the advent of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, been a 'pure numbers game.' Qualitative parameters and writing as an art form, have over the years, been ignored in favour of the numbers, quantity has trumped quality — more is more is better — what the AWP calls an "experiment in democratic participation in higher education and the arts" (AWP).

There are authorities, who support the 'democratisation' of creative writing teaching and learning with its mass production of 'qualified' writers and the focus on quantity rather than quality. These authorities justify the commodification of the creative text on the basis of its overall benefit to society, culture and the individual. Other authorities question the volume and scale of creative writing within academic institutions and their effects on the quality of the creative text, specifically, and American literature, generally.

Mary Cantrell adopts what appears to be an academically compromised position in which she seems to accept the truth of Flannery O'Connor's "famous statement that universities don't stifle enough writers," but then does not seem to have contemplated the negative repercussions of the over-production of writers and texts when she asks "is the world any worse for having too many would-be writers?" (2012: 159).

Stephanie Vanderslice is celebratory in her response to the mass production of creative writing:

> To date, with the surfeit of creative writing programs dotting the landscape, we can declare the frontier officially closed. The world is now saturated with creative writers and, although there are always a few curmudgeons who gripe about this state of affairs, I think it's a wonderful thing. In fact, I think it's the stuff of dreams, the stuff that a rich artistic culture is built upon" (2010: 56).

Steven Healey is one "curmudgeon," who questions the merits of the mass production of writers:

> Should we be skeptical of this democratisation of authorship? Is the role of the author being dumbed down and mass marketed? Many successful students and teachers of creative writing are indeed skeptical ...” (2012: 68).

A second “curmudgeon,” George Garrett, takes a different view of Vanderslice’s flippant and generalised use of the word ‘artistic’ when he identifies the detrimental effect the vast numbers of programmes and students may have on the quality of the texts coming out of the programmes and the ultimate negative effect this may have on readers:

> … courses in creative writing continue to proliferate and, at least for the present, there aren’t enough *bona fide* writers to staff them. Book lists are filling up with non-books. The number of serious readers seems to be dropping out of sight and becoming impossible to measure. But of the making of writers there seems to be no end in sight (1992: 676).

Tracy Daugherty’s response to the creative writing student demand phenomenon and the effect of the mass production of writers and texts is simply an acceptance of the status quo:

> Literary agents and editors mine these programs for talent ... universities milk them for money, so whatever our concerns — professionalizing of creativity, or the promotion of a shallow celebrity mentality — it seems moot to ask if this is the route young writers should take. They *are* taking it, some with spectacular success. For better or worse, for the foreseeable future, a generous portion of American Literature will be MFA-inflected (Daugherty, 2003).

The student demand for and growth of creative writing in higher education institutions is a counter-trend, which comes at a time when many universities, in most English-speaking countries, are being subjected to “university funding cuts and an overall decline in Humanities’ majors” (Donnelly and Harper, 2012: xiii). The global trend in the education sector has been a decrease in public and government funding for academic institutions and, in order to survive, institutions have had to adopt corporate commercial principles and embrace the demand for the teaching of creative writing to benefit from the revenues attached to that demand. “Institutions everywhere are now looking to writing to bring in students and make money” (May, 2003), but as the teaching of creative writing starts to reach ‘industrial proportions,’ traditional workshop-based creative writing programmes are

being extended to include peripheral revenue generating activities and facilities such as "conferences, colonies, and centers" (Altacruise, 1990: 18).

Creative Writing's popularity has also coincided with a general decline in demand for traditional English Studies courses with "the rate of expansion of creative writing instruction ... diametrically counter to the movement toward downsizing in English literature" (McFarland, 1993: 33). [See also Bartlett (2000: 27) and Dawson (2005: 159)] The content of a recent Association of Departments of English (ADE) report, in the UK, entitled "The Undergraduate English Major," as quoted by Anna Leahy, identifies "the addition of creative writing as one way that English departments have addressed the drop in percentage of English majors since the 1970s" (2012: 73).

As an educational and social phenomenon, the student demand for the teaching and learning of creative writing appears to have become a welcome panacea for the structural, functional and financial woes of academic institutions. Stephanie Vanderslice confirms that "[s]even decades after the first university writing program was founded, the rise in demand for creative writing courses in higher education continues unabated" (2010: 3) with the MFA in Creative Writing continuing to fulfil the role of cash cow in many institutions, resulting in a "glut of creative writing programs ..." (2010: 77).

It appears that the magnitude of student demand for creative writing instruction has shifted the teaching focus away from the students' creative writing needs to the needs of institutions and their personnel. The institutional response to the levels of student demand has been a simple market-related one of a supply-response to that demand. This response to student demand is succinctly illustrated by creative writing authorities Jeri Kroll and Jen Webb, who are writers and senior writing teachers working within the academic institutions. Their response highlights their own creative writing teaching focus and what the subject represents to them as career academics within the system. Note the personal and emotional response to the continued growth of student demand and the concentration on numbers and not the quality of the students.

> The creative disciplines constitute an important growth area for universities. Australian data shows that in 2007 more students were enrolled in creative arts disciplines than in the natural and physical sciences, engineering or information

> technology (creatED 2011). That is pleasing news to those of us whose lives are deeply invested in the field. Moreover, all these enrolled students are potential candidates for a doctorate, and certainly there has been good flow-on in the past years from taught courses in research degrees (2012: 167-8).

Kroll and Webb are pleased with the growth in the numbers of students because of their potential as prospective PhD candidates. The question arises whether pleasure should not be derived from the quality of the students enrolled and their potential as authors and artists and perhaps as future literary greats, rather than merely from the relief that your status and livelihood are secure? This prompts the question as to whether the teaching of creative writing at academic institutions is institution- and staff-centred, rather than student-centred?

The continuing, high level of student demand for creative writing instruction at academic institutions in the US, the UK and Australia points towards a universally shared passion to be able to write creatively. It is this human passion, which has and continues to fuel the growth of the teaching of creative writing at a rate not recently experienced by more traditional and mature academic fields of study.

Given the institutional reliance on the students' passion, need and desire for creative writing teaching and learning, the lack of explorations into or analyses of student needs and desires for creative writing instruction and their perceptions and conceptions of creative writing, is difficult to understand. As the 'consumer' of the academy's creative writing courses, as products, it would seem logical and perhaps academically prudent to examine and record students' needs and conceptions as a platform for the empirical development of creative writing pedagogy. Yet, as shall be seen, the lack of attention and focus on the student has been, and continues to be, an obtrusive omission from the discourse surrounding creative writing teaching and learning. Hughes Mearns, as quoted in DG Myers' book, *The Elephants Teach*, and in his own books, such as, *Creative Power: The Education of Youth in the Creative Arts*, and Gregory Light, in his student and academic institution-research-based PhD Thesis, are the two exceptions, who base their explorations, analysis and examination of creative writing on the specific recipients and supposed beneficiaries of creative writing pedagogy — the students.

Given the continuous increases over an extended period of time in the levels of student demand for the teaching and learning of creative writing at universities in the USA and UK particularly and the enrolment and financial benefits accruing to an increasing number of academic institutions from this student demand to write creatively, it is remarkable that there is a dearth of empirical, qualitative academic research, exploration, or analysis of the students' continuing fascination with and passion for creative writing.

In the discourse surrounding creative writing, represented by the literature and the authorities examined and evaluated as the basis of this thesis, the students' motives, state of mind and creative writing perceptions, conceptions and objectives are, by and large, ignored and perhaps even avoided with the bulk of the authoritative discourse on the subject of creative writing being aimed at the institution's assimilation of the subject and its evolution into an acceptable academic discipline, which will benefit the assimilating department, usually the staff of the English department.

As recently as 2010 and 2012, authorities continued to confirm that there is still an "absence of analysis of the nature of student demand" (Brook, 2010), and "relative lack of current public research on creative writing" (Harper, 2012b: 105).

This apparent institution- and personnel-centred focus on creative writing as an academic discipline may go some way to explaining the generally acknowledged lack of effort and progress in developing and establishing an empirically based and researched creative writing theory and pedagogy and as to why the needs, passions, perceptions and conceptions of the students in respect of their desire for creative writing instruction, which forms the core source of the creative writing industry, receives a minuscule amount of attention.

D. Creative Writing as a High-Demand Product of the Higher Education Industry

1. Introduction

As emphasised earlier, the extent of the students' demand for the teaching and learning of creative writing at academic institutions is an educational phenomenon unequalled by and unprecedented amongst the more traditional and entrenched disciplines and fields of study offered by higher education institutions, certainly in the United States, Great Britain and

Australia.

It is a fact of life that whenever there is a significant number of individuals expressing a specific need or desire and who are prepared to pay for that need or desire to be fulfilled, other individuals will identify opportunities inherent in such demand and will seize the opportunity to offer products, which fulfil those needs and desires, in return for economic reward.

As a result of the high levels of student demand for creative writing instruction, creative writing, which once was a relatively exclusive, if theoretically-based practice and activity, has been transformed and has assumed industrial-type tendencies within the overall higher education sector.

What follows is an overview of the responses of the academic institutions to the opportunities and pressures of that demand. A more detailed examination will be found in Chapter V, *Creative Writing in the Academy*.

In assimilating creative writing as a relatively new field of study, the institutions have reshaped the concept of creative writing. Umbrella organisations have been formed to formalise control and add credibility and legitimacy to the teaching of creative writing as an academic field of study. Noteworthy in this regard is the 900 creative writing programmes on offer in American institutions (Vernon, 2012: 180); the 442 courses available in the United Kingdom (NAWE); the fact that 20,000 students apply annually for admission to creative writing programmes at American universities (Rodriguez, 2008: 167; Daugherty, 2003); 3000 students earn graduate degrees in creative writing each year; 900 new books of poetry and 200,000 new books are published each year in North America (Fenza, 2006); since 1936 more than 75,000 official writers have been produced in the USA (Myers, 1993: 277); and 27.3 million Americans had in 2002 taken classes in creative writing, (both inside and outside the academy) representing 13.3% of the population (Fenza, 2004).

2. Creative Writing Legitimacy

To summarise, Australia has the Australasian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP), the UK has the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE) and the United States has the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) with an industry-like membership of over 50,000 writers, 500 college and university creative writing programmes, 125 writers conferences and centres (Wikipedia) and 9000 people attend its conferences and book fairs each year. (Fenza, 2011: 206)

3. Corporatisation of Higher Education Institutions

In higher education institutions creative writing has been 'industrialised. The practice of writing creatively has become a 'profitable' field of study. Once institutions become aware of "the academic and economic value of creative writing," (Donnelly, 2012: 20) academic administrators' "eyes light up," (Perelman, 2004) because "creative writing classes are big money-makers ... supporting a variety of less well-attended programs" (Vernon, 2012: 186). The entry of Creative Writing into academic institutions brought "[c]ommercial success[to] humanities [and] a whiff of trade into the ivory tower" (Thebo, 2012: 34) and coincided with economic pressures on higher education institutions to adopt and conform to corporate profitability models. Referring to Mark McGurl's contentions in his book, *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (2009), Tracy Daugherty provides a succinct explanation of the process of academic corporatisation or, as it has also been described, the evolution of the enterprise university in the United States:

> Because university administrators are responding to social and economic pressures, prompted by perceived public needs and partisan battles within state legislatures, it is only natural that many school leaders have adopted the language of the constituencies most forcefully applying the pressure. Thus, 'students' become 'consumers' and 'teachers' become 'product service-providers.' The university is no longer a 'social institution,' but an 'industry' or 'corporate entity.' Knowledge has become a commodity with attendant uses and costs ... most American universities are attempting to solve their problems within the bubble of managerial thinking (Daugherty, 2012).

Authorities have referred to this phenomenon as the "corporate model of university

education" (Radia, 2012: 163), or the "Enterprise University," (Sparrow, 2012: 82) and the "Consumerized University" (Healey, 2009). In essence this means that academic institutions have become commercialised and have entered the mainstream corporate avenues like businesses, whose divisions "compete for recognition and funding" (Harper, 2008: 166), but also compete against other universities in the higher education sector. Graeme Harper puts Creative Writing's position in corporatised academic institutions into perspective: "While creative writing is an incredibly individualist practice — that is, promoting the creative acts, ideals and intentions of individual human beings — it is also a subject, a discipline, a 'grouping' within higher education" (2008: 166).

Cathy Day provides a valuable glimpse of the dichotomous and extremely compromised position of creative writing in the academy by highlighting the concept of the "Consumerized University" (Healey, 2009) from the viewpoint of creative writing students:

> Students often extend the metaphor and see the college itself as a corporation in which the president is the CEO and the different departments are divisions of that corporation ... [and] students see their educational experience as a product, something they purchase. This consumer mentality produces students who consider themselves the employer, paying me to teach them to write. If they fail, it is my fault, not theirs (2005: 160).

As a result of their forced adoption of "corporate administrative structures and values ..." (Dawson, 2005: 181) according to Graeme Harper, "by the late twentieth century the corporate identities and intentions of universities far exceeded the sense of them being communities of thinkers and creators" (2006: 39).

4. A Commercial Pedagogy

In this economically driven environment the teaching of creative writing has become a "commercial pedagogy" (Cross, 2007: 69), which has ensured a steady growth of revenue for many academic institutions, as well as increasing the demand for writing teachers to cater for the instruction of the large volumes of creative writing students. So being a producer of a large number of writers, the academic institution has also become a primary location for the absorption of the placeless writer (Dawson, 2005: 192) from where "the academically certified Creative Writer goes out to teach Creative Writing and produces

other Creative Writers who are not writers, but who produce still other Creative Writers who are not writers" (Menand, 2009). This self-perpetuating process gives credence to DG Myer's notion of the educational "Elephant Machine" and validates Roland Barthes' theories on the 'repetitivity' of language institutions: "encratic language (the language produced and spread under the protection of power) is ... the language of repetition; all official institutions of language are repeating machines," which ultimately leads to "mass banalization" (1976: 41).

The expansion of the functions of authors and poets into teaching has not only affected their roles as artists, but has also affected the genres of poetry and the short story. As Barthes predicts, the newly found status of poetry and short fiction, as professional, academic texts, has caused them to become the subject of "overproduction" (Sontag, 1989: 550), as Susan Sontag also argues in her essay "Against Interpretation" (1989: 550).

The writing practices of authors and poets have become enmeshed with their functions as writing teachers, as their poems and stories reflect with, for example, poetry collections such as *Morrow's Anthology of Younger American Poets*, according to Dana Gioia, representing "not so much a selective literary collection as a comprehensive directory of creative-writing teachers" (1991).

In Donald Hall's famous "McPoem" essay, he highlights the probable outcomes of prolific poets and writers as teachers and mentors on their students and the risk of poetic overproduction usurping creative quality as an artistic measure:

> If Robert Lowell, John Berryman and Robert Penn Warren publish without allowing for revision or self-criticism, how can we expect a twenty-four-year-old in Manhattan to wait five years ... With these famous men as models, how should we blame the young poet who boasts in a brochure of over 400 poems published in the last five years? Or the publisher, advertising a book, that brags that his poet has published 12 books in 10 years? Or the workshop teacher who meets a colleague on a crosswalk and buffs the backs of his fingernails against his tweed as he proclaims that, over the last two years, he has averaged 'placing' two poems a week? (1983: 97).

It would seem, therefore, that the aim of the creation of substantial quantities of poetry is to

satisfy the need to achieve and be recognised academically, as opposed to artistically. Poems and short stories have become professional academic texts, as SG Teichmann argues:

> It would ... seem that poetry, due to its association with academia, has perhaps become more of a product, capitalistic in nature, produced for purposes of prosperity within the academic world. What indeed has become of poetry as art? The many literary journals and presses seem now to be little more than the competitive forum for which poets write to attain professional validation as writing teachers (1993: 2).

According to Andrew Levy the conversion of authors into teachers may not only have led to the "institutionalization of the marginal voice" (1993: 3), it may also have resulted in the academisation and professionalisation of the teaching system and the short story as a creative text:

> The most striking aspect of the modern workshop system ... is the extent to which it ensures the continued health of the short story despite the relative lack of direct commercial demand for the product. The workshop system ... is an alternate economy, enclosed and complete — a network of graduate programs, conferences, and literary magazines that creates and encompasses writers of short stories, readers of short stories, sites of publication, and an economic and philosophical rationale for the network's own existence (1993: 3).

The teaching of creative writing and all its outcomes is housed within the Higher Education industry with its "resources" providing an organisational, structural and distributive foundation, with the foundational layers including "book sales, book publishing, book distribution, archives, libraries, classes of students, funded reading series, visiting writers chairs, professorships and prizes" (Lazer, 1999: 303).

5. Economics and Funding

Especially in countries such as the United Kingdom and Australia, where historically and currently the standards, practices, processes and outcomes of Higher Education teaching and learning have been, and continue to be, measured and controlled by government controlling and granting bodies, creative writing, as a relatively new entrant into the academic domain, has not simply been accepted because of its revenue generating abilities, it has been forced

to adapt to and conform to the traditional learning and knowledge requirements expected of traditional academic disciplines. Creative writing has been forced to change its practices and outcomes in order to fit into the disciplinary paradigms so that, as a field of study, it is able to have access to and to benefit from economic opportunities, which have always been afforded to traditional academic disciplines and the members of their faculty, namely grants, funding and careers.

The shift in the objectives of corporatised universities has led to a "Strategic approach" that transformed "the rhetoric into proper learning outcomes — all of which is invariably linked to a strategic approach that will increase future revenue" (Radia, 2012: 163), with the result that, in Australia, "the country's creative writing programs are being refashioned ..." (Daugherty, 2012) for "purely bureaucratic ends" (Dawson, 2008). As Camilla Nelson identifies, in the Australian higher education milieu, the "rigid funding categories have been dictating the parameters of the [creative writing] debate" (2008), with creative writing being forcibly constructed as a discipline, which applies and encompasses certain forms of "practice-led research, practice as research or performative and action research ..." (Nelson, 2008). As Enza Gandolfo and Nigel Krauth confirm, "the pressure has been put on writer academics to articulate the creative work as research, to advocate its significance and contribution" (2012).

This reshaping of creative writing in an effort to legitimise and validate it as a funding and grant-worthy field of study, has led to the questioning of the "value of creative works" (Enza Gandolfo and Nigel Krauth 2012), as products of creative writing study, which is research-based and whether this pronounced pedagogic shift does not amount to a significant "distortion of art practice" (Nelson, 2008).

Camilla Nelson quotes Malcolm Gillies' response to academic manipulations of the practice of writing creatively into a research-focused subject, as it appears in Dennis Strand's 1998 report, *Research in the Creative Arts*:

> When is a pot or a painting research, and what is the size of the research element in these terms? If it were not for our ever-deepening funding crisis I suggest that we would not be much concerned with these often ridiculous questions (2008).

The seriousness of this funding crisis and its effect on the nature and scope of creative writing in higher education institutions is illustrated by the amount of attention devoted to debates, discussions, suggestions and justifications for the evolution of creative writing into an academically accepted discipline with economic rights equal to that of traditional academic disciplines. Authorities in both the United Kingdom and Australia, but in Australia particularly, spend much time and effort arguing to have creative writing accepted as a grant-generating discipline by the bodies responsible for higher education allocations.

David Fenza points out that the 'follow the money' trend is an international phenomenon, which is enveloping, shaping and contorting creative writing, with "big business" exerting its power on creative writing within American academic institutions:

> A few critics blame creative writing as yet another contributor to the decline of the college of arts and humanities. That blame-game overlooks a predator who has already made academe its compliant chew-toy. Big business has replaced the values of the liberal arts with its own objectives. With each passing year, the university loses the vestigial remnants from its origins as a divinity school. The old ethos, values, and wide-ranging studies are discarded for the measurable outcomes and specializations of business (2011: 213).

While Fenza bemoans the effect that business trends and influences have had on the corporatisation of American universities, in the US the higher education industry is not under the same financial pressure as British and Australian universities to secure funding from government-based funding bodies. These government-based funding bodies employ stringent funding parameters and impose strict regulatory pedagogic outcomes on academic institutions, as Dianne Donnelly explains:

> [U]niversity regulations and the expectations of the Academy steer research practices in the UK and in Australia, and the agencies behind these regulations and expectations are government funding bodies. In contrast, there is no funding impetus for the United States to design practice-led research programs as part of graduate creative writing study (2012b: 121). [See also Donnelly and Harper (2012: xvi-xvii)]

As Jeri Kroll points out

> [d]ebates about the teaching of creative writing initially centred not on whether one could discuss authorial intent, but about whether writing could be taught at all ... the debate has shifted because of something far less glamorous than literary-philosophical debates about the nature of the imagination or authorship: money (2004b: 92).

Within the higher education industry creative writing, as a relative newcomer to the tertiary education environment, has now to compete for its status, its recognition as an academic discipline and its funding, not only within its "own institution," but also "across the higher education sector" (Harper, 2008: 166).

6. Conformance to Academic Needs and Requirements

Needless to say, 'soft,' arts disciplines, such as creative writing, will struggle to obtain funding ahead of the more entrenched and affluent disciplines such as science, health, business, education and engineering (Owen, 2006), unless they can justify themselves as a legitimate field of study. Hence the flood of articles and essays by authorities seeking to justify and entrench creative writing as an important and valuable discipline within the academy, particularly in Australia and the United Kingdom.

Outside of the United States, in a constant effort to add academic legitimacy to the students' creative products, the secondary or complementary text or exegesis supports and explains the fictional text and serves as evidence of the academic analysis of the fictional process and its product and the learning extracted from the creative writing practice. The secondary, reflective academic text, supplementing the fictional text, has been a pre-requisite element of creative writing pedagogy since its first assimilation into higher education institutions in the UK, Australia and South Africa.

While the secondary text is still a current requirement at British and Australian universities, authorities working in the field of Creative Writing in academic institutions have, in their attempts to cement its position as a legitimate, funding-worthy field of study by raising the

volume of the discourse surrounding and redefining and shaping creative writing into a legitimate discipline, been active in attributing further traditional disciplinary characteristics and properties to creative writing.

It is argued that creative writing can be defined as research (Harper, 2012b: 104); that it needs to be grounded as a research subject (Harper and Kroll, 2008: 5); that creative writing is a practice-led research activity (Scott Brook, 2010); that creative writing teachers be considered 'as research active' (Dawson, 2007: 83); that creative writing "creates and disseminates knowledge, and … it builds a knowledge culture (Donnelly, 2012: 17); and "… the creative output is viewed by funding and accreditation bodies as a legitimate study that advances knowledge" (Donnelly, 2012b: 117).

In recent years creative writing authorities, working in academic institutions, have become more assertive and 'creative' in their efforts to redefine and reshape creative writing into a fully fledged academic discipline, which conforms to all the parameters of what traditionally constitutes a recognised academic field of study. This has resulted in a change to the objectives, nature and characteristics of creative writing, as may have been originally envisaged by students deciding to study creative writing at university.

The quest for academic legitimacy and the access to funding and further opportunities that this affords, includes the acquisition and donning of the traditional symbols and trappings of academic fields of study:

> As a discipline or field of study, creative writing can already claim status in the English department through its specialized academic programs, its professional organization, conferences and publications. Most importantly, it can be argued that creative writing is a growing professional body of knowledge, one which considers the acts and actions of writers (Donnelly, 2012: 5).

In this quotation, Donnelly's wordplay would seem to be hinting at a shift in the original objective of creative writing, namely, how to write creatively, to an objective of studying creative writing as a practice, which "considers the acts and actions of writers" (218: 5) (Donnelly, 2012: 5). It is evident that one of the primary aims of the redefinition of creative writing is the need to conform to the specifications and requirements of the various funding

bodies. It would seem that authorities within the institutions have indeed been successful in altering perceptions of the nature of creative writing:

> … The processes and practices of creative writers have only recently been recognized as critical evidence of the 'work' of creative writing and its contributions to knowledge ... official responses like that from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Board (and similarly from governing initiatives in Australia) began to emerge, defining for the discipline of creative writing, 'research primarily in terms of research process rather than outputs' (Donnelly, 2012b: 128).

Currently, creative writing in British and Australian tertiary education appears to have become a research-led and knowledge-generating field of study. The fictional product of the creative writing process, therefore, becomes less important and is almost seen as a mere by-product.

Graeme Harper states that "[c]reative writing actions are primary; the artefacts that emerge are secondary" (2012: 13) and that "creative writing does not primarily involve the creation of final artefacts … [but] involves human actions …" (2012: 13). The fictional text, the product of the students' imaginative, creative efforts assumes lesser significance. The focus is on elevating the practice of writing above any creative outcomes.

Paul Dawson concurs when he explains that the text "is scrutinised in terms of the process of its making, rather than as a literary artefact" (2005: 38). Stuart Glover agrees that "[t]he discipline's primary concerns and methods ... [are] compositional decision-making examined through self-exegesis …" (Glover, 2012: 294).

Michael Green provides an explanation of this radical academic shift of focus from product to practice:

> Crucially [the study of creative writing] focus[es] ... not on 'the finished artefacts that result from that practice' ... [but] on action and process ... 'Practice here ... means an approach to a subject based on knowledge acquired through the act of creating. This knowledge is not superficial. It results from sustained and serious examination of the art of writerly practice and might include not only contemporary theoretical or critical models but the writer's own past works

as well as predecessors and traditions (2012: 326).

In relation to creative writing as an academic discipline, Graeme Harper emphasises the demotion and dilution of the importance and status of the products of the practice of creative writing arguing that "Creative Writing exists, for creative writers, as perception, memory and action first, and as object and result second" firmly establishing the *practice* of creative writing as its most significant component — "it is in action that the Creative Writing becomes defined" (2010: xvi).

The continuing efforts of academic authorities to redefine, shape and entrench creative writing as a legitimate and fundable field of academic study include statements that it can be a site of knowledge as well as a research discipline: "Creative Writing, simply put, is a field or site of knowledge" (Harper, 2007). Stuart Glover maintains that the creation of an "industry-ready" screenplay "embraces the use of practice-based approaches to research and the creation of new knowledge" (2010: 127).

And finally, Dianne Donnelly confirms and establishes the unambiguous objective of reshaping and redefining creative writing so that it fits into the academy as a fully fledged and accepted field of study:

> ... UK and Australian graduate students contribute (and are expected to contribute) to their universities' research practices, shaping the study of creative writing, as they do, as a research discipline. As such, research in creative writing becomes an increasingly important aspect of the University's productivity as well as an increasingly important aspect to [*sic*] the development of creative writing research as knowledge (2012c: 122).

It is noteworthy that in all the analyses above, no attention has been paid to the needs of the student, which raises the question as to whether the student's primary objective is to create a fictional text of the very highest creative quality or whether it is simply to enjoy the process of writing?

7. Academic Efficiencies and Profitability

Besides being required to conform to the parameters and criteria the academy sets for its

disciplines and fields of study, the subject, Creative Writing, has and will continue to be, like all the other 'products' of the corporatised universities, the subject of efficiency and profitability drives. Because of the academic 'profitability' focus, in "many institutions, program design is in the hands of administration and guided by bottom-line costs and profit margins" (Donnelly, 2010: 17). While historically university administrators have welcomed the increased enrolment numbers provided by student demand for the teaching of creative writing, more recently academic authorities have begun focusing on the low teacher-student ratios of the creative writing workshop and other overheads that increase operational costs in an effort to bring the subject more into line with traditional disciplines that achieve a more efficient and profitable critical mass (Donnelly, 2012: 5).

The success of creative writing teaching has always been affected by the number of workshop participants, which has always been well below the number of students attending lectures and seminars of the academy's traditional subjects and fields of study. Gaylene Perry considers this trend to be a negative one for creative writing pedagogy and creative writing students. She sees it as a "new problem for [creative writing teachers] due to university pressure to let more students enrol in [the] program," while in the past, "the classes were smaller, the skill levels higher, and the commitment and preparedness much greater." (qtd in Donnelly, 2012c: 91)

Mike Harris describes how teachers are also under pressure to lower their standards in their assessment and grading of the work of creative writing students because

> [i]f you increase the pass mark you lose students; if you lose students you lose academic jobs. Thus, in a period when the student demographic is about to fall, raising the pass mark is about as likely as turkeys voting for Christmas (2008).

This trend towards academic profitability, at all costs, has resulted "in a culture where meaning is being collapsed and narrowed to the bottom-line" (Vernon, 2012:174), and where "flexibility and efficiency have become more prized than any sense of tradition or core mission" (Daugherty, 2012).

The mass commercialisation of creative writing within the higher education industry has also led to efficiency improvements being affected through the adoption and implementation

of corporate systems and processes such as those employed by, for example, the Columbia University Program, which, according to Robert Moody in his article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, "Writers and Mentors," seeks to "[s]treamline, simplify, avoid complexity, avoid ambiguity, avoid heterogeneity ..." (2005) If "continuity and non-novelty is useful to the business of selling" (Kermode, 1983: 94), it would seem that the concepts of 'originality' and 'otherness' in the teaching of creative writing may no longer apply.

8. Creative Writing – From Art Form to Commodity

The original objectives of creative writing instruction at higher education institutions have been affected by the corporatisation of universities. This is evidenced by the endorsement of the process by authorities such as Steve Healey, who has accepted creative writing as being a component in an industrial, value adding chain, which allows writing students to progress into professions and careers in a broad array of sectors and industries. The objectives behind the teaching of creative writing would seem to have become predominantly economic, vocational and professional conforming to the efficiencies and processes required by the academic institutions. Creative writing is no longer an artistic practice, it is an industrial activity:

> Just because Creative Writing has enjoyed enormous institutional success does not mean that the field is doomed to churn out consumerized zombie writers. This field, like any other, can recognise and respond to its ongoing relationship to economic forces — seen not only in the locations of teaching, publishing, and bookselling ... but increasingly in a much broader range of post-industrial vocations ... (Healey, 2009).

Edmund Hansen and James Stevens, on the other hand, allude to "students' 'low tolerance for challenge,' their 'risk averse' posture in our classrooms as products of 'educational consumerism' ..." (qtd in Donnelly, 2012c:91). This tendency towards conformance and uniformity is a result of the striving for efficiency by the institution, which maintains "an active vigilance against anything out of the ordinary" (Perelman, 2004).

Michelle Cross contends that there has been an 'industrial' shift in the nature of the fictional text, from its traditional role as a literary art form, to the text as commodity:

> Commercial pedagogy focuses on literary texts in the context of a market driven public culture. It implicitly conceives of creative writing as a vocation, and of the writer as professional labourer engaging in economic activity in an industry, more so than pursuing a path of artistic or spiritual self-discovery (2007: 69).

9. An Erosion of Creativity

Interestingly, there is little substantiation for the notion that the writer's action defines what Creative Writing is. This practice-based theory of creative writing inevitably also erodes the importance and relevance of creativity in the teaching and learning of creative writing. The practice-based theory of creative writing as espoused by Harper, Donnelly, Glover and Green, appears to run counter to the creativity theory, which has been researched, developed and entrenched by creativity specialist authorities such as IC Jarvie (1981:121), Teresa Amabile (1983:31) and Larry Briskman (1981: 145).

In his essay "Creative Product and Creative Process in Science and Art" in the book, *The Concept of Creativity in Science and Art*, Larry Briskman points out that it can only be as a result of the judgement of the ultimate product of the process as being creative that the creator and her creative process can be deemed to be creative. Neither the person nor the process can be adjudged to be creative without an evaluation of the product as creative:

> ... what we evaluate as 'creative' ... are a person's products ... but only as a result of an evaluation [and] it follows that we cannot identify, independently of such products, creative persons or creative ... processes (1981: 145).

Briskman's call for a "priority in the product," in contrast to the call for a 'priority in the practice,' in the development of a valuable conceptual creativity framework is straightforward, logical and uncomplicated:

> ... not only are we unable to identify a ... process as creative in the absence of an identification (or evaluation) of its resultant product as itself creative, but we are unable to identify any ... process at all as a creative process ... because the process is a creative one *only if* it issues in a product deemed to be a creative one (1981: 140).

In their introduction to their co-edited book, *Key Issues in Creative Writing*, Donnelly and

Harper provide a muted call to action in establishing and formalising Creative Writing as an internationally legitimate, valuable and accepted discipline within the academy:

> On a global plane, what would now prove valuable is a common language that addresses benchmarks for creative writing research as well as a strategic plan to increase the national and international visibility of creative writing's contribution to human knowledge, understanding the critical engagement with the world around us. Of equal importance in this aim is gaining the attention and understanding of university and governing bodies of the significant work that is done in undertaking and investigating creative writing and the undertaking of creative writing (2012: xviii-xix).

No mention or reference is however made to the creative component of creative writing pedagogy, nor to any aspects of creative theory or authorities on creativity.

10. Creativity – Redefined and Ignored

The industrial success and commercialisation of the teaching of creative writing have, and continue to have, far reaching effects on the concept of creativity and what role it plays in an institutional environment, which "entwines the economic and the aesthetic" (Sparrow, 2012: 93), and "tries to balance artistic and commercial interests" (Thorne, 2009: 224). While Dominique Hecq maintains that "in the current socio-political climate, creativity is trivialised, commodified and commercialised ..." (Harris, 2012: 120) and Jeff Sparrow suggests that "[t]he actuarial mentality of a corporate university seems incompatible with creativity, not simply in terms of research, but also pedagogy," (Sparrow, 2012: 80) Sue North appropriates and redefines the concept of creativity in line with how she interprets the concept of creativity, as it has evolved in the academy and in society:

> The academy, and more generally, the society in which it functions, has divorced creativity from the aesthetic, taking it from a specific to the general. Creativity is no longer linked with the Romantic notion of the artist — appropriately; but rather than accept it as part of dispositions and positions that *understand* the every day, the current episteme emphasises that it expects creativity to *be a part* of the everyday. The word 'creative' is being inserted into government and university policies as a new way of saying, 'This will make us more financially efficient and effective (North, 2006).

North's attempt to establish the concept of creativity as now being synonymous with financial efficiency is another example of the academy's attempts to appropriate and shape the concept of creativity for its own ends and in a manner that suits its agendas, particularly its commercial, teaching and personnel objectives.

This approach completely ignores the creative component of creative writing — perhaps because it complicates the profitable process of the teaching of creative writing.

While Sue North describes creativity as no longer deemed to be an exceptional characteristic, but a normal, everyday one, George Kalamaras in an article in *College Composition and Communication* attempts to sway the discourse on creativity by telling his readers that one must not assume that "creative writing is 'creative' (1999: 82). He seems to be implying that the adjective 'creative' in creative writing does not actually mean creative, but in academic terms means something less or something else.

Michael Green in the development of creative writing as a subject of the English Studies department of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, admits that the department did not consider "the teaching of creative writing at undergraduate levels … as a direct attempt to produce creative writers *per se* ..." (Green, 2005).

The fact that creativity is seen as a problematic element of the teaching of creative writing is evidenced by Katharine Haake's admission that she forbids her creative writing students to use the words 'creative' or 'creativity' in her creative writing classroom (2000: 240). Haake's banning of the word 'creative' from the workshop dialogue illustrates how far removed the practice of teaching creative writing has become from the concept of creative writing as a literary art form, based on the freedom of speech. Creativity is a complex and exclusive concept, which adds significant teaching complexity, thereby detracting from and restricting the efficient mass production of academic creative writers.

A further example of the extent to which creativity, as a concept and a vital component of creative writing, has been detached from the discourse surrounding its existence by academic institutions and those responsible for the teaching of creative writing, appears from a book by Matt Morrison, entitled *Key Concepts in Creative Writing*, published in

2010 by Palgrave MacMillan. In his introduction Morrison lists the three objectives of book as being:

> ... to provide a thorough glossary of 'technical' terms relevant to the craft of creative writing; to set down the industry terminology needed to negotiate the bewildering world of literary agents, booksellers, commissioning editors and production companies; and to give a sense of the on-going process of questioning that characterises the writer's working method. Behind these aims is a guiding belief that, far from being a solitary pursuit, creative writing flourishes within a well-defined network of shared ideas, collaboration and debate (2010: xii).

It is interesting that the words 'creative' and 'creativity' do not appear in Morrison's glossary and as such are not seen as "technical" terms relative to the craft of creative writing.

Traditionally, as shall be shown later, the creative component of creative writing has in higher education institutions been eschewed as complex, irrational, Romantic and academically illegitimate. With the recently accentuated economic pressures on academic institutions, they are being forced to adopt the processes and systems of "education and management theory" (Menand, 2009) and to disregard the inefficient and unproductive concepts of creativity, innovation and originality, with the result that the "human art of thinking and acting creatively" (Harper, 2006: 38) has been avoided. As a result of the predominance of the financial objectives of academic institutions, universities are less likely to be "communities of thinkers and creators" and less willing to "push the boundaries of human creativity and thought" (Harper, 2006: 38 and 39).

It is clear that there is a trend in institutions and their creative writing personnel have diminished creativity in their development of creative writing pedagogy. The large majority of creative writing teaching authorities have not explained or even considered the possible inclusion of creativity theory in their creative writing teaching processes and practices.

11. The Value of Creativity

Ironically, of late, there have been indications that creativity may become a high demand concept with potential economic value. In 2002 in his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida was predicting the rise of creativity's economic power based on his identification of corporate trends toward substantial increases in research and development.

In 2010 in a special issue of *The New York Times Magazine* devoted to 'The Year in Ideas, Segal highlighted the growing value of "creative thinking" and "the art of innovation" (Segal, 2010: 26) and how corporations were seeking to generate new ideas for their products and services and finding creative solutions to problems (qtd in Steve Healey, 2012: 61).

Healey contends that the most influential support for the seemingly increasing economic value of creativity is to be found in an article by Daniel H. Pink entitled "The MFA is the New MBA," published in the *Harvard Business Review* ... Pink argues that "the demand for aptitude is surging [because] businesses are realising that the only way to differentiate their goods and services in today's overstocked, materially abundant marketplace is to make their offerings transcendent — physically beautiful and emotionally compelling." Notice Pink's focus on the two elements of creativity, namely the aesthetic and the emotional, which the academy has avoided, as being subjective, irrational and incapable of measurement and, therefore, illegitimate and unacademic.

In his book *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age*, Pink maintains that

> The future belongs not to the rational, left-brain number crunchers but to the right brain thinkers, the 'creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers.' These people — artists, inventors, designers, storytellers ... big picture thinkers — will now reap society's richest rewards. (qtd in Healey, 2009: 166)

This pure form of creativity, now highly valued in the marketplace, encompasses the traditional characteristics of creativity such as originality, innovation and newness, which contrasts significantly with the 'academic' creativity, which has been upheld by English

Studies departments in their teaching of creative writing.

It is worth repeating Sue North's 'vision' of the academy's and society's definition of creativity as an example of the institutional demotion and devaluing of the concept, which runs counter to creativity's real characteristics and its real value:

> The academy, and more generally, the society in which it functions, has divorced creativity from the aesthetic, taking it from the specific to the general. Creativity is no longer linked with the Romantic notion of the artist — appropriately; but rather than accept it as part of dispositions and positions that *understand* the everyday, the current episteme emphasises that it *expects* creativity to *be a part* of the everyday (2006).

In their response to this recent emphasis on the value of 'pure' creativity, creative writing teaching authorities are now trying to intimate that creativity has always been an important element in the student's creative writing instruction. Thom Vernon claims that "creative capacities increase our employment prospects (2012: 178) and Fay Weldon provides the assurance that "[b]y the same token the study of creative writing fosters inventiveness, originality ... and that curious ability to 'think things up' so important to our rapidly changing society — and indeed our exports" (2009: 170).

Stephanie Vanderslice celebrates the value of creativity within the creative enterprise and the arts community, but somehow still seems not to recognise the need to incorporate creativity theory in the teaching of creative writing and the need to establish a creativity conducive environment for creative writing students. Instead of suggesting the acquisition and study of recognised works and research studies behind the theories of creativity, Vanderslice believes it is more appropriate and of more value to acquire the books that simply identify creativity's economic value, but which do not necessarily add to the teaching of creativity as a primary component of creative writing:

> ... books like Daniel Pink's *A Whole New Mind*, Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Eric Maisel's *Fearless Creating* and *The Creative Life* and ... Carol Lloyd's *Creating a Life Worth Living*, come into play, deserving as prominent place on our course reading lists as craft texts by writing gurus Anne Lamott, John Gardner, Stephen King, or Natalie Goldberg (2010: 38-9).

The predominant lack of focus on creativity and creativity theory by many English Department-based creative writing instructors, may cause the recruiters for creative individuals, to bypass the creative writing workshops on their way to the Universities' Arts Faculties.

V. CREATIVE WRITING IN THE ACADEMY

A. Introduction

Having completed a numerical examination of the development of creative writing within higher education institutions in the USA, UK, Australia and South Africa, it was found that the continuing growth of the discipline stems from the unabated student demand for the subject and that, in America particularly, creative writing teaching and learning had reached such a state of mass production and commodification that the significant milestone of 4th generation graduates has now been reached in the academic system. These are the MFA graduates whose teachers had been MFA graduates, who had been taught by MFA graduates, who had been taught by MFA graduates.

At a time when monetary support was dwindling and there was a general decline in the demand for traditional English studies courses, the high enrolment numbers in creative writing and the allocation of commensurate funding was of great economic value to the academic institutions. This in turn had the effect of shifting the focus of the objectives of creative writing teaching from student needs and expectations towards the monetary benefits available to the institutions and their personnel. This apparent institutional bias and focus may explain the lack of research into creative writing theory and pedagogy and into student needs and conceptions of creative writing.

With the corporatisation of academic institutions in the USA, the UK and Australia the high demand for creative writing teaching caused creative writing to become a commercial pedagogy, subject to the academic efficiencies and profitability requirements expected of all the fields of study at an institution. This resulted in a movement to convert creative writing from the practice of an art form to the production of textual commodities and to the erosion of the creativity component of creative writing. Ironically, in doggedly avoiding creativity as a key element of the teaching of creative writing, academic institutions, generally, and English studies faculties, specifically, may have forfeited their opportunities to benefit from the value now being placed on ‘pure’ creativity by market forces within the ‘creative economy.’

As a result of all the above influences, creative writing teachers and faculty personnel have converted creative writing into an academic field of study by "reconstructing artistic practice as an academic discipline" (Singerman, 1999: 203) and have transformed creative writing into a field of study with which to achieve institutional and departmental objectives.

As a means to establishing a theoretical foundation for what could be termed the contemporary pedagogy of creative writing in higher education institutions, this chapter provides a more detailed exploration, examination and analysis of creative writing teaching in higher education institutions by examining:

- The fundamental differences between the Creative Writing pedagogy of American and British-centred higher education institutions;
- The responses of a wide range of authorities to the question of whether creative writing can be taught;
- The influence that English Studies has had on creative writing pedagogy, as creative writing's predominant academic location; and
- The overall effects of the institutional influences of academic institutions on the teaching and learning of creative writing.

B. Foundational Differences between the Creative Writing Pedagogy of American and British-centred Higher Education Institutions

At a foundational undergraduate level most American tertiary institutions have English departments, which are structured on a triad of core subjects, namely composition, literary study and creative writing. Most creative writing courses in American universities are derived from and implemented based on the "workshop tradition," as confirmed by Madison Smart-Bell in his handbook, *Narrative Design: A Writer's Guide to Structure*: "It was [at Iowa] that the workshop method, now common to about 95% of all writing programs across the academic landscape, first evolved, The Iowa Workshop, in short, is the 'creative writing program'"(Robert Graham, 2001).

While most postgraduate creative writing programmes in the United States require the study of supplementary courses alongside the production of a substantial fictional text, in a course work type degree format, "the creative dissertation in the United States ('still conceived as a literary work to be circulated outside the academy') is recognised as the Master's or

doctoral academic equivalency of research output" (Donnelly, 2012b: 120).

According to Stephanie Vanderslice, "MFA programs in the US have emerged quite independently" (2007: 38) and "higher education ... is loosely regulated if at all" (2010b: 12).

In those countries whose educational systems are British-based such as the UK, Australia and South Africa, higher education is the subject of central regulation in terms of teaching and outcomes parameters, as well as funding decisions and allocations. The academic institutions in these countries tend to place relatively less emphasis on the workshop method, but align their teaching of creative writing with "what is associated with the formal history of the study of English literature …" (Harper and Vanderslice, 2005: 207).

In the UK, Australia and South Africa, academic institutions require the legitimisation of creative writing as a field of study in the form of a "supplementary discourse," for which a separate grade is awarded over and above the grading of the fictional text or 'thesis,' which receives a separate evaluation. Dianne Donnelly explains the reasons for this pedagogic assessment construction and, in so doing, reveals the resultant reshaping of creative writing for academic conformance purposes:

> UK and Australian graduates complete both a creative dissertation and a substantial critical essay (of which the latter contributes to disciplinary knowledge) ... the creative dissertation counts as research only when it is associated with a valid work of research. This hybridisation of creative and critical considers not only the process of creative writers in action, but also 'an original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding' (2012c: 120).

George Marsh lists the following as the learning objectives of the teaching of creative writing in the British system:

- to train professional writers;
- to illuminate criticism by learning experientially about the construction of a text;
- to develop communication skills — good command of language — valuable for many kinds of employment;
- to do literary writing because it is intrinsically worthwhile;

- to teach literary writing;
- to develop the mind of the student or to develop imagination and creativity; and
- to prepare schoolteachers for teaching Creative Writing (qtd in Vanderslice, 2008: 69).

In contrast, Philip Roth describes the "basic functions of courses like the writing workshop" in America to be to: "(1) give young writers an audience, (2) give them a sense of community, and (3) an acceptable category — that of student" (qtd in Vanderslice, 2008: 69).

It is noteworthy that neither the British nor American descriptions of the objectives or functions of the teaching of creative writing refer specifically to the aim of teaching students to write *creatively*. Both sets of objectives appear to focus on alternative outcomes.

C. Can Creative Writing be Taught?

1. Introduction

The fundamental pedagogic question, *Can Creative Writing be Taught?*, is a question that all creative writing teaching staff should be able to answer and discuss if they are to have any credibility with their creative writing students. This is not to say that institutions need to respond with an emphatic and absolute yes, but their personnel should have at least explored and examined the question and researched the discourse surrounding the analysis of the question and the various responses to it. This will add significant value to the dynamics of the creative writing workshop.

What follows is the outcome of an examination and analysis of the responses to the question *Can Creative Writing be Taught?* based on the literature of an array of authorities.

There are six different responses from authorities to this particular question. Three are direct and absolute and two are indirect responses. The third alternative response raises more questions and offers more options in responding to the question.

2. No, Creative Writing Cannot be Taught

Some authorities believe that true writers are born geniuses, whose inherent talent is a gift, a gift which cannot be developed through teaching of any kind, with perhaps the exception of those techniques "in which geniuses are expert" (Mayers, 1999: 42). [See also Lodge (1996: 176)] Genius and talent are coupled and viewed as exclusive, godlike properties. Howard Singerman points out that some consider "the work of genius [to be] unteachable" (1999: 5) and he provides the traditional Romantic image of the tortured artist and talented genius whose "habitat was an attic ... and forever there burned in his genius-lit eyes the brilliancy that bespoke consumption" (1999: 23). [See also Michelle Cross (2007: 74)] Patrick Bizzaro talks of those people "who believe writers are born to write, that they possess the 'writer gene'" (2007: 84) and Wallace Stegner confirms that, as a writing teacher, he "looks for signs of gift," for those indicators of genius and talent: "perceptiveness, alertness to the observed world, a feel for language" (1997: 14).

Little has been written about who, how and when someone is qualified to identify the genius of those talented writers that cannot be taught to write. Most often the mantle of 'genius-finder' appears to rest on the shoulders of whoever finds herself in the powerful position of talent selector. For 'university novelist' William Styron, it is up to the responsible academic in the institution to separate the talented from the talentless: "The professor should weed out the good from the bad, cull them like a farmer, and not encourage the ones who haven't got something" (Cowley, 1963: 242). Styron seems to suggest that "the professor," because of his position, is an ordained 'writing-talent scout' and that all individuals' writing talent or 'talentlessness' is exposed and in full view of "the professor" exactly at the time that "the professor" makes her judgment. [See also Patrick Bizzaro (2007: 78)]

Gregory Light identifies the general "assumption that creative talent is instinctive and unteachable" (1992: 27). He and John Gardner both question why creative writing has been treated differently to the traditional arts of painting, sculpting and musical composition, which have always been deemed to be 'teachable.' Gardner suggests that "the writing of fiction may be a less specific detectable skill than painting or musicianship" (1983: 80). This raises a further question: if writing talent is not an easily detectable skill, how are the many writing teachers able to accurately identify and sort the talented from the talentless in

the creative writing classroom?

Some authors, who support the general view that creative writing cannot be taught, point out that an established pedagogic methodology, system or process for the teaching of creative writing has not been developed or implemented. Gardner remarks that "there exists no standard theory on how to teach creative writing." (Gardner, 1983: 80) [See also Louis Menand (2009)] Wallace Stegner explains the reason for this absence of a formalised instruction regimen as the writer's inability to explain his own writing process: "How can anyone 'teach' writing, when he himself, as a writer, is never sure what he is doing?" (1997: 9). John W. Aldridge emphasises that there is an absence of any regulated and measured creative writing teaching process, any "formal curricular plan," for creative writing students:

> Unlike graduate programs in the visual arts or in music composition, writing programs do not, as a rule, require their students to learn specific techniques, nor do they measure their progress through their growing ability to make use of those techniques in their own work. There is, in short, no formal curricular plan for monitoring the development of writing students as they evolve from apprenticeship through ever more demanding performance requirements until they arrive at a condition at least approaching competence (1992: 26).

In 1974 Thomas H. Maugh reported on the outcomes of a writing teacher conference and noted that conference participants argued that it is "not possible to teach creativity in any subject" and that "creative writing is a misnomer," because "such courses were actually teaching criticism of creative writing" (1974: 1273).

As regards a course with 'creative writing' in its title, Michael Green's explanation as to why 'creativity' has been excluded in the assessment processes of the 'creative' writing of his students, is confusing and appears to be an admission that creativity is unteachable:

> It is made clear that evaluation is based on the 'teachable' components of the skills of creative expression in relation to the conventions of the particular genre at hand. These skills will, it is hoped, facilitate creative ability, but cannot in effect create creative ability. 'Talent,' dare one say even 'genius,' is beyond the realm of teaching, although its nurturing and development is well within that

realm (2005).

3. No, the Teaching of Creative Writing has a Negative Effect on Writing Quality

There is a paucity of books, essays and articles on the subject of the quality of the writing created by the many writers leaving the institutional writing workshops and it appears that student texts are evaluated purely on their technical properties. Michael Green's explanation of his creative writing student evaluation criteria would seem to suggest this to be the case.

Paul Dawson seems to confirm that the predominant quality measure used in assessing and rewarding student writers with the relevant academic qualification is 'technical competency.' Aesthetic or artistic quality is either not important, or impossible to measure given the elements of subjective judgement required to pronounce a text as artistic, or of having aesthetic quality. The result is that the bulk of the institutionally based fictional texts of student writers is "bland and soulless minimalist prose, with largely objective realist observations about the minutiae of everyday existence" (2005: 13).

As Dawson identifies, "what enters here are questions of value," because "work *is* being successfully produced and published, but it lacks literary quality" (2005: 12). In the drive to optimise the continually growing student demand for writing instruction, the notion of creative writing, as an art form, has been replaced by creative writing, as a commodity produced by bountiful, technically proficient professional authors.

4. No, but There are Ancillary Teaching Benefits

Jane Rogers concedes that while "inspiration ... cannot be taught ... [y]ou can set up situations where you *hope* to inspire students, you can try to create the space for them to think and imagine ..." (1992: 110). While Mal Leicester confirms that "creative writing cannot be taught," he also concedes that "students find that attending a class provides the motivation to make the required space for writing in their busy life" (1999: 17). Here Leicester makes a rare mention of the intrinsic, psychological concept of "motivation." [See also William Styron (Cowley, 1957: 242)] There is a general absence of a focused interrogation of the customs and traditions of the institutionalised teaching of creative writing, perhaps because it does not suit the creative writing status quo to entertain such an

interrogation. As Ritter and Vanderslice suggest, creative writing instruction, in its historic and current form, is 'embedded' in the system.

5. Yes, the Craft of Writing Can be Taught

Most authorities agree that the craft elements of writing can be taught. Craft is generally considered to be, and is mostly defined as, the mechanics of writing, the extrinsic components of writing removed from the content, style and emotion of the text. Kurt Vonnegut is convinced that creative writing can be taught in "the same way golf can be taught. A pro can point out obvious flaws in your swing ..." (Plimpton, 1984: 230). Wallace Stegner uses a sea-faring analogy to mirror Vonnegut's golfing example:

> A teacher who has been on those seas can teach certain things — equivalents of the use of compass and sextant: the language and its uses, and certain tested literary tools and techniques and strategies and stances ... (1997: 10).

Stegner's view of the teaching of creative writing appears to be myopically institutional, almost to the extent of being industrial and scientific. He refers to the university as a "writing establishment" where "the general technology of writing" (1997: 9) is taught. [See also William Styron (Cowley, 1957: 242)] These notions of the craft only teaching of creative writing are encapsulated in the oft-quoted words of Ron McFarland in a 1993 issue of *College English*:

> I once ascertained five essentials of a serious writer: desire, drive, talent, vision, and craft ... My point ... is not altered whether the list is held at five, cut to three, or expanded to twenty; of the essentials, only craft can be taught (1993: 34).

Tim Mayers attributes McFarland's rigid stance to what Mayers calls the "'institutional-conventional wisdom' of creative writing ... embedded within institutional structures ..." (2005: 13).

Louis Menand raises the valid concern that there appears to be no generally accepted view of what constitutes 'craft' in writing: "What counted as craft for James ... was very different from what counted as craft for Hemingway ... There is no 'craft of fiction' as such" (2009).

The avoidance of 'creativity' in the teaching and learning of creative writing, as an immeasurable element of the process, has also led to the avoidance of 'creativity' in the teaching methodologies of creative writing with the focus being on craft, as the only teachable and measurable component of creative writing instruction.

In their book, *Creative Writing and the Persistence of 'Lore'* (2007), Ritter and Vanderslice condemn the doctrine of 'only-the-craft-of-writing-can-be-taught.' They identify how the 'unteachability' of creative writing has remained an 'embedded concept,' as a "persistent feature of the profession since its inception as a motto of the Iowa Writer's Workshop (i.e., writing cannot be taught but talent can be nurtured)" (2007: xv). They point out that the failure "to complicate and interrogate" creative writing teaching "traditions" has led to a perpetuation of "the model of the creative writing teacher as a mentor or 'idol' whom younger writers should copy ... [which] is the standard default position in creative writing pedagogy" (2007: xv).

6. Yes, the 'Numbers' Prove That Creative Writing Can be Taught

Questions of aesthetic value, art and quality are deemed unimportant, because in the mercantile world the numbers do not lie. Creative Writing continues to be taught in increasing numbers in more countries and more academic institutions all the time. The academic assimilation of the teaching of creative writing has resulted in compromises and trade-offs. Aesthetic value and quality have become subordinate to the importance of the production of an optimal number of technically proficient professional writers. Andrew Levy confirms the economic objectives behind this assimilation:

> As both modern and early-century observers readily noted, the merger between academia and writers, 'created a lot of jobs.' If the creative writing 'revolution' is perceived as forming a 'safety' zone that is also a 'danger ... for contemporary writers, it also reflects a cultural transformation where writers have voluntarily chosen to subordinate many of the marginalizing aspects of their profession in exchange for several of the basic pragmatic trappings of respectability — financial security, advanced degrees, and so on (1993: 107).

The numbers have become the measure of whether creative writing can actually be taught. The fact that in excess of 100,000 qualified writers have joined the American writing

universe over the last 70 years is numeric proof that creative writing can be taught in higher education institutions. With the evolution of writing instruction as a commodity and its commensurate professionalisation, notions of the author as artist are replaced by the status of the writer as professional. As Andrew Levy points out, there is an "ongoing negotiation between the individual writer's desire to 'celebrate his own existence' (in Einstein's words), and to do so in as painless a manner as possible" (1993: 107). The numbers of qualified writers emerging from the universities would appear to suggest that writers are choosing a "painless" rather than a "celebrated existence" as artists. Levy suggests that the development of the creative writing industry via the academic institutions was not a natural development, but a financially astute and politically expedient process:

> The entire system of graduate programs and creative writing courses that has developed in the last forty years would have been an impossibility without a founding ideology that claimed that the composition of high literature was a craft that could be quantified and taught (1993: 122).

Louis Menand echoes Levy's observation that the "whole enterprise is based" on the fact that "creative writing is something that can be taught" (2009). Menand quotes John Barth from his article entitled "Writing: Can it be Taught?" in the *Times Book Review*, in which Barth highlights the absurdity of the debate given the embedded nature of creative writing as an industry and a field of academic study: His answer to the question of whether creative writing can be taught is simply "that it emphatically can, mainly on the ground that it so emphatically is" (2009).

In his essay, "The Novel," in *Teaching Creative Writing*, 2006 Graeme Harper injects some realism into the commercially justified doctrine that creative writing can be taught. Harper asks "whether it can be taught; whether in fact, creative writing classes in university and college are largely a waste of time, possibly even an elaborate educational hoax" (2006: 39) and proceeds to question the appropriateness of creative writing as an academic field of study, and whether it should ever have been given a place in the academy:

> Maybe, because of what contemporary academe has become in some instances, the teaching of creative writing on many campuses is well-nigh impossible — a kind of hopeful, but doomed, activity. That is, rather than teaching it, university employees (call them professors, lecturers, teachers, writer-teachers, or what

> you will) merely manage the discipline's existence. And the word here is very precisely 'discipline,' even if that might not be the word, to many minds, that best fits the way creative writing practice works or how its results are viewed (2006: 39).

7. Relative Responses Offering Flexible, Interrogative Perspectives and Pedagogic Alternatives

The alternative views of authorities, who are slightly removed from the subject under scrutiny, most often add a fresh perspective. For example, in the teaching of creative writing in academic institutions the aspiring writers are viewed as being the same as all other students and the presumption is that their desires are also the same as in all other disciplines. Note the refreshingly clear and simple alternatives that materialise when Howard Singerman views the student, not only as a student, but also as an artist:

> Artists are an ontological rather than an epistemological problem; theirs is a question of being rather than knowing. In the professional school ... the artist exceeds his education; the artist is precisely what is not educated. (1999: 22).

The myth that creativity is a rare gift limited to a few individuals is challenged by "investigations of cognitive psychology [which] have established creativity as a latent quality in every person ..." (Dawson, 2001). This finding by experts in the field of human creativity casts doubt on the entrenched notion that creative writing teachers and professors have the ability to identify the creatively talented students in their classrooms at the beginning of each academic year.

Margaret Boden highlights the negative effects of the continued insistence that individuals are either creative or uncreative, talented or talentless:

> Monolithic notions of creativity, talent or intelligence are discouraging ... Either one has got 'it' or one hasn't. Why bother to try, if one's efforts can lead only to a slightly less dispiriting level of mediocrity? (1990: 256).

She suggests that, instead of applying a premature judgment of students either as talented or talentless, an alternate and more progressive measurement process be used, a process also

mooted by John W. Aldridge, in which "the students' progress is measured through their growing ability to make use of those techniques [which they have been taught] in their own work" (1992: 26). If the existence of creativity is approached from a more relative than absolute perspective, students can be more positively measured against the improvements they have achieved in their writing practices:

> A very different attitude is possible for someone who sees creativity as based in ordinary abilities we all share, and in practiced expertise to which we all aspire. They can reasonably hope to achieve a fair degree of personal-creativity, and — who knows? — perhaps some historic-creativity too. Even if their highest hopes are disappointed, they may be able to improve their imaginative powers to some significant extent (Boden, 1990: 256).

Rollo May provides a glimpse of what potentially valuable insights are available, if those with an interest in creative writing teaching and learning explore the rarely entered world of the intrinsic, behavioural elements of the creative writing process:

> The fact that talent is plentiful but passion is lacking seems to me to be a fundamental facet of the problem of creativity in many fields today, and our ways of approaching creativity by evading the encounter have played directly into this trend. We worship technique — talent — as a way of evading the anxiety of the direct encounter (1975: 88).

The value inherent in considering the perspectives of those creativity theorists, who sit outside the academic creative writing enclave, is self-evident when their research findings clearly counter and cast doubt on traditionally entrenched dogmas, such as the commonly accepted principle that a student writer can be adjudged to be talented or talentless at a specific point in time, usually during the early years of a student's writing practice, by a designated authority figure. The conclusions of James C. Kaufman and Claudia A. Gentile are derived from a psychological research study reported in *High Ability Studies* in 2002 and provide an empirically substantiated reason to re-evaluate the entrenched dogma of 'talent or no talent right now.'

> [t]he results of the present study indicated that writing teachers should re-think the assumptions many of us have about talent, youth and creative writing. In addition to teaching creative writing as an avenue to developing creative

> thought, writing teachers could instil in their students (and themselves) the possibility of becoming successful creative writers at any stage in their lives. Thus, creative writing could be taught not only as a means of developing creative thinking skills, but as an end in itself — the development of students' abilities to be creative writers. Likewise, colleges and universities ... could spread the good news — that one is never too old to become a productive and successful writer (2002: 122).

Writing in his book, *On Becoming a Novelist*, in 1983 John Gardner had already discovered what Kaufman's and Gentile's study ultimately confirms, but few creative writing teaching authorities or specialists have explored:

> To answer the serious young writer's question [have I got the talent to be a successful writer?] responsibly, the writing teacher, or whoever, needs to consider a variety of indicators, none of them sure but each of them offering a useful hint. Some of these have to do with visible or potential ability, some with character. The reason none of the indicators is foolproof is partly that they're relative, and partly that the writer can improve — changing old habits of technique or personality, getting better by stubborn determination — or simply grow at a later stage from a probable non-writer to a probable success (1983: 2).

The fringe creativity focused authorities advocate that instead of avoiding the anxieties of an engagement with the intrinsic aspects of the teaching of creative writing, teachers and students and their writing will benefit from an examination of such an exploration.

The alternative theories provided by these creativity authorities will add significantly to the development of future creative writing pedagogy by incorporating the intrinsic dimensions of human creativity, motivation and processes to the existing predominant teaching focus on the extrinsic elements of writing craft.

D. The Influence of English Studies on Creative Writing

1. Background

During the 1930s the initial absorption of the teaching of creative writing by American universities had as its primary objective a "reform in the teaching of literature" (Myers,

1989: xlvii). Authorities, such as Hughes Mearns and Norman Foerster of the University of Iowa, described the academic assimilation of creative writing, at that time, as "a way of salvaging literary study from the dead hand of textbooks and historical scholarship" (Myers, 1989: xlvii-xlviii), and its intervention was considered to be a "Progressive" and "Humanist" endeavour.

The confluence of the student demand for the learning of creative writing and the growing commercialisation of higher education institutions has led to the replacement of those early humanist goals with more mercantile ones. The consistent demand for creative writing instruction continues to be "attractive to departments desperate to recruit more students" with creative writing seemingly logically housed within and proving to be "the fiscal salvation of English departments" (Shelnutt, 1992) at a time when English Studies enrolments are declining.

2. The Entrenched Dominance of English Studies

The teaching of creative writing, as a field of study, continues to be viewed and treated as academically inferior to the more traditional components of English Studies with the result that creative writing continues to be a "marginalized discipline" (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007: xii) and, with little in the way of development and support, universities "continue to allow creative writing to be a riderless horse in the larger field of English studies" (Ritter, 2001).

Those authorities, who display the most positive responses to the presence of the subject Creative Writing in English departments, are often themselves members, or even professors, of such departments. For Siobhan Holland the link between English and Creative writing is a positive one for both disciplines (2002). Graeme Harper contends that "the subject 'English Literature' is frequently presented as Creative Writing's primary cognate partner" and that "the development of the study of Creative Writing and appreciation of the study of English go hand-in-hand" (2006).

Steve May confirms the existence of the entrenched superiority of English Studies in response to creative writing's academic entrance, commenting that some institutions, like

the University of Warwick, "while offering a comprehensive writing programme with highly regarded creative writing programmes, retain a 'mother-subject' orientation" (2012: 66) in creative writing's relationship with English literature:

> The aims of the Warwick Writing Program is to encourage good reading as well as writing, to develop sound expository skills, to bridge academic and 'creative' approaches to literature in a fully integrated range of activities. The BA in English Literature and Creative Writing 'puts the practice of writing in different genres on an equal footing with critical and cultural-historical approaches to literature' (2012: 66).

Many authorities make it abundantly clear that the role of Creative Writing within English Faculties is to be subservient to traditional English Studies' needs and objectives. Patrick Bizzaro suggests that it is important to determine "creative writing's place in English studies" and that creative writing is somehow in debt "to other subjects in English studies" (2010: 36). This attitude towards creative writing as a supportive influence in English departments appears from the literature to be a fairly common approach to the subject. It is viewed as taking up "a central position in English studies ... draw[ing] on literature ... and the basic principles of composition [and] supports both as well" (Yoder Miller, 2005: 47). Michelene Wandor believes that "CW seems to offer a solution to, or at least reconciliation between, the imponderable differences between literary criticism, theory and literary practice (2012: 6).

The recognition of the superiority of English as a discipline and the inherent aim of maintaining and entrenching that dominance is evident throughout the literature on creative writing in higher education institutions. It is a constant theme, particularly in the UK and Australia. Marcelle Freiman bemoans

> the preference in some institutions for a limited intake into creative writing courses, which creates an elite cohort ... an approach to creative writing that is somewhat outdated in the context of contemporary demands on educators [and] helps to marginalize and isolate creative writing rather than reflecting its potential for learning and for expanding English studies (2003b).

Writing in *Power and Identity in the Creative Writing Classroom: The Authority Project*,

Anna Leahy's articulation of a "coherent creative writing pedagogy" provides a clear glimpse of the continuous thinking, efforts and activities aimed at subjugating creative writing in favour of the health and well-being of the subject English and the faculty and its teaching staff, with the interests of students clearly compromised and of secondary concern:

> … to establish creative writing as a distinct and valuable field in English studies ... to rethink prevalent assumptions about workshops and other common practices in order to both understand and revise them: to document and share a unified most adaptable approach for those entering and continuing to teach in the field; and to demystify teaching and separate it from writing in ways that ultimately benefit student learning and faculty satisfaction (2005: ix).

Despite calls for action such as that of Leahy for the development of "a coherent creative writing pedagogy," creative writing's continued inferiority, subjugation and domination by English literature has restricted its pedagogic development as a field of study, which Paul Dawson identifies as being the case in its assimilation by a number of Australian universities:

> ... it was the discipline of English itself which hindered the development of Creative Writing in Australia ... the writing was ignored because of the illogical consideration that the act of writing was somehow beneath the dignity of tertiary study (2001).

As Burton Hatlen explains:

> English has systematically devalued non-literary discourses in favour of literature, and the act of writing in favour of the contemplation of the completed masterpiece ... English both celebrates the transcendental value of the literary text and treats the people who actually create such texts with suspicion if not contempt ... English both affirms the value of written discourse and devalues the act of writing (1988: 798).

3. The Predominance of the Teaching of Literature

The protection, promotion and teaching of English Literature remains the primary focus of most English departments with the result that all the resources at the department's disposal,

which includes its intake of students, who want to be taught to write creatively, are directed towards the primary focus of the teaching of English literature.

In one of the few documented creative writing based research studies Gregory Light, having analysed the Creative Writing course outlines and teaching objectives of a number of British higher education institutions, addressed the "relationship of the particular writing course to the activity of writing itself" and concluded that the Creative Writing courses on offer contained one of two "writing orientations" (Light, 1995: 15),

> ... which, depending on the primary concern of the course with regard to writing, may be referred to as either extrinsic or intrinsic. In the former case, writing is primarily regarded as an instrument in the study of literature, while in the latter case, the course has as its primary goal the development of writing as a practice in and of itself (1995: 15).

Light found that the courses offered by the majority of the institutions examined, displayed an "extrinsic" orientation with the writing component of the creative writing course "primarily regarded as an instrument in the study of literature" (1995: 16). He points out that it is very important that students identify from the course literature the institution's preferred "writing orientation," because "while the 'intrinsic' course [focuses] the student on his or her own writing, 'extrinsic' courses focus them on the writing of someone else: on literature" (1995: 16).

The majority of authorities support the notion of an extrinsic writing orientation in which the students' writing supports the teaching of literature with most authorities also suggesting that the study of literature should also be a key component of the students' creative writing practice.

Morris Freedman claims that "a creative writing student ... must first of all be a student of literature" and David Fenza of the AWP warns that "the younger the writer is, the more that writer needs to study literature" (qtd in Bartlett, 2002). Both Thomas Bartlett (2002) and Tim Mayers (2005: x) boast of the strength of English literature in American universities and, providing a similar, literature supporting view from Australia, Paul Dawson argues that "the Creative Class 'should foster' a sense of responsibility to literature as a field of

knowledge" (2005: 62), and that "the history of Creative Writing demands that it be seen as flexible and continually developing a set of pedagogical strategies for challenging and reinvigorating Literary Studies" (2005: 10).

The bolstering of the teaching of English Literature by means of creative writing instruction is not the type of instruction the average creative writing student would agree to when seeking to enrol in a course, which she requires to teach her how to write creatively with an "intrinsic" writing orientation and with writing not as an instrument of literature, but "as a practice in and of itself" (Light, 1995: 15). John Gardner warns that this over emphasis on literature in creative writing courses may be an unnatural and artificial burden to load onto writing students: "[i]f he takes enough English literature courses, the young would-be writer can learn to block every true instinct he has" (1983: 43). The author Kurt Vonnegut supports Gardner's stance, albeit in a more direct manner: "I think it can be tremendously refreshing if a creator of literature has something on his mind other than the history of literature so far. Literature should not disappear up its own asshole, so to speak" (qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 226).

4. An Emphasis on Reading as a Literary Activity

Support for the advancement of the field of English Literature is also to be found in the constant emphasis on the importance of reading for those students, who study creative writing. Such is the extent of this emphasis on reading that it would appear that the practice of reading has replaced the practice of writing, as the ultimate objective of the creative writing course. This shift in emphasis from writing to reading, which is the primary activity practised by English Literature students, represents a further example of the manipulation of creative writing's presence as a subject in academic institutions.

Philip Gross emphasises the notion that "[r]eading, even more than writing, is the heart of the workshop process" (2005: 4). Marcelle Freiman claims that "teaching writing is ... about teaching reading. Rather than claiming to teach students to write 'publishable' writing ... we are teaching them about writing/reading and how language functions in its 'worldly' contexts" (2005).

George Garrett remarks that "creative writing has proved extremely useful as a relatively efficient and painless means to teach close reading and careful writing, quite aside from any professional writing goals and objectives" (1993: 438) and Thomas Bartlett attempts to justify the emphasis on reading over the importance of writing when he contends that creative writing students are "studying literature too, just from a different perspective," because "the old saw is true: Before you can become a writer, you have to become a reader" (2002).

Paul Dawson is an authority, who has recognised that this emphasis on reading inherent in many English departments is ultimately a defensive means of protecting and supporting English Literature:

> Whenever it is claimed that the real benefit of writing programmes is their ability to develop the students' reading skills it strikes me as a defensive attitude ... reducing the value of Creative Writing to an adjunct or pedagogical tool for Literary Studies (2005: 164).

Nigel Krauth provides a valuable reminder of the distinction between the practices of literary studies and creative writing and what 'writing-focused' programmes can offer student writers:

> [They] offer not only readership, but also *writership*. They replace re-action with pro-action. They empower students to tell, and not just to read and reply (to re-tell the telling); they encourage production and not just reception. They put expression, not just impression, into the hands of the students (2000).

In his article " 'Pleasure balks, bliss appears' or 'The apparatus shines like a blade:' Towards a theory of progressive reading praxis in Creative Writing pedagogy," which appeared in the October 2011 issue of *TEXT*, Tim Jarvis calls for a shift of the reading practice in the creative writing classroom:

> ... it is crucial that Creative Writing as a discipline move towards a more radical, liberated reading praxis, 'writerly reading;' this will help it transform from a place in which existing cultural codes are replicated and from which they are promulgated, to a space where the interrogation of cultural codes can take place

and new, radical codes can be formed, a locus of dissent (2011).

5. The Academic Illegitimacy of Creative Writing

It has already been pointed out that, as a subject within the field of English Studies, creative writing is considered to be academically inferior, invalid and illegitimate. Distinctions are made between "scholarly work" and "creative work" (Coles, 2006: 10) and conditions are set for its academic recognition:

> In order to gain acceptance in a traditional English department, any class which experimented with Creative Writing also had to be bolstered by critical and theoretical elements to assuage complaints that it lacked academic rigour ... (Dawson, 2005: 155).

Janet Emig explains the hierarchical relationship between literature and creative writing:

> Literature is real because it comes from outside the classroom, writing that is produced in the classroom on the other hand is ... less serious, somehow, specious ... only literature qualifies as texts ... only literature texts are consumed, and that consumption is called interpretation ... there is no marked interest in how texts, literature, are produced ... (1983: 173).

Krauth and Brady concur with Emig's conclusion: "The reading of literature ... has full status; but the making of literature ... has yet to establish its niche in spite of swelling student numbers and increased research activity" (qtd in Dawson, 1999). The documented development of the creative writing programmes and modules at the University of KwaZulu Natal provides a further practical example of the academic and hierarchal thinking, which determines the pedagogic parameters necessary to ensure that the subject Creative Writing possesses the required academic rigour, validity and legitimacy:

> Obviously a primary concern of introducing courses of this type is that they not become woolly and unstructured 'easy options' ... each level had to share in something of an academic ambience ... if they wish to gain *academic credit* for their creative efforts, then they must engage with some of the more scholarly features of creativity (as accounted for by the self-reflexive components of the courses offered) (Green, 2005).

Graeme Harper maintains that this drive towards academic legitimisation is rooted in the history of English Studies flowing from the time of the dominance of the Classics and through to the "modern phenomenon of professionalization and institutionalization [and] the role of the university ... to legitimize ..." (2006b: 4).

Wendy Bishop provides a useful summation of the position and role of creative writing in English Departments:

> In many departments, literature courses, as 'content' bearing courses, are considered much more valuable than writing courses, which may be viewed as contentless craft courses, or worse, as therapeutic. Department divisions fragment what should be interrelated reading-and-response and writing-and-response activities. At the most practical level, literature and writing fight for status and department funding. Creative writing classes may function as 'bait' to lure students to enrolment in literature classes, and creative writing students are not valued for themselves, for the learning they hope to achieve (1990: 9).

Aligned with Wendy Bishop's concern for the experiences students may have to undergo within an environment, which is focused on the entrenchment of the 'English' status quo and which requires supplementary explanations and explorations to support and verify creative writing's academic legitimacy, Robert Sheppard, as one of a minority of authorities to consider creative writing students and the effects that the ideological tensions within English departments have on their teaching and learning experiences, questions the role of the supplementary discourse, exegesis or thesis as a validation and legitimisation mechanism and in 2012 he verifies the continued ulteriority of the teaching of creative writing discovered and exposed in 1992 in the research of Gregory Light:

> One questionable assumption about the nature of the supplementary discourse ... is that its production consists of the same critical skills employed by literary critics, the same skills taught by teachers of literature, and there is evidence that students themselves are confused about this. There is still perhaps a residual sense that the function of Creative Writing on English programmes is to teach literary appreciation by other means ... It is one thing to chart the creative process or the philosophy of composition ... but another to interpret one's own particular text for a reader. It is not clear what use this exercise is to the

developing writer — it could even affect the creative process … (2012:114).

6. Alternative Locations and Structures for Creative Writing Teaching and Learning

This predominance of the interests, power and authority of English literature has ensured that the status quo of Creative Writing being located and controlled with in the English Faculty remains in most higher education institutions. While there are universities such as Colombia University, which has located its creative writing offering within its faculty of the School of the Arts alongside "drama, film, fine art and music" (Wandor, 2002) and the University of Georgia, which has housed its creative writing unit in its Fine Arts Department, (Donnelly, 2012: 12) and while some authorities do mention "creative writing [as] the last performance-based light to enter the academy" (Wandor, 2002) and literature, and in particular poetry, [as] the finest of the fine arts" (Dawson, 2005: 37), English faculty-based authorities avoid the connection between creative writing and art, thereby avoiding the complexities of the notions of creativity, innovation and originality. The consideration of creative writing as a process, which is an artistic endeavour, is more closely aligned to the writing aims of student writers than to the traditional study of creative writing as a supporting, ancillary practice to the study of English literature. The analysis of student creative needs, desires and conceptions in Chapter VIII *Student Writer Conceptions of Creative Writing* will provide ample substantiation for this statement.

In recent years an increasing number of authorities have been questioning the location of creative writing with most of those authorities favouring the status quo as the most desirable alternative. In his book, *(Re)Writing Craft: Composition, Creative Writing, and the Future of English Studies*, Tim Mayers argues that there are only two "recent works of reform-oriented scholarship that do adequately take into account the dominance of literary study within English departments" (2005: 27). Mayers considers the two books *Coming of Age: The Advanced Writing Curriculum* and *A Field of Dreams: Independent Writing Programs and the Future of Composition Studies* to be "provocative" (2005: 27) when all the authors of these two books are doing is questioning the location of creative writing and suggesting alternative English Department structures to more appropriately accommodate the subject:

[P]roductive advancements in the study and teaching of writing might only be

> realized *outside* of English departments or, at the very least, in the form of separate and autonomous curricular tracts within English departments (2005: 27).

In the year 2000 in their analysis of the outcome of a panel discussion, which took place at a writing conference, Paul Munden and Norman Schwenk identify and list the panel's negative findings in respect of creative writing's predominant position within English departments, but still favoured the status quo:

> It is perhaps the very success of writing programs which engenders this hostile demarcation ... the ongoing clash between 'literature' and 'writing' studies. One strong line of thinking has been to relocate Writing Departments within Fine Arts. The argument is that writers are makers, like painters, or sculptors, not scholars ... Richard Duggin even went so far as to blame literature departments for unambitious writing ... His colleagues on the panel were clearly of a similar mind ... [but] whatever the advantages of relocation (including more control over assessment) I'm not sure they outweigh the logic of keeping critical and creative literature studies under one roof. There's the simple fact that writers need to be well read (2000).

This underlying defensiveness overrides the needs of creative writing students, who have "important reasons of their own for taking ... workshops; they do not exist primarily to swell the rosters of English departments" (Bishop, 1999: 9), but "in a college classroom they are defenceless, and the rewards for giving in are many" (Gardner, 1983: 44) with the result that student resistance is minimal and "creative writing classes have remained pedagogically static or [have] become more conservative" (Bishop, 1990: 12).

Located in and controlled by the English faculty, once they have enrolled and are expecting to be taught to write creatively, students are told that creative writing is not "a) therapy, b) self-expression, c) a training ground for the next batch of great writers, d) a form of play, or e) a glorified form of literary or study skills training" (Wandor, 2002).

It is the older, more experienced and respected writing teachers and writers such as Raymond Williams, John Gardner and Kurt Vonnegut, who are the dissenting voices, questioning the suitability of the current academic status quo in terms of the location of

creative writing as a field of study and the makeup and form of its pedagogy. Raymond Williams poses two highly relevant, yet perennially avoided, questions about creative writing's location in and relationship to English Studies:

> Can radically different work still be carried on under a single heading or department when there is not just diversity of approach but more serious and fundamental differences about the object of knowledge (despite overlapping of the actual material of study?). Or must there be some wider reorganization of the received divisions of the humanities, the human sciences, into newly defined and newly collaborative arrangements? (1983: 211).

John Gardner echoes Williams' concerns daring to suggest that "it is not necessary — or perhaps not even advisable — that the young writer major in literature" (1983: 96) and Kurt Vonnegut finds it "tremendously refreshing if a creator of literature has something on his mind other than the history of literature so far" (qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 226) and he recommends that creative writing opportunities not be restricted to English departments alone, but that they should be offered to, and writing-students should also be drawn from

> the chemistry departments ... the zoology departments ... the anthropology departments and the astronomy departments and physics departments, and all the medical and law schools. That's where the writers are most likely to be (qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 226).

More recently the perspectives of some authorities have broadened to include creative writing teaching forms and locations, which do not include any mention of the English faculty, but appear to be based on alternative institutional personnel-focused and based opinions and interests, with as a consistent institutional phenomenon, no consideration of and only a courteous mention of the students and their creative writing conceptions and ambitions.

Willy Maley locates creative writing "between areas such as art and music ... and journalism and publishing" and he emphasises that "[a]cademic and professional writers do not always see eye-to-eye on the best way to foster creativity," but he personally sees "creative writing as a cognate with Journalism and Publishing more than with music and fine art" (Maley, 2010: 87).

In contrast Dianne Donnelly makes no attempt to define creative writing's position or attributes as a discipline in the higher education institution. She simply states that it must be located where it is most beneficial to the institution, as a field of study with the writing student not receiving a mention, but being generalised into the entire "student body:"

> The space that *creative writing studies* occupies must be that which allows creative writing studies to become pedagogically and programmatically sound, as well as productive and meaningful to the academy, its profession, its creative economy, and, critically, to its student body. As a discipline, it must continue its necessary field of inquiry, scholarship, and research as well as advocate for its own identity at the public and institutional level (2012c:147).

In terms of Creative Writing's location within higher education institutions the seemingly traditional domination of English literature and the continuing superiority of and bias towards institutional, departmental and personnel needs and interests, would not appear to be conducive to a creativity-focused, artistic environment, which has as its primary objective the creative outcomes of those students' writing practices.

It is for this reason that it is very important in the development of an alternative academic creative writing pedagogy to consider alternative sites and structures for the teaching and learning of creative writing, either located within a School of the Arts type faculty, alongside the more traditional art forms, or located separately and independently as a Writing School, with perhaps an affiliation to English Literature as a component of the creative writing curriculum, particularly in respect of undergraduate student writers.

E. Institutional Influences on Creative Writing Pedagogy

1. Academic Manipulation of Creative Writing

There are numerous examples of the academic manipulation of the teaching of creative writing. In the United States Katharine Haake in her essay, "Teaching Creative Writing if the Shoe Fits," and in her book, *What Our Speech Disrupts: Feminism and creative Writing Studies*, appears to simply dismiss the students' desire and passion for expressing

themselves creatively and to see creative writing as an undefined field of study, which can be didactically formed and constructed according to the teacher's needs and the visions and aims of the English Studies faculty:

> Perhaps it is time to ask ourselves exactly what we mean by creative writing teaching ... what alternative methodologies can we conceive for our pedagogy? What might be appropriate goals for our classes? How can crucial critical, cultural, and composition theories inform and enrich our discipline? What might constitute an effective creative writing curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level? How can creative writing be most productively situated within English studies? What are the ideological assumptions of our enterprise? Finally, what do we want our students to learn? (2000: 46)

Ten years later in her essay, "Re-envisioning the Workshop: Hybrid Classrooms, Hybrid Texts" (2010), Haake still uses the title of the subject she teaches, 'creative writing,' reluctantly and still argues that the "qualifier is unfortunate" (perhaps still banning the utterance of the word creative in her classroom). She declares that all writing is creative and that it "should be part of a larger project of re-configuring English Studies …" (2010: 183).

In South Africa Michael Green's approach to the teaching of creative writing at the University of KwaZulu-Natal resembles that of Haake in terms of creative writing's focus and value lying in its support and the strengthening of English Studies. As explained in Green's National Research Foundation Grantholder's Report, *Creative Writing at Tertiary Level*, in the university's assimilation and development of creative writing as a subject, the English Studies Department

- did not consider "the teaching of creative writing at undergraduate levels ... as a direct attempt to produce 'creative writers' per se," but to "improve expressive skills in general;"
- sought to increase the number of English Studies students, generally, and English Literature students, specifically, in order to maintain the status quo of Literary Studies as the backbone of the English Faculty by 'piggy-backing' on the student demand for creative writing by making the awarding of creative writing credits conditional upon the parallel study of other English Studies subjects, specifically English Literature; and
- sought to academically legitimise creative writing by establishing "clear aims,

> outcomes, and scholarly paradigms" to ensure that it acquires an "academic ambience" (2005).

It appears that for some authorities the underlying objective of shaping and manipulating creative writing as an academic discipline is the establishment and entrenchment of some form of power base. There seems to be a need for some level of authority through the manipulation and control of creative writing instruction. For example, when Anna Leahy is confronted by student feedback, which rejects the need for critical writing and explains the students' creativity needs, she "challenges their assumptions and authority" seemingly as the authoritarian teacher (2005b: 14).

Dianne Donnelly is willing to develop and mould creative writing as an academic field of study into any form, which will ultimately entrench it in the academy as a valid and legitimate field of study with the accompanying power and authority benefits, which would be a product of such entrenchment. It is notable that creativity plays no role in the development of the subject. 'Creativity' as the subject descriptor ensures student interest, demand and fees, but the institution decides the form of what students will be taught, even if it is not what the students expect or need.

> Program design is a critical factor in determining a cost-effective, efficient and successful creative writing program. Assuming a proactive position within the university system means creative writing situates and demonstrates its critical contribution … Reshaping creative writing, rather, is an attentive championing effort, one which adds for [*sic*] the discipline, power and agency in the academy (2012: 12).

Academic authorities on the teaching of creative writing talk about re-configuring (Haake) and reshaping (Donnelly) creative writing. This re-configuring and reshaping often entails creative writing's integration with other elements of English studies specifically thereby masking its uniqueness and otherness and difference from more scholarly, logical and rational forms of writing, particularly traditional academic writing. Indigo Perry quotes Jeri Kroll as stating that "[c]ertainly the disciplines of creative and professional writing interpenetrate" (2012: 152).

Evie Yoder Miller agrees with Harris (2001: 180) that "rather than segregating writing

courses according to the writing product, writing courses should ideally work together in a more integrative and comprehensive process …" (2005: 48) For Yoder Miller, as for Donnelly, the integration of creative writing may lead to the satisfaction of the need for power:

> ... we can create writing pedagogy that integrates the strengths of literature, composition and creative writing. With our breadth of understanding about literature and composition, creative writing teachers can be a unifying authoritative force in English departments and classrooms (2005: 48).

This manipulation and contorting of creative writing by means of integration and removing the differences between creative writing and other more formal academic forms of writing is a common practice amongst academic creative writing authorities, as they try and convince their readers, and perhaps themselves and their institutions, that creative writing is simply another element in a range of writing forms and genres all with the common characteristic of 'writing.'

Cindy Nichols chooses to express her opinion in the form of a list of questions, but in doing so implies that creative writing is the same as other forms of writing and that perceived differences do not really matter:

> So what, exactly, distinguishes creative writing *as* creative writing? Does such a distinction even matter? How does 'creative writing' compare fundamentally to the kinds of writing — especially the scholarly — which you're expected to practice in the University? (Nichols, 2008: 80).

Christine Owen suggests that "[o]ne of the ways in which the negatively perceived dichotomy between the academic and creative can be addressed is through recognising that creative writing is one of a number of disciplines engaged in critical thinking about writing, narrative and creativity" (2006). Owen's call for a 'recognition' of creative writing is a call for a redefinition of creative writing so that it 'fits' her academic requirements.

Similarly, Claire Woods declares that "[c]reative writing, professional writing, and general writing courses ... all deal with the same thing …" (Woods, 2008), while Dianne Donnelly adds the questionable views of Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen into the debate. These two

authorities contend that "all students of writing are creative, that they are always writing literature, and that writing processes have basic commonalities ..." (qtd Donnelly, 2012c: 141). Ponsot and Deen claim that "[i]n our experience and in the experience of those we know, there is no essential difference between writing a poem and writing an essay, except, as we must often say, that writing a poem is easier, its conventions being so much clearer and more plentiful" (qtd Donnelly, 2012c: 140).

Beyond their experience and the experience of those they know, Ponsot and Deen provide no literal or empirical substantiation for their radical claim that there is no difference in the practices of writing poetry and writing essays. Similarly, Graeme Harper reshapes and redefines established and contemporary notions of creative writing and bases his findings and conclusions on Creative Writing's "ancient origins," on "10,000 years of Creative Writing history" during which the human practice of creative writing was the primary activity with the 'artefacts' of that writing being only of secondary concern and importance:

> Creative Writing is one word not two. That is, like Music or Painting or Film-making. Creative Writing is a set of acts and actions, a collection of human activities that make it distinctive. Creative Writing is not 'writing that is creative,' rather it is Creative Writing ... and ... we have been sidetracked ... into too often promoting the commodities of Creative Writing above the human activity of Creative Writing … (2009).

Harper is arguing that the primary element of Creative Writing is the process and practice of creative writing, with the text as a byproduct and an irrelevant result of the creative activity, when, as discussed previously (in the section *Creative Writing as a High-Demand Product of the Higher Education Industry*, under the heading *9. An Erosion of Creativity* on page 112) adjudging the practice of creative writing to be creative is dependent upon evaluating the product of that process as being creative. Focusing exclusively on the practice of writing as the single determinant of the existence of creativity would suggest that all writing could be deemed to be creative simply by attaching the descriptor 'creative' to that writing and that there would be no distinguishing factors between all the texts that make use of the descriptor 'creative.'

And finally in his essay " The Novel and the Academic Novel," which appeared in 2008 in

Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy, Nigel Krauth made an unambiguous statement, confirming what the many statements, redefinitions and re-articulations of creative writing in the discourse have always seemed to imply: "Writing creatively in the academic context is different from normal creative writing" (Krauth, 2008: 10). It is worth repeating this quote as it is the very premise of this thesis. "Writing creatively in the academic context is different from normal creative writing" (Krauth, 2008: 10). The question that then arises is, *which creative writing students are expecting to be taught, normal creative writing or the 'different' or 'abnormal' creative writing offered by academic institutions?*

There is very little research into creative writing student needs, perceptions and conceptions with academic authorities persistently basing their judgement of student needs on their own presumptions, assumptions and their own personal needs. For example, Stephanie Vanderslice quotes Graeme Harper as explaining that creative writing students "'want to experience the learning of Creative Writing'" (Vanderslice, 2008: 68), as if the creative product is less important than the process. There is no substantiation for these statements and, as appears from the chapter, *Student Writer Conceptions of Creative Writing* below, empirical qualitative research reveals that the form and content of creative writing, as reshaped by higher education institutions, runs counter to the needs, expectations and conceptions of students of the subject.

As an example, Anna Leahy seems surprised by her students' reaction to their having to write a supplementary discourse to accompany their creative texts and she feels the need to maintain her authority over them. Her students need their writing freedom, yet academic restrictions encumber their writing practices raising the question whether this could ever be an environment, which enhances and nurtures creativity? Leahy's students complain that

> ... critical writing distracts them from creativity itself. When I ask students to write in traditional form, some moan about how unnatural, and therefore uncreative, it is and about how it prohibits them from saying what they want to say. Many students seem to believe that they know what's best for themselves because they already know how to write and be creative ... I challenge their assumptions and authority (Leahy, 2005b: 14).

The reactions of Leahy's students accurately reflect the research outcomes of Gregory Light's research study into student conceptions of creative writing on which he elaborates in 2002 in his article in *Higher Education*. He found that "creative writing students uniformly associate creative writing with the personal, especially with private experience" (qtd in Myers, 2012: 28):

> The general assumption ... is that, in contrast to essay writing, Creative Writing provides a writing opportunity which permits students to tap into a much more private, personal and emotional reality for their ideas and material. It is characterized by freedom from the non-personal, external demands of facts and other people's ideas, comments and forms. For the most part it is concerned with original, creative, personal experiences and feelings that can be discovered by the self and which provide the basis for their material (Light, 2002: 265).

Light's research also reveals and emphasises that creative writing, in the minds, conceptions and expectations of the students, cannot be integrated with and equated to other forms of writing:

> … student accounts are uniform in viewing creative writing as both qualitatively unique and different from other kinds of writing: usually noted in contrast to their views of essay or journalistic writing ... [creative writing is] a form opposed to those perceived as being in the external world of discursive academic or journalistic disciplines (Light, 1995: 7-8).

The results of Gregory Light's research disproves and negates the general statements authorities have made about the nature and characteristics of creative writing.

Obviously, the distinction between creative writing and other scholarly kinds of writing *does matter* (Nichols, 2008: 80); creative writing, professional writing, and general writing courses *do not* all deal with the same thing (Woods, 2008); creative writing *is not* one of a number of writing disciplines and the negatively perceived dichotomy between the academic and the creative is *a student reality* which cannot be erased by simply unilaterally deciding that creative writing is one of a number of disciplines engaged in critical thinking about writing, narrative and creativity (Owen, 2006); and, according to creative writing students, there are *fundamental differences* between writing a *poem* and writing an *essay*

with the two activities being diametrically opposed as writing processes and practices. (Bishop, 1994: 190)

2. Extreme Expectations of the Academic Role of Creative Writing

While creative writing has been used to bolster the diminishing importance of English Studies faculties in countries such as the USA, the UK and South Africa, some Australian authorities hold loftier ideals for the teaching of creative writing. They believe the teaching of creative writing should also bear substantial socio-cultural and intellectual responsibilities.

Kevin Brophy argues that creative writing students should be "integrated with departments and courses focusing on literature and cultural studies," because this will allow them to "maintain a level of sophistication and security important to resisting rigidity in their approaches to writing" (qtd in Uppal, 2007: 48).

In his book, *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* (2005), Paul Dawson has even greater expectations of creative writing teaching in the academy as he draws an image of the creative writer, as an academic and intellectual super-hero in the form of a "pseudo-mythic model of the public intellectual who can straddle the academic world and the public sphere, and ... become the exemplary figure of the New Humanities" (2005: 195).

Dawson suggests that by "reforming Creative Writing" teaching by placing it "within a broader cultural or political context" students "might consider placing themselves as writers in society, as intellectuals who can potentially contribute to public debate via the medium of literature, rather than merely seeing potential publication as affirmation of their 'talent'" (2005:208).

In Dawson's notion of creative writing teaching, creativity has disappeared as a descriptor and his vision of the public intellectual writer is far removed from the student writer, who simply wants to write creatively. This idealised view is an extreme example of how far the concept of the teaching of creative writing can be stretched. It is also another example of the diminished value, which is placed on the personal ambitions and desires of the student writer.

3. Creativity is Academically Problematical

As has been demonstrated, the concept of 'creativity' remains problematic for higher education institutions, which results in the manipulation of the discourse surrounding the teaching of creative writing. In this discourse the meanings of the language have been used to fit the rules and parameters and broad ideology of the teachers, the faculties and the institutions. Various examples of the manipulation of the concept of creativity have already been provided earlier under section *D. Creative Writing as a High-Demand Product of the Higher Education Industry* (p. 98) specifically in subsections g. *An Erosion of Creativity* (p. 112) and j. *Creativity - Redefined and Ignored* (p. 113).

Creativity appears to be problematical in higher education institutions because of its 'slipperiness,' its vagueness, its insubstantiveness, which makes creativity academically illegitimate and, at the British-education-based institutions, a discipline which has to always be 'chaperoned' and explained by a secondary, supplementary text or discourse, which validates the fictional text and provides creativity with an academic 'passport' to legitimacy.

This supplementary text phenomenon is firmly entrenched in the creative writing pedagogy in universities in the UK, Australia and South Africa. Even the umbrella body for the teaching of creative writing in the UK, the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), emphasises it in its definition of the subject Creative Writing: "Creative Writing is the study of writing (including poetry, fiction, drama and creative non-fiction) and its contexts through creative production and reflection on process" (*Creative Writing Subject Benchmark Statement*, NAWE, 2).

As further evidence of the dilution and avoidance of creativity, in NAWE's list of 10 Defining Principles for an undergraduate creative writing programme, the word 'creative' only appears twice. The first reference does not refer to the students' writing, but is used as a descriptor for the student's "creative understanding of the subject/craft/art/and of their own creative process." (NAWE, 4) In the second appearance, the word 'creative' is used as a descriptor for the student's "ambitions" and "aspirations." At no time do these defining principles connect the words 'creative' and 'writing.'

In his article, “Conceptualising creativity in the creative arts: Seeking common ground,” in the April 2012 issue of the Australian online journal *TEXT*, Chris Morgan, quoting Sawyer and McWilliam, “acknowledges that our understanding of creativity is at best partial” and that

> notwithstanding academic longing for a theory or model, creativity continues to be regarded by many both within and outside academic circles as so mysterious and serendipitous that it defies definition and thus also defies any attempt to foster it systematically (2012).

Morgan also refers to a research study undertaken by Paul Kleiman (2007), “Thinking, making, doing, solving, dreaming: Conceptions of creativity in learning and teaching in higher education,” (Paper presented at the Building Cultures of Creativity in Higher Education Conference, Cardiff UK, 8-10 January), which explored “academic perceptions of creativity [and] revealed that much creativity research does not really speak to academics, nor does it form part of their daily discourse” (qtd in Morgan, 2012).

Morgan determines that this avoidance of creativity by creative writing teachers is pedagogically concerning because “in the creative arts ... creativity is so central to its core purposes” (Morgan, 2012).

Eighteen years ago in their essay, “Creative Research and Classroom Practice, ” in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy,* Linda Sarbo and Joseph Moxley proclaimed that their “primary concern in the classroom is with fostering creativity” and they, therefore, recommended that there would be pedagogic value in looking outside the English faculty for additional insights into the teaching of creative writing and that academically-based creative writing teachers would be justified in undertaking a “journey into theory” with creativity researchers and specialists in an effort to “inform [their] teaching practices” (Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 134).

Rarely, if at all, have creative writing authorities followed up on the suggestions of Sarbo and Moxley and included creativity theory in the development of their creative writing teaching processes. Chris Morgan in 2012 is one of the first authorities to echo Sarbo and

Moxley's recognition of the extreme importance of creativity in the teaching of creative writing:

> ... an understanding about creativity and creative processes are arguably central to one's decisions about developing curricula and particular teaching approaches, facilitating student learning, providing feedback and making judgements about creative works (Morgan, 2012).

Perhaps as a result of the increasing publicity afforded the 'creative economy' and the perceived increase in the value placed upon creativity, as an industrial and economic property, interest in creativity, as a component of creative writing pedagogy, appears to be growing. In an April 2012 Special Issue of *TEXT* called "Creativity: Cognitive, Social and Cultural Perspectives," in an article of the same name, Nigel McLouchlin and Donna Lee Brien highlight the increased visibility of the concept of creativity and explain that the compilation of the creativity-focused special issue *TEXT* sought to attract input, knowledge and expertise from a broad range of creativity authorities.

They express the concern that "the term's [creativity] very meaning may become eroded" (McLouchlin and Brien, 2012) when, as has been shown within the realm of the academy, creativity, its meaning, its value and its existence has been largely ignored.

> In recent years, the term 'creativity' has become a buzzword in practically every sector of public life and many who teach and research within the creative disciplines in higher education have become increasingly sensitive to the rise of the terms 'creative' and 'creativity' as important and overarching themes within our universities (McLouchlin and Brien, 2012).

It is ironic that whereas previously academically-based creative writing teachers have been teaching the subject with the descriptor, 'creative,' in it for so many years and have avoided the concept of creativity to the detriment of their students, who want to learn to write creatively, now that creativity has become popular and of increased economic value, creative writing authorities are now focusing on creativity because of its "far-reaching appeal ... currency and popularity" (McLouchlin and Brien, 2012). The two authorities claim that

> this special issue of *TEXT* offers an opportunity to *refocus* on creativity as a concept and a process. It also reflects a conscious effort to *reclaim* creativity and the creative process as something *worthy* of study, research and academic *attention* both within the *creative arts* disciplines and outside ... (McLouchlin and Brien, 2012). [my italics]

The italicised words are indicative of how academically-based creative writing teachers have treated the creative component of their creative writing curricula and pedagogy. Creativity has received no *focus*; it was not owned by teaching staff but now needs to be repossessed, *reclaimed*; it was never *worthy* of academic focus and time and received no *attention* from teaching staff; and now creativity is suddenly used in the same sentence as *the creative arts*.

Eighteen years after Sarbo and Moxley's call for the inclusion of creativity in the teaching and learning of creative writing, McLouchlin and Brien now invite

> ... creative artists and researchers, cognitive psychologists, neuroscientists, educational researchers and others involved in developing and supporting research in creativity to contribute ... [to] conversations about the practice and pedagogy of creative disciplines and the study of creativity as a cognitive social and cultural phenomenon (McLouchlin and Brien, 2012).

It is interesting to note that this sudden shift is as a result of outside trends and forces, which have placed a value on the concept of creativity. It has nothing to do with the recognition of the needs and expectations of creative writing students.

Chapter IX, *An Exploration of Creativity* provides a detailed exploration, examination and analysis of creativity of the type envisaged by Sarbo and Moxley and McLouchlin and Brien, which will serve as a theoretical foundation for the concept of creativity as it underlies, supports, directs and controls the practice of writing creatively.

4. The Academic Assimilation of Creative Writing is Unscientific

As has been seen, the appropriation and assimilation of creative writing as an academic discipline has not been based on any empirical investigations. The absence of student research studies and the avoidance of the concept of creativity has not contributed a foundation towards the development of legitimate creative writing curricula, syllabi and pedagogy. The structure and content of creative writing modules and programmes appear to be justified informally and retrospectively.

A single example will suffice to support the statement that the academic assimilation of Creative Writing is unscientific. This particular example is reminiscent of the informal, individualistic, and personalised approach adopted by Kathryn Haake. (*Supra*, p. 143)

An evaluation of a single paragraph from Priscila Uppal's essay, "Both Sides of the Desk: Experiencing Creative Writing Lore as a Student and as a Professor," (2007) demonstrates the individualistic approach creative writing teaching 'experts' have used in their development of the 'subject,' creative writing, in higher education institutions:

> I am still convinced that the study of creative writing ought to be interdisciplinary in approach and uphold a literary vision that advocates engagement and involvement in the issues of one's own time and one's own communities. Creative writing should exhibit an appreciation and dedication to the discipline of the writing craft, rather than operate in a self-expressive, internalized vacuum. I thus propose here to isolate features of the creative writing workshop and its lore that contribute to the development of a writer and/ or a critically thinking reader (2007: 46-7).

She makes no reference to the primary property, which qualifies and specifies the type of writing practice — *creative* writing. In Uppal's opinion creative writing should be integrated with other academic disciplines, generally, but with a literary focus, specifically, which is coupled to a thematic social responsibility. The practice of writing should focus on the "discipline" of "writing craft" and the subjectivity and irrationality of the 'personal' should be avoided. Uppal appears to value form above content, as form is more easily measurable and content is more subjective and therefore problematical, requiring as it does, a value judgement.

She refers to "the development of a writer" and excludes the adjective 'creative.' She also desires to make a writer into a critically thinking reader (Uppal, 2007: 47). If by teaching creative writing, we will produce "critically thinking readers" then perhaps the inverse will also hold true: by teaching "critically thinking readers," creative writers may appear.

Under the guise of teaching creative writing, it appears that Uppal's 'real' teaching objective is to *produce socially and culturally sensitive literary critics with highly disciplined writing skills*.

Bizarro and McClanahan confirm that the independently developed teaching processes and principles of the writing teacher remain entrenched

> … not because well-thought-out research studies have proved [their] effectiveness, but because tradition and privilege are such powerful forces that this long-standing method of instruction is rarely challenged (2007: 86-7).

Ritter and Vanderslice corroborate that this approach to the teaching of creative writing has resulted in a "patchwork pedagogy with little basis in theory of practical research [which] encourage[s] a seat of the pants approach to teaching that eschews syllabi, class plans, and systematic assessment" (2007: ix).

5. The Outcomes of the Assimilation of Creative Writing by Higher Education Institutions

(a) Textual Mass Production

One of the primary outcomes of this assimilation has been the mass production of both poetry and fictional texts with estimates of an additional "20000 accredited professional poets" being produced in America between the years 1991 and 2001, and a commensurate increase in the volume of published poetry with "just under a thousand new collections of verse ... published each year" (Gioia, 1991). [See also Menand (2009)] DG Myers estimates that since the inception of American writing programmes in the mid-1930s, "75,000 ... official writers (1993: 277) have been produced.

As early as 1963, Robert Frost warned of the potential detrimental effects the high volumes of poets and verse may have on the quality of poetry. “Mediocrity will necessarily be exalted” (Brooks, 1963: 28), “mediocre verse [will] not only be published but praised” (34) (Gioia, 1991) and it will have a negative effect on poetry readership, because it will “make it more rather than less difficult for people to recognize really good achievement when it does occur” (Brooks, 1963: 28), which may result in “public skepticism, [which] represents the final isolation of verse as an art form in contemporary society” (Gioia, 1991). [See also Tim Mayers (2005: 50)]

There is also, however, a contrary school of thought that argues that in terms of fictional texts *quantity ensures quality* that “far from homogenizing literature or turning it into an academic exercise, creative-writing programs have been a success purely on literary grounds,” because “there is more good fiction out there than anyone has time to read” and, therefore, “the system must be doing something right” (Menand, 2009).

(b) Publication Becomes a Professional Validation

The growth of literary journals and presses for short stories and poetry were not established in response to “an increased appetite ... among the public,” but in response “to the desperate need of writing teachers for professional validation” (Gioia, 1991). Years of public and private funding have created “a large professional class ... comprising legions of teachers, graduate students, editors, publishers, and administrators, which has become the primary audience” (Gioia, 1991) for the textual products of the teachers and students of creative writing programmes. [See also John Irving (Plimpton, 1988: 31), Aldridge (1992: 20-1), Smiley (1994: 227) and Menand (2009)]

This “professional aristocracy” (Aldridge, 1992: 20) has resulted in the establishment of a self-protective, self-promoting and regenerative environment in which “writers become powerful gatekeepers by teaching literature and serving on juries and editorial boards” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 262). Robert Stone argues that the phenomenon of “writers who write primarily for other writers” (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 361) must have a detrimental effect on textual quality.

While agreeing that creative writing has been academised and professionalised, Mark McGurl and Dana Gioia disagree as to whether that assimilation has had positive or negative results. McGurl argues that "the world of mass higher education and the white-collar workplace" (Menand, 2009) [See also Gioia (1991)] has become the real writing world; while Gioia maintains that the "migration of American literature to the university [has] contributed to its disappearance from public view" and that it has become an "industry created to serve the interests of producers and not consumers [and] in the process the integrity of the art has been betrayed" (Gioia, 1991).

(c) Writing Quality Becomes Obscured

Like creativity, writing quality does not appear to have a 'productive' place in a world of mass-produced texts, a world in which, according to Dana Gioia, "bureaucracies" such as higher education institutions "by their very nature, have difficulty measuring something as intangible as literary quality" (1991). With the significant increase in creative writing student numbers over the years, it has not been feasible for academic institutions to maintain the very narrow and restrictive parameter of insisting that student writing must be of a 'publishable' standard. In order to ensure the successful graduation of the majority of creative writing students, creative writing's teaching objectives have had to be widened to include a "variety of recognised 'successful outcomes.'" Interestingly, these 'successful outcomes' seem to involve ignoring the students' fictional texts in favour of rewarding creative writing students for simply displaying a "far greater understanding of the nature of excellent creative writing" (Harper and Kroll, 2008: 5). Students are, therefore, awarded postgraduate creative writing degrees for being able to recognise and appreciate quality writing. In this regard Mike Harris' admission that he is under pressure to lower his grading standards and to pass more of his creative writing students, is telling. (S*upra*, p. 110)

This shift of the measure of quality from the text to student knowledge acquisition is described by Mary Cantrell as the "[p]rivileging [of] knowledge over talent, craft over art," which has caused "editors and writers ... in recent years ... [to complain] about 'workshop stories' and 'workshop poems' that are technically sound but emotionally bereft writing that emerges from many Creative Writing programs …" (Cantrell, 2012: 159). In his *Lingua*

Franca article, “Stepford Writers: Undercover Inside the MFA Creative Boot Camp,” Chris Altacruise corroborates Cantrell’s identification of the “technically sound” nature of writing programme fiction, contending that “so many people can now write competent stories that the short story as a medium is in danger of dying of competence” (Altacruise, 1990: 20).

Katherine Coles describes the ‘workshop story’ as “ubiquitous ... competent but uncompelling,” created through “enforce[d] conformity,” which infests “literary journals and first books” with “domestic and expected” (Coles, 2006: 8) content and storylines (Coles, 2006: 8). John W. Aldridge attributes the conservative properties of the texts produced by those writers, who are products of the creative writing education process, to our risk-averse teaching and learning environment (Aldridge, 1992: 30). [See also Busch (1999: 227) and Doctorow (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 318)]

The lack of focus on the quality of texts has been blamed on the steady demise of an honest critical review process, which identifies the exceptional and warns readers of the mediocre so that there is a continual dialogue and debate surrounding the quality standards within what should be the domain of literary art. Instead in his article, “Can Poetry Matter?” Dana Gioia maintains that the “several dozen journals” that only print poems and short fiction “don’t publish literary reviews” and have an “ insular audience of literary professionals, mainly teachers of creative writing and their students” (1991). [See also Aldridge (1992: 30)]

In his *Writer’s Chronicle* article, “The Rise of Creative Writing and the New Value of Creativity,” Steve Healey suggests that Gioia’s “solutions to poetry’s insularity should include a return to tougher evaluative criticism and more selective anthologies so readers won’t be turned off by mediocrity” (Healey, 2009).

Increasing the number of readers and the enjoyment of such readers do not seem to be the primary concerns of the Chairman of the AWP, David Fenza. Neither is the quality of the texts emanating from all the writing programmes. In his article in *The Writer’s Chronicle*, “The Words and the Bees,” Fenza calls on graduating MFA students to “Embrace the Swarm.” His creative writing objectives are based on its democratisation, its plurality, its humanity, its variety and making it accessible to the masses:

> As a graduate with the MFA degree, you are part of the great democratic experiment in public access to higher education and the arts. You are part of a new plurality ... the Democratic access is partly what has enabled America to have a literature that more closely resembles its humanity — the variety of our experiences — all races, all regions, all classes. Our literature, finally, contains multitudes (Fenza, 2006).

In contrast to Fenza in his *New York Times* article, "Stranger Than Fiction; What Johnny Won't Read," Charles McGrath echoes Dana Gioia's concern about the mediocrity of creative writing and the numbers of mediocre texts confronting readers, when McGrath asks "would people read more books, in other words, if there were more good books, or, rather, if all the good books weren't quite so hard to find among the many bad ones?" (2004)

In his book, *Talents and Technicians: Literary Chic and the New Assembly-Line Fiction*, John W. Aldridge argues that, as a result of the institutional focus on the writer as producer and not on the text as product, "academic criticism fails to communicate with the literary marketplace and the general reader," which has caused the "standardless void" that new writers find themselves in (Aldridge, 1992: 13).

Authorities such as Evie Yoder Miller are prepared to temper their aversion to the 'exclusivity' inherent in the creation of any art form, because they accept the logic that the creative product must be evaluated and measured:

> Granted, these are elitist notions about art. But even the stance that writers can improve their skills suggests that value judgements are a necessary part of education. Teaching involves setting and communicating basic standards about the quality expected in students work (2005: 45).

Mary Cantrell is emphatic in stating that "professors are not the gatekeepers of literary excellence" Cantrell, 2012: 159), but perhaps they should at least act as the pivots and catalysts for the discussion and debate of what constitutes quality in writing.

Contrary to Roland Barthes' proclamation that 'the author is dead,' it would appear from this current analysis in this thesis of the assimilation of creative writing by academic

institutions that it is the text that is dying, if it is not already dead. It is not the texts that the writer produces, but the writer as professional, who is ultimately the product of the institution's creative writing modules and programmes.

Literary quality is no longer measured by the value of the text, but by the number of times a text has been published, where, by whom and the number of prizes and awards an author has received. Very seldom is an author praised for the creative or literary qualities of a specific text. The text's value is almost always verified, not in reference to the text itself, but in reference to accolades bestowed on the author as personality.

According to Dana Gioia it would appear that the solution to the so-called 'immeasurability' of writing quality has been the substitution of actual evaluations of the quality of the texts with more tangible symbols of quality such as "fellowships, grants, degrees, appointments, and publications [which] are objective facts. They are quantifiable: they can be listed on a résumé" (1991).

(d) Selective Rationalism of the Institutions Subjugates the Mystical Irrationalism of Creativity

Authorities such as Paul Feyerabend and Richard Hofstadter condemn institutional attempts to entrench logic and rationality, as the only acceptable cornerstones of science and education, to the exclusion of anything irrational, illogical and immeasurable. Their premise is that neither the rational nor the irrational can be excluded: "Given science, reason cannot be universal and unreason cannot be excluded" (Feyerabend, 1978: 14). Education institutions, however, continue to "create a tradition that is held together by strict rules" (Feyerabend, 1978: 19), which enforce uniformity and conformity with the ultimate objective of the "preservation of the old and familiar" (Feyerabend, 1978: 36) and the defence of "academic ... territories ... bounded spaces where rules and customs operate and where dwellers ... guard against those from other territories" (Mayers, 2005: 103). This exclusion of anything new or different is aimed ultimately at maintaining the status quo. [See Feyerabend (1978: 44)]

The 'tried and tested method' is the primary protection measure used to protect the status

quo and to ensure the least potential disruption, because

> [t]he first adequate theory has the right of priority over equally adequate newcomers ... It contributes to the preservation of the old and familiar not because of any inherent advantage in it ... but because it is old and familiar (Feyerabend, 1978: 36).

The protection and preservation of a set of practices, principles and philosophies in the teaching of creative writing in academic institutions has already been shown to be self-serving, but its development is also designed to simplify, clearly demarcate and protect a domain by giving it a "logic of its own" (Feyerabend, 1978: 19). The lore surrounding the traditional teaching of creative writing in American academic institutions was deemed to be such a powerful component of creative writing pedagogy that editors Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice devoted an entire book, *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy*, 2007, to an analysis of the subject.

In *The Courage to Create,* Rollo May lists some of the primary factors, which contribute to the uncomfortable relationship between institutions of power and creativity. Firstly, "[m]echanization requires uniformity, predictability and orderliness," secondly, "the very fact that unconscious phenomena are original and irrational is already an inevitable threat to bourgeois order and uniformity" (1975: 69) and finally probably the greatest danger posed by creativity is the artist's freedom (1975: 76).

In 1976 in *The Pleasure of the Text* Roland Barthes affirms and expands Rollo May's observation of the dichotomy between creativity's mystical irrationalism and the academic institution's quest for rational objectivity (1976: 22) and points out that this is, because "it is obvious that the pleasure of the text is scandalous: not because it is immoral but because it is *atopic* (1976: 23).

Barthes identifies "the pleasure of the text" as being 'mis-placed,' perhaps 'ill-located' within the academic institution. If the pleasure of the text is 'mis-placed,' then it follows that the writer as artist is also 'mis-placed' within the academy. Barthes proceeds to place the role and characteristics of creative writing within the political and ideological realm of the academic institution, when he asks and answers the question, "[w]hat relation can there be

between the pleasure of the text and the institutions of the text?"

> Very slight. The theory of the text postulates bliss, but it has little institutional future: what it establishes, its precise accomplishment, its assumption, is a practice (that of the writer), not a science, a method, a research, a pedagogy: on these very principles, this theory can produce only theoreticians or practitioners, not specialists (critics, researchers, professor, students). It is not only the inevitably metalinguistic nature of all institutional research which hampers the writing of textual pleasure, it is also that we are today incapable of conceiving a true science of becoming (which alone might assemble our pleasure without garnishing it with moral tutelage) …" (1976: 60).

Barthes identifies a number of concepts, which may be worthy of further investigation in terms of the value they could add to the development of creative writing teaching principles and curricula for use in institutional environments:

- the delectability of the text and the potential delectability of knowledge (1976: 23);
- the 'atopicism' of the text and, therefore, the practice of writing within the institution;
- "the theory of the text ... is a practice ... not a science, a method, a research, a pedagogy" (1976: 60); and
- perhaps we should be attempting to 'conceive' of the teaching of creative writing as a practice, as a "science of becoming" (1976: 60).

(e) Authority of the Creative Writing Teacher Predominates

There are two distinct categories of writing teachers. Where the teaching of creative writing is a mature academic practice, such as in the United States, most teachers are published writers and/or MFA 'qualified' writing teachers with published and experienced writers mostly teaching in the postgraduate programmes and the most prestigious universities offering the teaching services of the most celebrated authors and poets. At those academic institutions that are unable to attract famous authors, or MFA 'qualified' writers, composition specialist teachers and, to a lesser extent, English Literature lecturers may be seconded to teach creative writing, particularly at undergraduate level. At universities in those countries where creative writing is a relatively recent field of study, English faculties

are usually reluctant to recruit staff specifically for this 'new' subject and tend to use existing personnel with the result that the English lecturers, who are not practising or 'qualified' poets or prose fiction writers, but are specialists in literary criticism, become the creative writing teachers.

The author/teacher, entrenched in the American academic system since the late 1930s, has had a pronounced and enduring effect on the literary landscape because, as John W. Aldridge pointed out in 1992, at that time, that generation of American writers was the "first literary generation ... ever to be created almost exclusively through formal academic instruction in creative writing" and the creative writing teachers have been the primary influence in "shaping the characters of the writers they instruct as well as the literature those writers produce" (1992: 15).

The negative effect of the repetitive circularity of the MFA based teaching cycle was highlighted by Menand in 2009 when he explained that "the academically certified Creative Writer goes out to teach Creative Writing, and produce other Creative Writers who are not writers, but to produce still other Creative Writers who are not writers" (2009). [See also John Gardner (1983: 115)]

More recently, ten years after Aldridge had identified the emergence of the predominance of academically produced writers, DeWitt Henry points out that the teaching of creative writing by American higher education institutions has reached the stage where the MFA graduates that are now being produced are "fourth generation MFA degree holders (that is taught by an MFA, who was taught by an MFA, who was taught by an MFA)" (2012: 19).

With writer/teachers focusing primarily on earning a livelihood and pursuing their own writing practices, Nietzsche asks how "serious" they can be in their "desire to cultivate the [student]" (1872: 64), [See also Ritter and Vanderslice (2007: xiii)] and

> is the pedagogical process merely guided by the idiosyncrasies of each teacher, the practising writer able to pass on knowledge by virtue of his or her innate talent and secret knowledge of the craft? (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007: xiii).

In British, Australian and South African institutions where the teaching of creative writing

has tended to be located within the English Faculty, the qualifications, experience and skills of the teachers selected to give creative writing instruction are less specific and appear to be relatively unimportant, as teacher selection tends to be based more on which existing faculty members are willing and available to take on the additional load of creative writing instruction.

Siobahn Holland is one of the few authorities to provide even a cursory view of the make-up of an ideal creative writing teacher: "a) professional writing skills, b) pedagogically oriented language skills, and c) traditional English literature theory skill (Holland, 2002).

According to Bizzaro and McClanahan the teacher can have "near dictatorial control over the students' texts." Non-conformance to the writer/teacher's evaluation and suggested revisions of student texts could lead to poor student grades (2007: 86) and the teachers' authority may be further strengthened by their influence over what gets published and wins awards (2007: 86). This authority remains entrenched

> ... not because well-thought-out research studies have proved its effectiveness, but because tradition and privilege are such powerful forces that this long-standing method of instruction rarely is challenged (2007: 86-7).

As editors of the book, which focuses on the "Lore" of creative writing pedagogy, *Can It Really Be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy*, Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice argue that this idiosyncratic approach has resulted in a "patchwork pedagogy with little basis in theory or practical research [which] encourage [s] a seat of the pants approach to teaching that eschews syllabi, class plans and systematic assessment" (2007: ix).

With this lack of pedagogic structure, objectives and measurement criteria, the creative writing teacher becomes all-powerful with students totally reliant on her judgements, viewpoints, decisions and directives. As Tim Mayers emphasises, the fact is that in the creative writing workshop

> the teacher is the only audience the student's writing ever has. Or, at the very least, the teacher (the one who assigns the grade) is the only audience that ever seems to matter. This teacher-as-audience dynamic has a number of potential drawbacks … (2010: 94).

Authorities have more recently recognised the complexity of the relationships within the workshop setting with the teacher/student relationship being of primary importance in an environment with complex dynamics. Dianne Donnelly highlights Tobin's "notion that 'the dynamics of transference and counter-transference between student and teacher are most destructive and inhibiting in the writing class when we fail to acknowledge and deal with them'" (qtd in Donnelly, 2012c: 52).

The dominant position of the teacher as reader, assessor and grader causes an extreme student-focus, so much so that Tim Mayers noted that "students themselves tended (consciously or unconsciously) to think of me as the audience and to try to figure out what I wanted to see in their papers" (2010: 100) and Carl Vandermeulen admits that he "underestimated both the weight of [his] authority in the eyes of [his] students as well as the threat posed by classmates as competitors, not just collaborators 2005: 50).

There have been calls for dismantling of writing teacher authority (Donnelly, 2012: 118), for a shifting of the teacher's traditional status and role as an "exemplary reader and authority" (Donnelly, 2012c: 36) towards, what Peter Elbow calls, "a more equitable status in the classroom, 'encourag[ing] instructors to surrender the trappings of traditional teacher authority' so that they might 'act as a member of the class' writing community instead" (qtd in Donnelly, 2012c: 97).

Leslie Kreiner Wilson supports Epps' (2006: 103) argument that "'[s]tudents should be encouraged to write 'naked' on the page'" and she surmises that "[p]erhaps, then, we have to let go of our 'controlling' teacher and allow students freedom to run, laugh, cry, even fall" (qtd in Kreiner Wilson, 2010: 214).

(f) Creative Writing Becomes the Subject of Institutional Bureaucracy, and Conformity and Uniformity Replace Creativity and Originality

Michel Foucault maintains that all institutions consist of a "tangle of interwoven discourses ... of power and authority" (Hatlen, 1988: 797). When the teaching of creative writing, as a field of study, is absorbed into the academic institutional environment, whoever controls the institutional discourse is able to secure control over the subject of creative writing by redefining the subject matter of the discourse, and in so doing, subjecting creative writing to the bureaucratic forces of the academy as institution. [See also Howard Singerman (1999: 211) and Michel Foucault (1982: 787)]

Institutional bureaucracy is "an important part of the mechanisms put into operation by an institution to ensure its own preservation" (Foucault, 1982: 791). [See also William Cain (1984: 8)] In the name of 'productivity' and 'quality' "institutions encourage conformity to their rituals and values" and, if there is a reluctance to conform, they proceed to "dominate and discipline others into submission" (Cain, 1984: 11).

Paul Dawson provides an appropriate example of the institutional control and manipulation of the discourse surrounding creative writing in Australian higher education institutions. Camilla Nelson presents Dawson's argument that

> ... fashionable terms such as practice-led research, practice as research, performative and action research represent a branch of scholarship that has been generated for purely bureaucratic ends. This is a powerful line of argument, particularly in Australia where it might be argued that rigid funding categories have been dictating the parameters of the debate (2008).

Steve Healey supports this notion that creative writing and the discourse surrounding it has resulted in "Creative Writing ... [losing] its way in the dark night of literary bureaucracy and business" (2009).

The practice of writing creatively, and its properties and characteristics, are the antithesis of those required by a successful institutional bureaucracy. While the institution insists on conformity, uniformity and control, creative writing thrives on freedom, independence and

subversion. Foucault argues that "the scholars and critics want to pin language down, explain it, and thereby ... discipline and punish it," while in contrast, "the poet or novelist wants to liberate language, to allow it to take new and wondrous shapes" (1988: 792). [See also Richard Hofstadter (1964: 423)]

The ultimate result of the "dichotomy of creativity versus discipline" (Monteith, 1992: 11) is the "reconstructing [of] artistic practice as an academic discipline" (Singerman, 1999: 203). [See also Menand (2009) and Foucault (1988: 800)] This reconstruction of the creative practice of writing is both constrictive and destructive, as it removes the element of freedom from the creative process and imposes specific institutional restrictions on the students and their creative processes and products with the following potential outcomes:

> [D]istinctions are ... considered taboo, while uniformity ... is made to seem a cardinal virtue ... after a collective workshop critique, a story or poem will all too often have been denuded of individual character and made to seem anonymous or the product of just anybody or nobody. ... a young writer would hardly be disposed to take risks, since his success is measured in the degree of his refusal to take them (Aldridge, 1992: 34). [See also Nietzsche, (1872: 54) Paul Feyerabend (1978: 20) John W. Aldridge (1992: 24) and Andrew Levy (1993: 40)]

As recently as 2012 authorities such as Jon Cook have admitted that there has been a "maddening pressure to be explicit about ... creativity" and that

> Universities have now become the stage for a time honoured confrontation between the creative individual — free, spontaneous and unpredictable — and the requirements of an institution obliged to establish norms, objectives and predictable outcomes (Cook, 2012: 99).

Marcel Freiman provides an important example of the repercussions of the pressure of the institutional bureaucracy to conform to the requirements of the status quo. This pressure ultimately ends in some form of compromise. Notice how delicately Freiman approaches the question of academic compromise:

> The writer or artist walks a fine line between artistic independence and social engagement, and our task as teachers is to encourage critical and self-critical discourse within social contexts to develop awareness and responsibility. At the same time, we need to guard against excess of social control, the danger of uniformity and mediocrity, and the suppression of creative thought (Freiman, 2003).

The academic pressure, which results in the sort of compromised thinking displayed by Marcelle Freiman, could lead to the production of writers, who do not seem to have "any kind or any sense of belonging to a literary tradition" (Aldridge, 1992: 34). DeWitt Henry, twenty years after Aldridge's observation, confirms that "[b]oth in workshops and in related literature courses, an over emphasis on contemporary models leaves writers poorly read and ignorant of tradition" (2012: 20). According to Aldridge these academically produced writers also "appear never to have possessed the traditional desires of writers to be as original and as completely different from one another as possible" (1992: 34). [See also Coles (2006: 8)]

Rollo May contends that there can be no creativity without artistic freedom (1975: 76), Miriam Sved argues that "art does not and should not operate on intellectual paradigms" (2005) and Paul Dawson questions whether creative writing's reshaping by higher education institutions has not resulted in "a distortion of art practice" (qtd in Nelson, 2008).

It would seem that as a result of the institutional pressure to conform and compromise, creative writing students will not be rewarded for their spontaneity and originality (Hofstadter, 1964: 403), but will be rewarded for preserving "the status quo of intellectual life" (Feyerabend, 1978: 45) by fulfilling a more academically appropriate "quietist and apologetic function" (Murphy, 1999: 78). DeWitt Henry supports this view arguing that the "standardization" of creative writing has led to the development of "workshops [that are] ... supposedly geared more to produce a well-mannered mediocrity than genius" (2012: 20).

These restrictions on the teaching of creative writing leads to a "deterioration of intellectual capabilities" and may destroy "the most precious gift of the young — their tremendous power of imagination" (Feyerabend, 1978: 45).

Rollo May provides a reminder that the forces of conformity and uniformity are the response of society and the institutions to the dangers the 'true' artist poses to the status quo (1975: 76). These forces tend to taint the individual and marginalise the characteristics of the artist as being undesirable and a romantic cliché with no place in the contemporary academic institution. This is the ongoing battle between the artist, as individual, and the forces of social convention:

> In the inevitable tension between tradition and the individual talent, they weighted the scales heavily against anything assertive or originative in the individual ... and taste and morals were carefully defined in such a way as to establish disapproval of any rebelliousness, political or esthetic, against the existing order (Hofstadter, 1964: 402). [See Henry Miller, (Brooks, 1963: 150) Richard Hofstadter, (1964: 403) Paul Feyerabend (1978: 20) and Richard Murphy (1999: 78)]

(g) Academic and Creative Objectives Become Divergent, Incompatible and Contradictory

The academisation of creative writing requires that the practice of writing creatively joins the institution's "confluence of writerly authority and middle-class respectability" and scores of individuals are paid for adhering to those standards and for "institutionalising their marginal voices" (Levy, 1993: 3). Two questions arise: Can a voice that has been institutionalised remain marginal, and can an institutionalised voice avoid conforming and becoming institutionally integrated?

In response to these questions a classroom task set for his students by Patrick Bizarro provides an example of how the processes and objectives of student writers become controlled and directed by the institutional system. Students are given the task of examining a "selection of literary magazines with the intention of determining editorial preferences," matching "their stories ... to a magazine ... to submit a piece of writing to that magazine" and to write a "narrative on the development of literary value" based on the "writings in the journals" (1988: 54).

This exercise restricts the students' exposure to only those literary magazines, which have been selected with the result that the students' creativity domain horizon is reduced substantially and in their analysis of "literary value," it is implied by the teacher that the quality of the fiction contained in those magazines is the quality level to be aspired to by the students, because they are asked to adapt their writing according to the standards represented in those magazines.

This exercise seems to instil an objective of seeking publication for the sake of being published, because "it is publication ... that impresses employers ... an MFA from a good school may help" (Gardner, 1983: 73) as will "prizes and honours, fellowships and grants" (Gardner, 1983: 101). It instils the objective of commercial achievement with no mention of any artistic or aesthetic writing qualities or attributes. [See also John Irving (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 440)]

In contrast Ernest Hemingway contends that writing itself is a "full time job" and that the writer's primary objective should be to "write something of permanent value" (qtd in Brooks, 1963: 189). Hemingway avoided academia and what he called the "discord between the imperatives of a creative career and the demands of the institution within which it takes place" (qtd in Hofstadter, 1964: 427). [See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 424)]

Writers in an institutional environment, because of the time sensitive results driven requirements of that location, are automatically compared to and measured against their peers and their competitors, who are competing for the same short term goals. All their contemporaries are attempting to secure selection by prospective employers, publishers, competition and award judges and fellowship and grant committee members. The writing domain in which the value and quality of these writers' work is judged is accordingly extremely small, localised and time specific. The only benchmark used by the evaluators is the pool of writers competing in that particular 'fish bowl.' While the writing will be allocated values from best to worst, no cognisance is taken of the best which exists outside of that tiny domain.

By striving to achieve these institutionalised short term writing goals, the academic writer has chosen to forego the risk and, perhaps, futility of competing in the broader expanse of

literature against the work of those writers, who have been adjudged to have created "something of permanent value" (Hemingway qtd in Brooks, 1963: 189).

Perhaps the professional writer is the antithesis of the writer-artist and is, as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi explains, a "person who identifies too strongly with the field and its problems [who] has no incentives to break into new territory, and is not interested in exploring knowledge that lies outside the boundaries of the domain" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 424).

(h) Professionalism Compromises the Writer as Artist

There are, therefore, challenges facing writing students and writing teachers, who are determined to remain artistically uncompromised and who believe that they can, at the same time, play a meaningful role in the academy. These challenges include the following:

According to Levy, as a commercially driven entity, "an alternate economy, [which] institutionalises the marginal voice," the academic institution's enforced "standardization" could "lead to the death of the individual voice" (1993: 73), because academic institutions tend to "marginalize creative writers as they seek to become respected university teaching faculty" (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007: xiii). [See also Dana Gioia (1991)]

Harrison argues that this standardisation raises "doubts" as to whether "so-called 'creative writing' has a place in the university where peer pressure tends to construe a uniform product and the MFA has become a somewhat suspect license" (Harrison, 1999: 276). The student writers, who are willing to forgo their freedom and independence in return for the financial and status benefits that institutions offer, indicates a "conformism" that Delmore Schwartz describes as "a surrender to current pressures toward conservatism and patriotism, a capitulation to comfort and smugness" (qtd in Hofstadter, 1964: 395). [See also Irving Howe, (qtd in Hofstadter, 1964: 396) Richard Hofstadter (Hofstadter, 1964: 401) and GK Chesterton (qtd in Hofstadter, 1964: 401)]

Their freedom and independence is the price the writers have to pay to acquire institutional writing success. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, (1996: 424) Marcelle Freiman (2001) and

Donald Morton and Mas'ud Zavarzadeh (1988-1989: 172)]

Peter Elbow describes the extent of the power of those controlling the discourse: "These authorities get to decide whether the writing counts as important or true — whether it is valid — and ultimately whether it counts as knowledge." According to Elbow, if the student is given access to the discourse, she has the right to an audience — "Listen to me, I have something to tell you," — but when she is excluded from the discourse, she is always dependent on approval — "Is this okay? Will you accept this? — and "runs the grave risk of permitting [her]self to be digested by it" (qtd in Hofstadter, 1964: 398). [See also Mark McGurl (qtd in Menand, 2009), Rick Moody (2005), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 329) and Paul Feyerabend (1978: 45)]

RV Cassill argues that when a writer has compromised her writing practice, she devalues her existence as an artist and "if [her] conscience has been compromised then the whole fictive audience whom [she] wish[es] to address is poisoned too" (Sasser, 2003: 109).

The absorption of writers into the academy has resulted in the "migration of ... literary culture to the university ... [which has] unwittingly contributed to its disappearance from public view" (Gioia, 1991). It has also seen writers opting in favour of "the comfortable life and freetime" (Gioia, 1991) offered by being a writing teacher and the "security that writing programs afford," even if it comes at the price of the "compromise of an author's integrity" (Dawson, 2007: 19).

Eudora Welty points out that danger and risk are vital components of the writer's writing practice:

> [W]hen we think in terms of the spirit, which are the terms of writing, is there a conception more stupefying than that of security? ... No art ever came out of not risking your neck. And risk — experiment — is a considerable part of the joy of doing, which is the lone, simple reason all writers are willing to work as hard as they do (Welty, 1978). [See also T.S. Eliot (qtd in Brooks, 1963: 91)]

Ernest Hemingway considered an academic career for a writer as being very restrictive: "The academic life could put a period to outside experience which might possibly limit

growth of knowledge of the world" (qtd in Brooks, 1963: 89), and Michael Martone warns of the stunting effects the institutional limitations could have on the writer's work and career: "The cultural message to poets and writers of literary fiction is clear: cold storage in universities and/or a narrow and narrowing band of traditional publishing, and distribution for you guys" (Martone, 1999: 309). [See also Charles W. Sasser (2003: 110), John Hersey (qtd in Plimpton, 1998: 129), E.L. Doctorow, (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 318) Richard Hofstadter (1964: 427), Marianne Moore (Brooks, 1963: 76) and Gail Godwin (1994: 127)]

(i) Creative Writing Pedagogy Remains Underdeveloped, Un-Theorised and Non-Academic

With English faculties as the predominant location for the teaching of Creative Writing, authorities have questioned the suitability of the skills and expertise of academic personnel for the teaching of creative writing both in British Education-based and American institutional teaching environments.

John W. Aldridge contends that "while universities may be adequate for the study of literature, they are clearly not constituted to train its potential creators" (1992: 26).

From the universal lack of progress in the development and establishment of a fully researched and theorised creative writing pedagogy, it would appear that departmental staff are not trained to develop creative writing pedagogy and/or do not have the development and establishment of creative writing pedagogy as their primary focus or objective.

Particularly in British Education-based higher education institutions it would appear that what is being taught under the creative writing banner are the skills and knowledge, which address the needs of the staff and faculty in accordance with the overall objectives of the institution. It is for this reason that Graeme Harper argues that in higher education institutions the phrase 'creative writing' is a misnomer:

> [E]mphasizing commercial criteria — including the infamous publishability definition ... will confirm that much of what is undertaken in creative writing teaching and learning in universities is a failure. Equally, emphasizing criteria noting 'improvement of lifeskills' or 'increasing the ability to communicate

> effectively in words,' or the wonders that studying creative writing provides in relation to 'understanding literature' or 'developing creativity,' will rightly confirm that the term 'Creative Writing' fails as an accurate definition of the subject (2006b: 2).

A valuable example of the individual and institutional appropriation of the concept of creative writing and its manipulation into a form required by the faculty and institution is to be found in Paul Dawson's redefining and reshaping of creative writing to conform to his personal vision of creative writing as a valid and legitimate academic discipline:

> It is no longer possible for Creative Writing to maintain its romantic ideal of a garret in the ivory tower, a community of writers made possible by the patronage of the university. And it is not sufficient to define Creative Writing pedagogy as the passing down of a guild craft from established practitioners to a new generation of writers. Writing programmes now exist in an intellectual environment of inter-disciplinarity, critical self-reflection and opposition politics, on the one hand, and in an institutional environment of learning outcomes, transferable skills and competitive research funding on the other (2007: 78).

It would appear that the pragmatic and real progress of the development of creative writing pedagogy has and will continue to be stifled, because it is not in the interest of or of benefit to the teachers of creative writing and their faculties to do so. In its malleable, un-researched, un-theorised form creative writing, as an academic field of study, allows and entrenches an avoidance of measurement and accountability in its teaching without theorised objectives, course outlines and teaching plans and required outcomes.

Seventy seven years after the University of Iowa offered its first graduate degree in creative writing, creative writing as an academic field of study still carries a "pedagogical mystique" (Light, 1992: 21) and a "myth of unteachability" (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007: xvi). In 1998 David Starkey described the discipline of creative writing as a 'new' field of study, as a "murky, still largely ill-defined world …" (1998: xv), a world with a "relative dearth of published material about creative writing pedagogy" (Coles, 2006: 2).

As a result of this reluctance to research, evaluate and theorise the teaching and learning of

creative writing, the form and content of creative writing pedagogy has evolved from the custom and lore of teaching handed down from generation to generation of writing teachers:

> Such lore starts from the top and trickles down into creative writing program design, and then to individual students and faculties in those programs, becoming an unquestioned pattern of practice for generations of writers … (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007: xii).

Creative writing, therefore, continues to be considered by many as an academically illegitimate field of study. As the subject is often offered as a "half weighted credit option," it has "contested relationships with literature [and] theory" and the students's creative textual product, certainly in the academies of most British education-based countries, is always reliant for its authenticity and academic validation on the production and submission of an ancillary and explanatory text in the form of a 'research paper' (Dawson, 2005: 194).

Dianne Donnelly describes creative writing as an "academic anomaly" (2012c: 2) and Anna Leahy calls for the 'demystification of its teaching' (2005: ix). Donnelly confirms that "the lack of empirical data and investigative studies into creative writing's teaching praxes leaves much of what goes on in the creative writing classroom unexamined, untheorised" (2012c: 17). Gerry LaFemina supports Donnelly's contention that there is an absence of academic exploration into and theorisation of creative writing teaching when he states in 2011 that he has "never once seen an extensive look at creative writing syllabi [and] creative writing textbooks" (2011).

Unfortunately, it would appear that certain creative writing teaching authorities remain unsure as to how to go about undertaking empirical and investigative studies into creative writing teaching and what the sources and objectives of such studies should be. Dianne Donnelly assumes the objects of such an exploration should be existing creative writing teachers, her personal experience and the workshop. Did Ritter and Vanderslice not verify in 2007 already that these elements were responsible for the establishment and continuing entrenchment of creative writing as a lore-based pedagogy?

> My recent survey of undergraduate creative writing teachers at programs across the US, my own personal experience as a creative writing teacher, and much

> scholarship in writing pedagogy inform the basis of my analysis of the workshop (2010: 3).

Notice, once again, the absence of any focus on or even reference to the needs and expectations of the students, who drive the demand for creative writing instruction, a demand, which in essence forms the basis of the subject, its popularity and its financial attractiveness and is the core reason for the existence of the subject as an academic discipline on which the well-being and financial livelihood and academic careers of so many academic creative writing teachers are reliant. Yet the creative writing student is seldom, if ever, given a voice or allowed to provide an input into the form or pedagogy of the subject's teaching.

In terms of the teaching of creative writing, students have historically been so neglected and the subject's pedagogy treated as so unimportant that up until recently there has been little, if any, mention in the literature of the teaching of writing teachers to teach creative writing.

In the development of the Kentucky Educational Reform Act, for example, a "survey of teachers responsible for guiding students [in creative writing] reveals that not a single teacher had ever taken a course in creative writing pedagogy and only a handful had even had any formal training in creative writing (Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet, 2005:116).

It is only since as recently as 2008 that questions regarding the absence of creative writing pedagogy, in respect of creative writing teachers, have been raised. Gerry LaFemina refers to an "absence of teacher training" (2008), while Stephanie Vanderslice also mentions "the absence of courses in creative writing pedagogy" (2010b: 6), but, without providing specific details, comments that there are "at least 30 creative writing pedagogy courses in graduate programs in the United States" (2010: 96-7).

In her book, *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline*, Dianne Donnelly, verifies the lack of focus and lack of progress of the empirical and theorised development of creative writing's pedagogy, yet somehow she believes that it has still progressed even if it is only in some minuscule manner:

> It is hard to dismiss, offhandedly, such cancellations of support by those who have respectable histories like Cassill ... Still despite apologias that shake the workshop at its core, some of us may murmur from a position *sans* theory, *sans* standards, *sans* empirical data ... yet it moves (2012c: 76).

The relevant question, in response to Donnelly's observation that creative writing pedagogy has *moved*, is for whom and how has it in fact moved and against what measurement of movement can it be deemed to have done so? Perhaps creative writing's growth and the continued demand for its teaching represents movement, certainly for teachers, faculty and institutions, but has it moved for students, has it evolved or progressed? Has the movement been significant and value-laden?

Joseph Moxley's article, "Afterword: Disciplinarity and the Future Creative Writing Studies," in the Dianne Donnelly edited compilation, *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?,* provides a valuable, refreshingly practical perspective of the progression of the teaching of creative writing in higher education institutions. Moxley contradicts Donnelly's notion of movement in the pedagogy of creative writing. According to him "[o]n the surface creative writing programs may be evolving at a pace that makes plate tectonics seem positively speedy …" (Moxley, 2010: 235).

Moxley attributes this inertia and lack of momentum to the "enduring power of the status quo" (Moxley, 2010: 231) and the factors, which support and maintain that status quo such as the 'popularity' of the subject creative writing and the "constraining force of the faculty reward system" (Moxley, 2010: 234).

Kimberly Andrews maintains that the general lack of progress in the development of a theorised creative writing pedagogy should be blamed on "laziness" and she proceeds to provide one of the few practical, realistic and plausible explanations for the inert and stagnant state of the teaching and learning of creative writing in higher education institutions:

> My own suspicion is that teaching lore — this set of mystical principles, this idea that the only thing that matters is the raw (or slightly refined) product of the heart — is fundamentally comforting, because the handing-down of 'tried and

> true' writing tips and tricks is an endeavor requiring little maintenance: no pedagogical trends to follow, no debates to become embroiled in, and, fundamentally, no critics (well, except some of us, and only recently) knocking on the classroom door. Teaching lore further comforts creative writers who are intimidated by the enormous body of literature and criticism that encircles them; it is much easier to speak of the genius of creative writing, to say, like a bad infomercial, 'you, too, can cultivate this genius in yourself!' (qtd in Moxley, 2010: 247).

However, Joseph Moxley remains positive, despite this lag, that "in the next 20 years ... we can expect creative writing programs to embrace pedagogy, research and theory" (Moxley, 2010: 236).

F. Conclusions

The British based educational institutions adopt a learning-based and objectives-driven approach to the teaching of creative writing, whereas their American counterparts have a more decentralised and less rigid workshop approach.

There are a range of different views amongst the authorities as to whether creative writing can, or cannot be taught.

Creative writing is normally a subject within the field of English Studies and is considered to be inferior and subservient to the study of English literature, but also its saviour. The inherent aim of maintaining the dominance of English Studies has impeded the pedagogical development of creative writing.

The teaching of English literature remains the primary focus of most English departments with the majority of authorities suggesting that the study of literature should remain a key component of the teaching of creative writing and that creative writing should continue to bolster and support English Studies as the established academic discipline. The creative writing students' needs in this regard are, however, not taken into account.

The importance of reading in the teaching of creative writing is also emphasised, thereby indirectly promoting the study of English literature. In the teaching of creative writing

greater emphasis seems to be placed on the reading of texts rather than on the writing.

Creative writing is considered to be inferior within the field of English Studies and somewhat illegitimate. Distinctions are made between “creative” and “scholarly” works. The teaching of creative writing is not valued for itself, but rather as a lure to enrol students in English Studies courses.

The location of the teaching of creative writing within English faculties has been questioned. As an artistic endeavour it has been suggested that it may very well be better placed within Arts faculties. The status quo, however, has prevailed.

Creative Writing in an academic environment has been reshaped as an academic field of study without taking the needs and desires of the students into account and without recognising the “creative element.” The impression has been created that creative writing is the same, as other forms of writing; whereas research shows that the needs of the students are not being met by the current academic creative writing programmes on offer.

Extreme expectations have been placed on the academic role of creative writing with the creative writer being seen as an intellectual, who can straddle both the academic world and the public sphere.

The concept of ‘creativity’ remains problematical for the higher education institutions and has, therefore, been largely ignored, until recently when an economic value has now been placed on the concept. A non-scientific approach, which has little basis in research, has until now always been adopted towards the pedagogy of creative writing.

The assimilation of creative writing by higher education institutions has resulted in a mass production of texts, in response to the need of creative writing teachers and students for professional validation. This has had an effect on the quality of the writing produced. Some authorities argue a detrimental effect; whereas others disagree. Quality is no longer measured in terms of the text, but in terms of the ability to appreciate quality writing. This has led to the production of technically sound, competent, but unimaginative texts, which are not subjected to critical. The mystical irrationalism of creativity has become subjected to

the institutional quest for objective rationalism.

The role of the writing teacher as reader, assessor and grader leads to an unhealthy emphasis on the authority of the creative writing teacher. Creativity and originality have, because of institutional bureaucracy, been replace by uniformity and conformity. The creative and academic objectives have become divergent and incompatible. The academic objective is academic and commercial achievement, while the creative objective focuses on artistic and aesthetic attributes.

Professionalism compromises the freedom and independence of the writer as artist.

VI. SUMMATION

Having now completed a detailed analysis of the literature of experienced and authoritative individuals on the subject of the teaching of creative writing and having reached a number of significant conclusions drawn from an assessment and interpretation of this literature, a record of *The Origins and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing* has been established. The effects of the following factors on the teaching and learning of Creative Writing have been focused on in particular:

- *The Development of Creative Writing in Higher Education Institutions* in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa;
- Student Demand for the Teaching of Creative Writing;
- Creative Writing as a High-Demand Product of the Higher Education Industry; and
- Creative Writing as an Academic Discipline.

The one constant, which has emerged is the inertia, which surrounds the development and progress of the pedagogy of creative writing in higher education institutions. It has been suggested that, compared to the evolution of creative writing pedagogy, continental drift takes place at breakneck speed. (Moxley, 2010: 235)

Seventy seven years after first appearing as a graduate course, creative writing remains a pedagogic mystery (Light, 1992: 21), it is still considered to be unteachable (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007:xvi), is still largely ill-defined (Starkey, 1998: xv) and there is an absence and a scarcity of published material about creative writing pedagogy (Coles, 2006: 2).

Despite this historical lack of progress in the development of a theorised creative writing pedagogy, Joseph Moxley remains positive that “we can expect creative writing programs to embrace pedagogy, research and theory” (2010: 236).

The broad objective of this thesis is to provide an empirical and theoretical base, which can be used as a foundation for the pedagogic explorations of others and as a means to provide feasible and legitimate alternatives to current creative writing pedagogies. The aim is to nudge the teaching of creative writing out of its inert state and generate a modicum of

momentum, which will prove beneficial to students and the products of their creative writing endeavours and practices. This exploration and examination has revealed specific areas of study and analysis, which represent pedagogic gaps in the development of an alternative creative writing teaching and learning paradigm. These areas of study and analysis will now be focused on as key components of the teaching of creative writing. These elements are:

1. Creative Writing Handbooks as a published and publicly available record of creative writing pedagogy;
2. Student research into the needs, conceptions and expectations of students, who seek to be taught to write creatively;
3. Research into and development of creativity theory relating to the teaching of creative writing and the establishment of an optimal creative teaching environment;
4. The needs and requirements of readers as the ultimate recipients, co-creators, final arbiters and judges of the fictional text; and
5. Research into student needs, requirements and responses as writers in a workshop programme setting in terms of teaching processes, exercises, feedback, group dynamics, group construction and assessment.

VII. CREATIVE WRITING HANDBOOKS

A. Introduction

It is intriguing that in an academic environment, which traditionally insists on rationality and which values documentary proof and published materials, there appear to be no documented assessments or analyses of the host of available published handbooks on creative writing. In 2011 Gerry LaFemina confirmed this finding when he noted that there has been little if any analyses of or investigations into "creative writing syllabi [and] creative writing textbooks" (2011).

Besides Paul Dawson's brief explanation of the history of writing handbooks and specific references to selected handbooks on the subjects of reading as a writer and showing, not telling, (2005: 60-66, 79-87, 90-93, 102-106), there are only isolated references to creative writing handbooks in the literature on the subject. George Garrett in his article, "Review: The Craft So Long to Learn," in a 1993 issue of *College English* lists a number of handbooks as examples of what was available to his generation of writers. Authorities such as Stephen Wade, John Singleton, Gail Godwin, Joe Amato and Kassia Fleisher and Katie Wood Ray make isolated, mostly singular mentions of creative writing handbooks in various edited compilations and journal articles during the period 1992 to 2003.

In his article, "Creative Writing and Postmodern Interdisciplinarity," in the journal *TEXT* (12.1 2008) Paul Dawson contends that "[f]or much of its history throughout the twentieth century, formal reflection on creative writing as a university subject has been largely restricted to the publication of writing handbooks …" (2008). Michelene Wandor in her book, *The Author is not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else* (2012), agrees with Dawson, but she warns that creative writing handbooks do not "explore the principles underlying the implications and pedagogies of CW — they do not … theorise its practice" (2012: 5), however, Wandor does emphasise that handbooks "consciously and immanently, provide the clearest source for the theorisation of CW's underlying principles" (2012: 95).

It can be concluded, therefore, that an examination and analysis of a suitably representative range of creative writing handbooks may be the closest that an investigation into the

teaching and learning of creative writing can come to identifying and establishing what and how creative writing has been, and is being, taught and identifying a theoretical pedagogic base from which to develop alternative creative writing pedagogies.

Given the extent of the data generated by this analysis, the results are provided in summary form with the references serving to substantiate the findings and conclusions. Additional evaluations and conclusions will only be included when deemed necessary.

B. The History of the Creative Writing Handbook

In his book, *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story*, Andrew Levy describes how from the late 1800s right through to the 1950s the increasing demand for short stories by popular American magazines spurred the prolific growth in how-to books. The early handbooks were aimed at prospective writers, who represented

> an increasingly large class of Americans in the early twentieth century [who] had come to believe that authorship was no longer the province of the eccentric and wealthy, and the short story was the vehicle of their ambitions (1993: 48).

The popularity of the "how-to handbooks and courses during the period 1910 to 1935" in turn led to the "more recent development of the system of academic workshops and graduate programs" (Levy, 1993: 48) and saw the short story rebound from near extinction to a rejuvenation, as an academic, apprentice genre. As an example of the magnitude of the prospective writer phenomenon during the 1950s, the *Saturday Evening Post* would receive between 60,000 and 200,000 unsolicited manuscripts (Levy, 1993: 48) at any one time.

In the initial phase of its development between the 1890s and 1920 the writing handbook evolved from "fragmentary essays in periodicals into bound volumes, multiple editions, and ever increasing levels of analytical and definitional density" (Levy, 1993: 79). Throughout the 1920s "literally hundreds of how-to-write-short-story-handbooks" appeared in "American correspondence schools and universities" (Levy, 1993: 38) leading to the first frictions between "art and science" and "literature and the mercantile world" (Levy, 1993: 88).

As the measure of success for all these writers was the publication of their short stories in the numerous magazines available at that time, the short story handbooks were designed to and had the primary objective of enabling writers to achieve such publication and therefore the how-to handbooks based their "principles and guidelines for success" on the more tangible "'scientific' analysis of works, which had been published and acclaimed" (Dawson, 2005: 60). In this process the handbook authors "scientifically" identified, recorded and explained the craft elements of short story texts, which ensured readership attention, affirmation and publication and in so doing the writing handbooks of the late 19th and early 20th century "codified and popularised the most seminal axioms of creative writing pedagogy" (1993: 104-5) Levy maintains that

> ... the handbook writers were members of the first generation of scholars to embrace creative writing as an academic discipline [and] that many of the basic elements of that approach have been adopted by later generations of creative writing teachers and students (1993: 78).

During the early 1930s creative writing was formally accepted and offered as a field of study by American universities, as a legitimate pedagogic alternative to the traditional writing handbook. Andrew Levy contends that there is "a tremendous amount of continuity between the handbook era and the current workshop era" and highlights similarities in the criticism levelled at both the historical writing handbook and current workshop entities:

> Just as the handbooks were criticized for inciting widespread conformity and a lowering of standards for what constituted 'literature,' contemporary observers speak of an 'MFA style,' emphasising 'technical superiority,' 'elegantly, awarely foolproof' [and] just as early handbook detractors believed that the handbooks were disseminating a critical, self-conscious vision of creative activity, modern writers are concerned that 'the university's demands' lead to 'deflated creative souls' … (1993: 103).

The persistent demand for all forms of creative writing instruction has resulted in an increasing number of creative writing handbooks, the authors of which, unlike their early twentieth century counterparts, appear to be legitimate and more credible due mainly to the credentials of the authors, who tend to be either experienced writers or academically qualified individuals or, in some instances, may have both sets of experience.

Contemporary handbooks do not indicate whether they are aimed at individuals as teachers of creative writing, or whether they are designed to be used by individuals, who see themselves as prospective writers. The absence of any reference to a specific readership focus certainly applies to the 27 handbooks examined in this evaluation. It may be that the publishers are hoping that, by not formally addressing a specific audience, they will capture both.

C. The Basis of the Selection of the Creative Writing Handbooks

The most useful definition of the handbook is the one offered by the Concise Oxford Dictionary: "*a short manual or guidebook."* It is designed to guide the readers through a step-by-step process and explains how the practice of writing should occur and what form it should take. While some of the examined handbooks conform exactly to the 'how-to' characteristics of the original creative writing 'instruction' books, others are more general and less prescriptive in style and format. In order to be as representative as possible, this evaluation has concentrated on a broad range of handbook texts.

No exploration of writing handbooks, as a pedagogic phenomenon, can be considered to be a definitive study on the subject, but it can provide a valuable perspective of the historical and contemporary codified principles, processes, methods and practices, which have been and continue to be applied to the teaching of creative writing. It is with the objective of analysing creative writing pedagogy from multiple and alternative perspectives that the following criteria were used as a basis for the selection of the handbooks for analysis and evaluation:

1. Popularity and Longevity

One of the primary criteria in the selection of the handbooks for this analysis was that the handbooks should have had extensive usage over a relatively prolonged period of time, thereby indicating that teachers and students have continued to derive pedagogic value from the use of those texts. For example, Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* is one of the most successful creative writing handbooks given its continuing

popularity amongst teachers at American academic institutions. It is now in its eighth edition and is frequently mentioned by authorities on the subject of creative writing. [See Curtis, (2009: 107), Cullity (2011) and Lively (2010: 42)] Burroway's *Imaginative Writing: Elements of Craft* is currently in it's third edition (Green, 2005) and Dorothea Brande's book, *Becoming a Writer*, which was originally published in 1934, is currently in its 14th print run (Dawson, 2003). *The College Handbook of Creative Writing* (Robert De Maria) is also a favourite of American academic institutions (Garrett, 1993: 438). Books such as John Gardner's *The Art of Fiction* are considered to be classic creative writing texts (Levy, 1993: 102) and the contributions of writing process specialist authors like Peter Elbow and Donald M. Murray are deemed to be important to current creative writing teaching developments and debates.

2. Handbooks Published Over an Extended Period of Time

The selected handbooks were written over the period 1934 to the year 2010 with most of them having been written during the last 15 years and incorporating handbooks, which have preceded their own creation.

3. Craft Based

The craft based teaching texts include Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction* and *Imaginative Writing*, Robert De Maria's *The College Handbook of Creative Writing*, *Gotham Writers' Workshop* (editor Alexander Steele), *The Creative Writing Coursebook* (editors Julia Bell and Paul Magrs) and *The Creative Writing Handbook* (editors John Singleton and Mary Luckhurst). These predominantly craft focused handbooks normally take one of two forms. They are usually compiled and written by a single author, or two authors writing in collaboration, or they consist of an array of craft oriented essays written by a range of authors, which cover all the primary elements of craft based creative writing pedagogy.

4. Process Based

Traditionally craft based and process based teaching perspectives have tended to be mutually exclusive. Recent trends, however, suggest that there is value in investigating an

overlapping of these two writing approaches in that it may lead to the more effective teaching of creative writing to the benefit of student writers. The texts of composition and process based experts such as Peter Elbow, Donald M. Murray, Pat Schneider and Pat Belanoff have, therefore, been included.

5. Experienced Teachers and Authors and a Multi-National Perspective

All the handbook authors and/or editors are specialists in creative writing, either as published authors, or as experienced teachers of creative writing, or as a combination of the two. The analysis includes the handbook texts of two popular and highly successful fiction writers, Stephen King and Elizabeth George, which contributed to the evaluation from yet another writing perspective.

Instead of focusing only on handbook texts originating in the United States of America, where the majority of creative writing teaching texts are created and published, handbook texts from countries like Australia and the United Kingdom have also been included. Kate Grenville's *The Writing Book: A Workbook for Fiction Writers* is used by creative writing teachers at Australian universities and *The Creative Writing Coursebook: Forty Writers Share Advice and Exercises for Poetry and Prose* was compiled by Julia Bell and Paul Magrs, who were both on the faculty of the writing programme of the University of East Anglia, which is still regarded as the pre-eminent writing programme in the UK. This book has been used in that university's undergraduate creative writing programme, as has *The Creative Writing Handbook: Techniques for New Writers*, edited by John Singleton and Mary Luckhurst.

6. All-Encompassing to Functionally Specialised

The selected handbooks include those that discuss all the elements required to undertake and implement a creative writing workshop to those, which specialise only in specific components of writing craft or writing process. For example, it would seem that the continuing success of Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* is in large part due to the fact that it is an all-encompassing handbook text as it includes, not only instructional components, but also extensive references and booklists for further student

reading and research, as well as textual excerpts emphasising and explaining the concepts being taught and exercises, which allow students to practice specific techniques and concepts. This handbook is 1 of only 4 of the 27 evaluated that provides complete short stories as textual examples of what is being taught, in a form that is readily accessible for students to read and assimilate. All encompassing books such as these come closest to the definition of the handbook as a teaching tool.

Other all-encompassing handbooks include Burroway's *Imaginative Writing: The Elements of Craft*; Kate Grenville's *The Writing Book: A Workbook for Fiction Writers* and Robert De Maria's *The College Handbook of Creative Writing*. While *Narrative Design: A Writer's Guide to Structure* (Madison Smartt Bell), *On Writing Short Stories*, (editor Tom Bailey) and *The Art of the Short Story* (editors Dana Gioia and RS Gwynn) all include full-length short story texts, they are more specialised with Smartt Bell's book focusing exclusively on plot and story line and the other two focusing exclusively on the short story as a genre.

The more specialised handbooks that have formed a part of this handbook analysis, include Donald M. Murray's *The Craft of Revision*, Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*, Pat Schneider's *Writing Alone and with Others*, Alan Ziegler's three-part *The Writing Workshop*-series and Josip Novakovich's *Fiction Writer's Workshop*, which provide a handbook perspective from within the workshop teaching process.

7. Handbooks Which Appeal to a Broad Target Audience

These handbooks were also selected to ensure that their texts and their teachings were accessible and valuable not only to the teachers of writing, but also to prospective writers and student writers for self-learning and private and personal writing practice and development.

8. Handbooks Which are Both Writing and Writer Orientated

In line with the perceived need to examine handbooks, which include craft based and process based components of writing practice, it was also important to include handbooks, which addressed and explored, not only writing craft and the process of writing, but also the

personal and lifestyle repercussions awaiting students, who are committed to becoming dedicated writers. As an example, Dorothea Brande's evergreen book, *Becoming a Writer*, focuses specifically on the writer and the writing process.

A detailed list of the selected handbooks is contained in the *Literature Review*.

Note that the specific editions of the handbooks examined and analysed in this chapter were chosen for no other reason than their accessibility and they may not be the latest available editions.

D. Handbook Objectives

The authors have different objectives for compiling handbooks. Janet Burroway focuses on the elements of fiction and technique based on literary study, but appears to recognise the student as writer and prospective artist:

> ... to guide the student writer from first impulse to final revision, employing concepts of fiction's elements familiar from literature study, but shifting the perspective toward that of the practicing writer ... to address the student ... as a fellow artist [in] the understanding and developing [of] technique (2007: xvii).

Dorothea Brande's objective is singularly focused on the needs of the student as writer and she is critical of writing teachers, who "become so fixed on high standards of writing ... [that they] dismiss a majority of those they work with as 'not really writers'" (1981: 17). Brande warned (in 1934 already) that teachers and courses, which focus exclusively on "'the techniques of writing'" avoid addressing the "root problems" writers have with the result that "all creative writing courses are for most people most of the time failures" (1981: 11). Brande's objectives are purely writer focused: to provide the "stalled or not-yet-started writer [with] some magic for getting in touch with himself, some key" to show the writer "what kinds of thought and action impede progress, what unnoticed forces undermine confidence …" (1981: 13). Her overall objective is to focus "on the writer's mind and heart" (1981: 15).

Kate Grenville's handbook objective is one of the few to mention the reader as a primary element in the teaching and learning of creative writing. Her goal is also one of the more practically specific objectives: to teach the writer, who "has something to express ... that the art of writing is to discover the shape, size and colour of writing that is the most forceful way of bringing it to a reader" by illustrating this process through "exercises in writing [and] examples of types of writing" (1990: xiii)

The objective Robert De Maria sets for his creative writing handbook is aimed at problem solving and error avoidance. His handbook seeks to avoid difficult and controversial concepts and issues and is narrowly craft orientated because, "talent cannot be taught ... matters of craft ... *can* be taught …" (1991: v). De Maria also avoids 'art' as a concept, because it is a "more difficult word to define than *craft*. It is complex and controversial. Let's focus instead on craft" (1991: 3). The general objective of his handbook is to "describe how universal writing problems have been dealt with by experienced writers" and how "the mistakes commonly made by novice writers can be avoided" (1991: v).

John Gardner's objective is probably the most direct and simple of all and is quite clearly focused on writing, as an art form, and on the writer, as an artist: "to teach the serious beginning writer the art of fiction" (1991: 248). He quite specifically emphasises that his book is aimed at "the elite; that is, for serious literary artists" (1991: 248).

In his "Foreword" to *The Creative Writing Coursebook* Andrew Motion confirms the handbook's development as an instrument to be used in the support of the teaching of an MA course in creative writing, which is aimed at

> presenting students with a chance to concentrate on their work in an atmosphere that is ... intense and supportive: to develop their skills, to search more deeply into their selves and their imaginations, to experiment and to diversify (2001: x).

Motion also has a secondary, academic objective, which is to determine how "criticising and creating can be combined in English studies everywhere" (2001: x).

In her "Introduction" to *The Creative Writing Handbook* Julia Bell describes an objective, which ultimately leads to the personal satisfaction of the writing student. According to Bell

the objective is to teach the students "how to generate and shape a successful piece of creative work" and in so doing to add "something important to their repertoire of life skills that will go on to give them pleasure throughout their lives" (2001: xi).

Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter in *What If?: Writing Exercises for Fiction Writers* provide a range of closely linked and pragmatic objectives for their book:

> To de-mystify the process of making up stories and writing them down ... by breaking down the writing of fiction into ... its ... most manageable components... [to] learn how to write a singular story or even a novel ... [to] feel far more at ease with written prose and ... experience the joy of saying exactly what you want to say the way you want to say it ... [to] help the serious student sharpen her skills — at both thinking and writing like a writer (1990: xvii).

In her workshop focused handbook, *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*, Katie Wood Ray heralds the "huge shift in how we go about teaching writing" (2001: 4) based on a shift of focus from "*pieces of writing*" to writing workshops "where the focus is very much on *writers* … who use writing to do powerful things in the world in which they live" (2001: 5).

Dana Gioia and RS Gwynn confirm that *The Art of the Short Story* was conceived, written, and edited with the aim of

> creating an anthology of literary masterpieces that emphasised the individual, human origins of great fiction ... to offer an informed, accessible, and comprehensive survey of the short story as a modern literary form ... built ... around the lives, works, and ideas of a diverse group of significant, major authors, many of them contemporary (2006: xi).

E. Broad Range of Handbook Components

The examination and analysis of these different writing handbooks reveal that, while there are a broad range of writing components and elements, which are deemed important in the teaching of creative writing, the primary focus remains on the traditional area of writing craft, as the more explicable and measurable part of writing pedagogy. The process of

writing remains a fringe aspect of the teaching of writing, but does appear to be making some inroads. The following primary components of creative writing pedagogy will be discussed in what follows:

1. Writing Craft
2. Writing Process
3. Audience Focused Skills and Techniques
4. Teaching Components
5. Writer Focused Issues
6. Ancillary Questions and Issues
7. Supplementary Writer Support Components

1. Writing Craft

The focus on the teaching of writing craft, as the foundation of creative writing pedagogy, remains based on the belief that craft encompasses teachable and learnable skills and that, like the tools and skills used in "carpentry, ... words and style" (King, 2000: 155), are the prerequisites for effective writing. [See also Elizabeth George (2004: 175) and Madison Smartt Bell (1997: xii)]

Alexander Steele's description of the development of a bank of knowledge of writing craft verifies the haphazard, traditional and lore-based evolution of craft pedagogy, which somehow has avoided any meaningful theoretical evaluation and analysis:

> By craft we mean the time-tested practices that have proven helpful to the construction of good fiction ... The 'rules' of fiction craft weren't created by any one person in particular. They simply emerged over time as guiding principles and made fiction writing stronger … (2003: 19).

Some handbook authors view this absolute focus on the craft of writing as too technical, mechanical and perhaps as unemotional and unfeeling. Madison Smartt Bell contends that "95 percent of all workshops in academia" base their workshops on the Iowa model, which is "nothing if not craft-driven ... with a mission to teach a repertory of techniques" (1997: 8). In his description of the workings of the writing workshop Smartt Bell uses words such as "technical," "mechanics," "surgical," "dissection," and the "text ... as a machine" (1997:

8). He warns that students may forget that a story is "a living organism" and that the "tilted ... mechanics" of the workshop may "turn out monsters of mere technique," pointing out that the teaching of craft "tends to ignore that no stories are *originally* written on craft intelligence alone" (1997: 9).

Pat Schneider describes writing craft as the knowledge of how to "plot, develop character, use point of view, make transitions ... to understand and master ... character, action, setting …" (2003: 141). These writing components make up the bulk of what has been categorised as the Primary Craft Elements. However, there are also some important Secondary Craft Elements, which, while receiving significantly less focus, may also play a role in the creation of successful texts. [See also Bernays and Painter (1990: 167)]

(a) Primary Craft Elements

(i) Structure, Plot and Storyline

Of all the primary craft elements, the story's narrative structure receives predominant attention and focus, because of the importance of the storyline and plot in capturing the reader's imagination and holding the reader's attention (Magrs, 2001f: 227). The following are some of the key aspects and characteristics of structure, plot and storyline identified and explained in the handbooks:

The storyline must contain "complication, crisis ... dilemma [and] resolution" with which to "hold the reader" (Singleton, 2001: 112). [See also Tom Bailey (2000: 50); Madison Smartt Bell (1997: 29); Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 99); Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 101 & 171); and Janet Burroway (2007: 282)] Without the tension and conflict housed within the story's structure, the writer will be neglecting "his responsibility to energize his fiction with conflict [and] will probably have a very limited or temporary audience" (Bernays and Painter 1990: 101). [See also Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 96)]

Textual suspense is described as the "important technique of delay," (Gardner, 1983: 162) which coupled with the effective use of subtext "'shows' the real story to the reader" (Burroway, 2003: 281).

In the simplest structural terms, the story should contain a beginning, a middle and an end and ideally some form of denouement (Ebenbach, 2003: 66). [See also Julia Bell (2001g: 195) and Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 98)] This linear design is derived from the ancient Five Act structure consisting of the "exposition ... rising action ... the climax ... falling action ... and the denouement or resolution" (Smartt Bell, 2003: 27) Alternate story structures can be found in works such as Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), as popularised by Chris Vogler in *The Writer's Journey Mythic Structure for Writers* (1998). [See also Val Taylor (2001: 214) and Elizabeth George (2004: 239)] There are also many variations and opportunities to experiment with narrative structures (Grenville, 1990: 146) and even to write plotless fiction (Grenville, 1990: 143). [See also Stephen King (2000: 187)]

Some novelists and handbook authors have devised specific names for different types of plots and plot variations. Some of these include the Double Plot, the Hourglass Plot, the Picaresque Plot (George 2004: 241-2), the Conflict Plot (Novakovich, 1995: 75-6), the Combination Plot (Novakovich, 1995: 75), the Siege Narrative, the Quest Narrative (Duncker, 2001: 206) and the Bestselling Plots, which include Courtroom Plots and Journey Plots (Bell, 2001g: 198).

Certain handbook authors maintain that it is the text's "single, dominant meaning" (Murray, 2004: 60) or "major dramatic question" (Ebenbach, 2001: 54), which generates the textual suspense, which maintains the reader's interest. [See also Percy Lubbock (1968: 267)]

Most of the handbooks contend that characterisation, not storyline, is the focal point of all fiction with the other craft elements merely supporting the central character-hub. [See Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 97), Josip Novakovich (1995: 73) and Elizabeth George (2004: 457)]

(ii) Fictional Place and Fictional Setting

Fictional place and setting "grounds the reader in the story in the most physical sense" (Gissof, 2003: 151) and can take a limitless number of forms from the "minimal and generic" (Bailey, 2000: 57) to the realistic (De Maria, 1991: 32) and to the fantasy of imaginary worlds" (De Maria, 1991: 31). [See also Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 216)] Fictional place offers a range of roles to a work of fiction with fictional setting as a "world ... a camera ... a mood and symbol [or] as action" Burroway, 2007: 129). [See also Tom Bailey (2000: 57)] Setting can also be a participant in the text in the form of "setting as situation ... as motive ... as metaphor" (Bailey 2000: 57). [See also Elizabeth George (2004: 22)] The level of detail contained in the descriptions of settings are vital to the atmosphere, believability and memorability of the story. [See Caren Gissof (2003: 165)]

The creation of detailed settings can provide an additional characterisation component, "building characters by showing them interacting with their environment" (Magrs, 2001e: 169). [See also David Almond (2001: 175 & 187)]

(iii) Fictional Time

Relative to the other components of writing craft, fictional time receives little attention with only Janet Burroway and Robert De Maria devoting any attention to it with De Maria identifying the various forms of fictional time: the establishment of the period in time when the action takes place (1991: 191-2); present action (1991: 193); past action (1991: 194-5); duration (1991: 196-7); and transitions (1991: 198). [See also Tom Bailey (2000: 64) and Caren Gissof (2003: 165)]

Tom Bailey explores fictional time in the writing scene and writing time in the forms of flashback and slow motion (2000: 64-7). Caren Gissof evaluates the "pace of time [and] the manipulation of time" (2003: 165) in fiction.

(iv) Building Character

For DH Lawrence "a character in a novel has got to live, or it is nothing" (qtd in Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 529). The generally accepted processes and techniques for developing character, include character presentation through appearance, action, dialogue, thought (Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 529) and desire (Burroway, 2007: 87). E. M. Forster describes motivation as "the heart and soul of any character's action or inaction" (Bailey, 2000: 64-7).

Writers should strive to "create living people; people, not characters" (Novakovich, 1995: 51) by ensuring depth in the development (De Maria, 1991: 51) of their characters, seeing them as psychological beings (Bradbury, 2001: 127), writing vertically, not just horizontally (Dubus, 2000: 92) and revealing the character's internal conflicts (Bell, 2001e: 95) and shortcomings and flaws (Reissenweber, 2003: 29). [See also Robert De Maria (1991: 54), Malcolm Bradbury (2001: 118), Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 139 & 143) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 24)]

The methods used to develop characters, include "building a character from the ground up [as] a purely intellectual creation" (Novakovich, 1995: 51-2); using the biographical or autobiographical method; or a mixture of methods (Novakovich, 1995: 53).

To establish convincing and interesting characters (Bradbury, 2001: 122) it is necessary to establish a complete universe of characteristics, including "physical characteristics, habits and mannerisms, speech patterns, attitudes, beliefs and motives, desires, a past and present, and ... actions" (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 35). [See also Julia Bell (2001e: 99), Brandi Reissenweber (2003: 38-9) and Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 47-8)]

Some handbook authors suggest that character creation is more a part of the process of writing, than the craft of writing, with the characters sometimes leading and directing the writer with the best characters coming to them fully formed and almost writing themselves (Grenville, 1990: 137). [See also Julia Bell (2001e: 97)]

Of all the components of the craft of writing, characterisation is considered to be the most crucial, because as F. Scott Fitzgerald points out "character is plot, plot is character ... out of

character, plot easily grows, but out of plot, a character does not necessarily follow" (qtd in Novakovich, 1995: 48). [See also Elizabeth George (2004: 9) and compare Stephen King (2000: 224)]

(v) Dialogue

Dialogue is a simulation of speech and properly done should portray "the effortless-looking illusion of real speech" (Grenville, 1990: 101). [See also Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 78) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 129)]

Dialogue is generally written in a standard recognised form: direct dialogue contained between quotation marks; indirect thought, direct thought; and stream of consciousness (De Maria, 1991: 161-184). [See also Ann Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 85), Stephen King (2000: 142) and Elizabeth George (2004: 140)]

Handbook authors warn against the injudicious and careless use of accents and dialects in the development of dialogue (Novakovich, 1995: 129). [See also Robert De Maria (1991: 168)]

Dialogue provides an "economic way of defining" (Bernays and Painter 1990: 73), exposing and developing character (Bernays and Painter 1990: 82) [See also Stephen King (2000: 142)] and shows the characters' verbal interactions [See Allison Amend (2003: 144) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 136)] and the invisible effects of "subtext ... miscommunication [and] misunderstandings" (Amend, 2003: 144). [See also Ann Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 73) and Elizabeth George (2004: 140)]

Body language can also play an important role in supporting and emphasising the messages, subjects and tensions the writer is trying to convey through the use of dialogue (Novakovich, 1995: 134).

(vi) Point of View

Point of view is traditionally considered to refer to whether the story is being told by means of a first person, second person, or third person voice or a mixture of perspectives from a number of voices. Percy Lubbock describes point of view as "the relation in which the narrator stands to the story" (1968: 251). [See also Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French (2007: 296)]

Handbook authors offer a number of variations to and derivatives of the traditional first person voice, for example, the first person subjective or objective (Bailey, 2000: 64-7); the "First Person: Multiple Vision" (Vogrin, 2003: 81) and the "First Person: Peripheral" (Vogrin, 2003: 84); "the shifting first person" (George, 2004: 102); and the "First-Person Collective Observer POV" (Novakovich, 1995: 113).

Authors such as John Gardner emphasise the importance of the third person point of view, as the most popular and common narrative perspective, and from his vast experience as a writer provides a valuable evaluation and explanation of the effects the variations of the third person point of view have on the text and the readers' response to the text. He refers to the third person subjective (Gardner, 1983: 156) and the third person objective (Gardner, 1983: 157) point of view. Other handbook authors offer a host of third person point of view options and variations. [See Valerie Vogrin (2003: 85, 87, 90 & 94)), Robert De Maria (1991: 97), Tom Bailey (2000: 36), Elizabeth George (2004: 105) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 104-113)]

The usefulness, appropriateness and current validity of the omniscient narrator is an issue, which receives emphasis in some of the handbooks. [See Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 59), Elizabeth George (2004: 98), Tom Bailey (2000: 40), Julia Bell (2001f: 166), Paul Magrs (2001d: 139), Valerie Vogrin (2003: 90), and Robert De Maria, (1991: 97) Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French (2007: 298), Janet Burroway (2003: 51), Josip Novakovich (1995: 107) and John Gardner (1983: 159)]

A limited number of handbooks consider "Stream of Consciousness" (Burroway and Stuckey-French, 2007: 307) to be an accepted form of narration and point of view and few

handbooks devote attention to the attractiveness of employing the point of view of the unreliable narrator. [See Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 70) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 102)]

(vii) Showing, not Telling

Showing, not telling encompasses a range of methods and techniques to achieve the objective of activating the reader's response to the text. It is not really a mechanical craft component, but more a process component closer to and aimed specifically at connecting with the reader and accessing the reader's response and involvement in the text. Showing and not telling is more personal and direct in its objectives. It should perhaps be classified as an audience based writing process component, because it is more magical, less pragmatic and less calculated than other primary craft elements. Showing and not telling, in conjunction with the extended skills of figurative writing, may be the all important, elusive and rare ability of talented writers, which distinguishes them from the average and makes them memorable and great authors. This abbreviated analysis illustrates how the characteristics of writing texts that show and don't tell tend to be treated and viewed differently by handbook authors, when compared to the other more mechanical, technique and skill based components of writing craft.

For example, most of the descriptions used to explain notions and processes of showing, not telling tend to be more abstract, more emotional and less based on logic and rationality. Janet Burroway describes showing, not telling as "achieving the sensuous in fiction ... helping the reader 'sink into the dream' of the story" (2007: 38). This notion of the fictional text representing a dreamlike state for the reader is found in the teaching texts of John Gardner. In *The Art of Fiction* Gardner describes the fictional text as an "organized and intelligent fictional dream that will eventually fill the reader's mind …" (1983: 36). Any good writer is creating "'a vivid and continuous dream' ... not allowing the reader's mind to wander out off the fictional world" (Lombardi, 2003: 104).

Unlike other more mechanically based craft elements, which tend to have a less immediate interest in the reader, more as a witness and passive bystander, the process of showing, and not telling seeks to engage the direct participation and active involvement of the reader.

John Gardner contends that it is the author's primary purpose to make the reader 'believe' the text, or conversely, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge explains, "to persuade him to suspend disbelief" (1983: 24). In order to 'show' the reader 'through the text,' the writer needs to "take the reader in close" (Schneider, 2003: 77) and touch the reader's feelings in some way. Some handbook authors suggest that showing and not telling is all about capturing the reader's imagination so that the reader is enticed into becoming an active participant and a co-creator of the text. Lindsay Clarke in her essay, "Going the Last Inch: Some Thoughts on Showing and Telling," in *The Creative Writing Coursebook* contends that a text is kicked into life only when a reader's imagination collaborates with that of the writer (2001: 256). Showing allows "room for a reader to project their own imagination into a narrative ... [while] if writing is a dialogue between a reader and a writer, then narratives that are too telling are a one-way conversation" (Bell, 2001c: 48).

Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff maintain that by showing and not telling writers make "readers see ... make the reader's experience what [they] are writing about" (1989: 78). One of the primary objectives of this engagement with and participation of readers in the text is the establishment of some level of memorability, once the reading of the text has ben completed. [See Ann Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 180) and Elizabeth George (2004: 39)]

The art of showing and not telling is based on a number of clearly defined techniques and processes. The text should contain high levels of imagery and offer the reader sensory appeal. [See Janet Burroway in *Imaginative Writing* (2003: 4), Kate Grenville (1990: 129), John Gardner (1983: 198), Chris Lombardi (2003: 106), Alicia Stubbersfield (2001: 29), Ann Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 180) and Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 84)]

In order to appeal to the reader's senses and maintain her attention, the detail the writer injects into her text should be animated, 'alive,' should "achieve vividness; make the scene continuous ... avoid anything that might distract the reader from the image …" (Gardner, 1983: 32). This is in accordance with John Gardner's "single notion in the theory of fiction ... the vivid and continuous fictional dream …" (1983: 97). He maintains that the opposite result, "frigidity," is achieved when an author wishes to "intrude himself" (1983:

119), into the text. [See also Percy Lubbock (1968: 174), Paul Magrs (2001b: 65), and Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 180)]

Some handbook authors also extend this pre-requisite of showing and not telling by suggesting that writers also follow the advice of Henry James to "'dramatize, dramatize, dramatize'" (2001: 256). [See also Percy Lubbock (1968: 173) and Kate Grenville (1990: 148)]

Confirming William Blake's adage that "'he who does not imagine in minute particulars does not imagine at all'" (Clarke, 2001: 258), the majority of the handbook authors evaluated agree that the amount and the "precision of detail" provided in the text is vital to the reader's participation in and authentication of that text (Gardner, 1983: 22-3). Percy Lubbock contends that physical detail is vitally important, if the writer is to "give his subject the highest relief ... To heighten its flat, pictorial, descriptive surface …" (1968: 173-4) and Elizabeth George emphasises that "telling imprints nothing at all," while "specific and telling details ... no reader forgets …" (2004: 39). [See also Robert De Maria (1991: 137), Alexander Steele (2003: 19), Chris Lombardi (2003: 119-20) and Alicia Stubbersfield (2001: 30)]

Coupled closely to textual detail, as a means of achieving authenticity and verisimilitude in the eyes of the reader, is the use of "concrete, specific language." As Pat Schneider explains, "... Writing is most powerful when it is most concrete writing ... setting the stage for the experience of the reader ... [Taking] the reader in close" (2003: 76). [See also John Gardner (1983: 98) and Chris Lombardi (2003: 107)]

The handbook texts' approach to and the processes attached to the 'craft' of showing and not telling appear to be aimed at the specific objective of creating a fictional text, during the reading of which, the reader becomes involved with and participates in, and, ultimately accepts and recognises as being genuine and authentic. [See Paul Magrs (2001b: 65) and John Gardner (1983: 22-3)]

(viii) The Revision Process

Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff state that there are "three levels of revising ... reseeing, rethinking, or changing the bones" (1989: 167). Revision is more than just a process of fixing errors or mistakes. It should be a means of "reseeing," re-envisioning and re-viewing (Murray, 2004: 48) the initial drafts of the text. [See also Janet Burroway (2007: 388) and Kate Grenville (1990: 167)]

A number of handbook authors provide details on how to revise, what to revise and when to revise. The revision process usually flows from a broad to narrow textual focus. [See Peter Selgin (2003: 218-227), Donald M. Murray (2004: 56-65), James Friel (2001: 261-9), Liz Cashdan, Mary Luckhurst and John Singleton (2000: 302-318), Alan Ziegler (1981: 90-3) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 227-239)]

(b) Secondary Craft Elements

The Secondary Craft Elements are those components of the craft of fiction writing, which have collectively received less attention and focus by the handbook authors.

(i) Resolution and Final Meaning

The elements of "resolution and final meaning" (1990: 32) of the completed text receive attention from Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter. Frank Conroy emphasises the importance of the writer creating some form of meaning with, and through, the text (2000: 84).

(ii) Titles

Donald M. Murray emphasises the importance of the title of a piece of fiction, particularly the short story, as a potentially valuable part of the overall text as "it establishes the subject ... it sets the voice ... it points to the direction ... it limits the subject ... it attracts the reader …" (2004: 26).

(iii) Beginnings and Endings

Ann Bernays and Pamela Painter identify the beginnings and endings of stories as being the most difficult for the writer to create and they offer a variety of methods for overcoming what for some authors can be a major obstacle. They recommend that the story should begin "in the middle of things" (1990: 1). [See also Josip Novakovich (1995: 171), Donald M. Murray, (2004: 27-33) Allan Ziegler (1981: 44) and Elizabeth George (2004: 85)]

(c) Craft Developmental Instruments and Practices

(i) The Writer's Journal

The writer's journal, both as a catch-all receptacle of emotions, information and observations [See Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French (2007: 3-4) and Janet Burroway (2003: xxv)] and as a means of exercising the practice of writing, is a common theme amongst the handbook authors (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 20). [See also Alan Ziegler (2008: 35), Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 21-31), Katie Wood Ray (2001: 242) and Donald Murray (2004: 69)]

Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff suggest that the writer's journal can also fulfil the function of a writer's process journal "keeping an eye out for clues about what helps [her] and what hinders [her] in [her] writing" (1989: 15) and gives a writer a means to become acquainted with and accustomed to her 'writing' self.

(ii) Reading as a Writer

Most of the handbooks tend to view and promote the practice of 'reading like a writer.' Reading as a writer is considered above all, as a means of learning writing craft skills and techniques from other writers as "teachers" (Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 4), as part of a writing "apprenticeship" (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 226). [See also Margaret Atwood (qtd in Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 4-5), and Eudora Welty (qtd in Bernays and Painter,1990: 226)]

The traditional handbook focus on reading as a writer tends to be primarily a narrow, conservative view of reading, focusing specifically on observing, imitating and adopting another author's techniques of craft. [See Katie Wood Ray (2001: 37)]

It is important to interrogate traditional notions of 'reading as a writer' and to consider the value and potential, which may be unlocked, when the concept of reading as a writer is inverted to include writing as a reader (Cashdan, Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 309) and reading as a reader, which recognises and embraces the reciprocity so crucial to the writer/ reader relationship and fundamental to the reading process: "we *are* together ... we're close ... we're having a meeting of the minds" (King, 2000: 117).

Many handbook authors and essay contributors subscribe to the narrow craft only orientation of reading as a writer, but there are alternative perspectives of the writer's relationship with her reading, which can extend her reading practice from being a purely craft focused activity into the broader realm of writing process, creativity, quality, knowledge and originality. Stephen King maintains that "reading is the creative centre of a writer's life" and, as such, gives the writer's work a position and a perspective in relation to other fictional texts and that writers should not only read exemplary work, but should also "read to experience the mediocre and the outright rotten ... to help us to recognize those things when they begin to creep into our own work, and to steer clear of them …" (2000: 166). [See also Julia Bell (2001h: 248-9), Stephen King (2000: 171) and Pat Schneider (2003: 110)]

(iii) Textual Examples, Excerpts and References

Many of the handbook authors appear to deem the ongoing practice of reading as a writer to be one of the fundamental pillars of the establishment of a writer's skill and expertise in the vital craft elements of creative writing and, as such, the practice of reading must be treated as a very important component of the pedagogy of creative writing. It is for this reason that creative writing handbooks utilise the reading of texts as one of the key components of the teaching and learning of creative writing. As a result the handbook texts, either provide their readers with full text examples of short stories and/or excerpts from longer texts, as

examples of writing techniques, and/or simply refer to specific texts for readers to source and examine on their own.

This reading theme continues and is extended in the academic writing teaching environment, where students in the workshop setting also have to read, analyse, evaluate and provide feedback on the writing of fellow students.

The supplying of textual examples, excerpts from texts and references to specific texts also serves the important purpose of exposing students to a range of textual styles and techniques, as well as embedding an implied benchmark of the level and type of writing standards the handbook authors consider to be of importance to prospective writers based on the handbook author's own tastes, experience and textual perspective. The exposure to all these texts also provides the budding author with a glimpse of the 'universe' of fiction against which to compare and create her own work, as well as a broader perspective of the realm of the fictional art form.

A minority of the handbooks also provide fictional examples beyond the short story and include poetry, short film screenplays, excerpts from screenplays and plays and even essays in some instances, but for the purposes of this study all the fictional examples, excerpts and references have been restricted to those of the short story and novella and novel genres.

What follows is an analysis of the texts provided and recommended by the different handbooks. This will provide a foundation from which to establish a range of texts for use in an undergraduate creative writing course and a postgraduate creative writing teaching programme.

Full-Text Examples

Seven of the handbooks examined contain 149 examples of short story texts. Eighty two of those short stories appear in the two short story 'teaching' anthologies, *The Art of the Short Story* (64) and *On Writing Short Stories*, (18) while Janet Burroway's two books, *Writing Fiction* (27) and *Imaginative Writing* (15) contain 42 short stories. *Narrative Design* (12) (Madison Smartt Bell), *The College Handbook of Creative Writing* (12) (Robert De Maria)

and *The Gotham Writer's Workshop* (1) make up the balance of the short story texts provided as examples to the handbook readers. If a definition is to be developed for the 'genuine' creative writing handbook, the definition should recognise the inclusion of a reasonable range of short fiction texts, which will provide the teacher/student with all the required texts and materials in one accessible book thereby allowing the reader to have everything at hand. This represents a significant time and effort saving to teachers and students alike, who do not have to face the practical problems of sourcing, acquiring and paying for numerous additional texts. Handbooks, which only refer to specific texts, or simply provide a list of recommended texts to be read, have a reduced effectiveness.

A more detailed breakdown of the analysis findings is contained in Appendices p. 1.

Based on the total number of times their texts have appeared as examples in all the handbooks and based on the number of different handbooks their texts have appeared in, the following are the most 'popular' authors (3 or more exposures), and their most popular short story.

1. Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"
2. Anton Chekhov, "The Lady with the Pet Dog"
3. Flannery O'Connor, "Everything That Rises Must Converge"
4. Eudora Welty, "Why I Live at the PO"
5. Guy de Maupassant, "The Necklace"
6. William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily"
7. Katherine Mansfield, "Miss Brill"
8. Joyce Carol Oates, "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"

The following authors have had their texts used in 2 of the 7 creative writing handbooks:

Margaret Atwood, "Happy Endings"

James Baldwin – "Sonny's Blues"

Charles Baxter – "Gryphon" and "Snow"

Kate Chopin, "The Storm" and "The Story of an Hour"

John Cheever, "The Swimmer"

Louise Erdrich – "Sister Godzilla" and "Saint Marie"

Nadine Gordimer "The Diamond Mine" and "A Company of Laughing Faces"

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birthmark" and "Young Goodman Brown"

Ha Jin "In the Kindergarten" and "Saboteur"

DH Lawrence, "The Rocking-Horse Winner" and "Odour of Chrysanthemums"

Tim O'Brien – "The Things They Carried"

Robert Olen Butler – "Hotel Tourine" and "Missing"

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Tell-Tale Heart"

James Joyce, "Araby" and "The Dead"

Franz Kafka, "Before the Law" and "The Metamorphosis"

Given that the 7 handbooks, which offer full text examples of short story writing are all American in origin, it is not surprising that 75 (almost 40%) of the authors of the short fiction examples are American, with 58 of those being contemporary writers and 17 having written in earlier periods. Only 20 of the example texts were written by non-American authors, with the majority of them being English (4), Russian (3) and French (3).

Interestingly 25% (37) of the authors, whose texts were selected to be used as examples in the handbooks, are, or were, academically affiliated in terms of their qualifications, careers or professions. A number of the authors are winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature (7), the Pulitzer Prize (8) and the National Book Award (4); while 8 of the authors are graduates of the Iowa Writers' Workshop.

Generally the handbooks contain a blend of traditional, contemporary and modern short story examples, with some handbooks, like *The Art of the Short Story*, aiming to create "an anthology of literary masterpieces, while offering an informed, accessible, and comprehensive survey of the short story as a modern literary form" (Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: xi). Other handbooks like Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French's *Writing Fiction* and Kate Grenville's *The Writing Book* adopt a more social, author-based, less diverse textual focused approach. Burroway and Stuckey-French have chosen stories "primarily from contemporary American fiction with attention to increased variety in form, mood, and content and emphasis on multicultural representation of authors and experiences" (2007: x). Their objective in the seventh edition of their book contradicts its own sub-title, *A Guide to Narrative Craft*, representing a shift from the craft based teaching philosophy that the apprentice learns a craft from the instruction and work of a master. Burroway and Stuckey-French suggest that their selected texts are not necessarily the texts of masters, but authors and their texts, which symbolise a broader "multicultural representation" of society. Similarly, Kate Grenville allows a cultural, societal and nationalist bias to restrict the creative writing content of her handbook by excluding all references to and examples of non-Australian texts in favour of only the work of authors of "contemporary Australian fiction" (1990: xiii). Grenville's absolute adoption of a culturally nationalist approach to the teaching of writing downplays notions of the teaching of writing being based almost exclusively on the teaching of writing craft.

Excerpt Examples

Ten of the handbooks examined contain 481 excerpts from fictional texts selected both from short stories and novels. These excerpts are examples of the craft skills and techniques employed by a broader range of authors than the full text examples. Josip Novakovich's book, *Fiction Writers Workshop*, has the most number of excerpt examples at 113, with Peter Elbow only making use of 2 excerpts in his book, *Writing Without Teachers*. *The Gotham Writers' Workshop* makes use of 94 excerpts and Janet Burroway and Elizabeth Stuckey-French use 83 excerpts to provide students with examples of how established authors address specific craft skills and techniques.

A more detailed breakdown of the analysis findings is contained in Appendices p. 2.

Based on the total number of times their excerpts have appeared as examples in all the handbooks and the number of different handbooks making use of those excerpts, the following are the most 'popular' authors, whose texts have provided 5 or more excerpts as examples for use by the handbook authors and the texts from which most excerpts were derived.

1. Raymond Carver, "Cathedral"
2. Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"
3. Flannery O'Connor, "Everything That Rises Must Converge"
4. James Joyce, *Ulysses*
5. Charles Dickens (excerpts from 8 different texts)
6. Anton Chekov, "The Lady with the Dog"
7. Margaret Atwood, (excerpts from 7 different texts)
8. William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily."
9. John Cheever, (excerpts from 5 different texts)
10. Stephen Crane, "The Blue Hotel"
11. Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
12. Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
13. Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Illich*

The following authors have had excerpts from their texts used 4 times in 3 or more different handbooks with the most used text listed:

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”	Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*
Joyce Carol Oates, “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”	Charles Baxter, “Gryphon”
Tim O'Brien, “The Things They Carried”	Mary Gaitskill, “The Girl on the Plane”
Lorrie Moore, “People Like That Are the Only People Here”	F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years Of Solitude*	John Updike, (excerpts from different texts)

While the texts of contemporary American authors still predominate, with 127 excerpts, the breadth and depth of the authors, whose excerpts have been used, have been extended with American authors representing 30% of the total number of excerpts and Non-American authors making up 15% of all the excerpts used. English writers (31) make up the majority of the ‘other’ authors’ excerpts, followed by the Russian (7), German (5), French (4) and Irish (3) authors.

The number of authors with academic affiliations shows an increase to 89, as does the number of authors, who graduated from the Iowa Writer’s Workshop, which increased to 19.

References to Texts

As a means of providing their readers with concrete examples of particular writing styles, skills and techniques, the handbook authors also make use of references to fictional texts, both in the handbook texts themselves and in the form of lists of recommended readings. In total, in 16 handbooks, 618 references were made to other texts that would provide the handbook readers with additional examples, over and above the full texts and textual excerpts examples already provided in some handbooks. The reference option is the practically least effective of the three pedagogic example options and is more theoretical and academic in its need for the reader to expend effort to source and acquire the reference text. Those ‘handbooks,’ which provide their readers with references only, are not ‘handbooks’ in the strict sense of the word, as they do not have everything at hand for the reader.

An analysis of the references provided by the 16 handbooks reveals that the authors and texts referred to make up an entirely different profile and mix to those that are so prominent

as full text examples and excerpt examples. The following is a breakdown of the authors, whose texts received more than 5 references and those texts most referred to:

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*	Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
James Joyce, *Ulysses*	Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*	John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*
William Faulkner, *Absalom! Absalom! The Sound and the Fury*	DH Lawrence, *The Fox*
Henry James – *The Wings of the Dove*	Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*
Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"	Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"	Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*	Edgar Allan Poe (5 different short stories)
Margaret Atwood, *Bodily Harm*, *Cat's Eye*	Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
Anton Chekhov, "The Lady with the Pet Dog"	

The texts of these 19 authors received 145 referrals, which represent 24% of the total number of 618 references. These authors are mostly from the Victorian and Modernist writing eras with, interestingly, only Tony Morrison and Margaret Atwood representing contemporary authors. The authors also have a definite cosmopolitan skew with a predominance of European and British authors, in particular. When one considers the possible reasons for the dramatic change in the mix of the authors and texts from the full text examples and excerpt examples to the referenced authors and texts, it may be that the referenced texts represent a collective, enduring, 'canonical' collection of fictional texts, which may not always be used as practical examples of effective writing craft, but are constantly present as more traditional reference points. It could be said that these authors and their fictional texts represent a collective standard for the authors of the 16 handbooks.

A more detailed breakdown of the analysis findings is contained in Appendices p. 3.

2. Writing Process

(a) The Writing Process

Alan Ziegler remarks that teachers and institutions have spent "decades ... emphasizing product rather than process" and that more recently "education researchers have turned their attention to identifying components ... [and] ... patterns" (1981: 33) of the writing process. Donald M. Murray refers to this 'method' as the "process approach to writing," an approach, which respects the student's potential (2004: xi). The justification for the development of a process perspective in the teaching of creative writing is based on the notion that "writing is an act of thought ... a way of making meaning ... [that] the process of writing can be studied and understood ... [and] is not one process, but many" (2004: 3-4).

Ali Smith in her essay, "Creative Writing Workshy," describes the practice of writing as "a dynamic meld of anarchy and discipline ... a place between order and chaos ... between instinct and edit …" (2001: 25). Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff describe the act of writing required of the writer as "two mental abilities, which conflict with each other ... the ability to *create* an abundance of words and ideas and the ability to *criticize* and discard words and ideas ... to be both generative and cutthroat" (1989: 3). [See also Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 437)]

The creation of an abundance of words is a vital component of the writer's need for writing freedom, which encompasses the notion of writers tapping into their subconscious selves and optimising the use of their imaginations in their creation of their texts, leading to the magical connotations attached to the process and the texts that are the product of that process. In contrast the opposite component of the practice of writing, the ordering, editing, selecting or the cleaning up of the chaos generated by the writer's freedom, could be termed the disciplined component of the writing process.

(b) Writing Freedom

Writers have to make a conscious effort to recover and reclaim their writing freedom and "writers have to unlearn a lot before [they] are free to write ... to unlearn, for a while, the

desire to have a finished product" and to remember that "getting a piece of writing to work usually means many failed attempts" (Grenville, 1990: 4).

Relinquishing control and accepting failure as a byproduct of the writing process are also important steps in claiming and practicing writing with freedom, which includes "letting go of fear and affectation" (King, 2000: 143) and *let[ing] go* of planning, control, and vigilance [and] invit[ing] chaos and bad writing …" (Elbow, 1998: xviii). [See also Peter Elbow (1998: 31)]

In achieving total writing freedom, there are no obstructions between the writer's unconscious and conscious mind (Schneider, 2003: 12), which allows the author not only to make important connections, but also "disconnections" and recollections (Schneider, 2003: 17). The creative writing process is a "heuristic procedure ... an informed method of trial-and-error — a strategy, not a recipe" (Ziegler, 2008 xviii), which necessitates failure and "the advantage of failure." Donald M. Murray bemoans the fact that students have become risk averse and that they appear to be "inhibited, constipated, frightened — in no condition to produce good writing" (2004: 9).

This relinquishment of control over their writing and an apparent acceptance of the risk attached to such experimentation appears to transfer the control and responsibility from the writer to the process and the text itself, transfers the control and domination of the conscious mind to the freedom of the subconscious. E. M. Forster famously asked, "'How do I know what I think until I see what I say?'" (qtd in Singleton, 2000: 101-2). [See also Andre Dubus (2000: 91 & 92), Pat Schneider (2003: 17) and Kate Grenville (1990: 11)]

In 1932 Dorothea Brande was urging writers and writing teachers to "come to terms with the unconscious," contending that it was the pathway to the "artistic coma" and the source of the "writer's magic" (1981:15-2). In *The Creative Writing Handbook* Mary Luckhurst and John Singleton welcome the entrance of "twentieth-century psychology," as a relevant contributor to the debates surrounding the teaching of creative writing and because "the writer's unconscious is the wellspring of creativity" (2000: 11). [See also Pat Schneider (2003: 12)]

The prime role played by the writer's subconscious in a free, unrestricted writing environment, seems to form the basis for the fluent workings of the writer's imagination, which, is "the process ... that underlies creative writing" (1997: 14). Some handbook authors encourage writers to embrace their imaginations by exploring imagined experiences (Dunn, 2001: 79), to bring their imaginations into play by "writing about what [they] don't know" (Singleton, 2000: 101). [See also Pat Schneider (2003: 13)]

In a more academic and conservative environment, most of the handbook authors prefer to take a more pragmatic stance and do not use flowery descriptions and unsubstantiated statements in describing writing as a process. For Example, Donald M. Murray has a more pragmatic, down to earth view of the writing process insisting that writing is "a craft before it is an art" (2004b: 4) and that "writing is a not a mystery ... it is a craft, a habit, a discipline ... practiced ... a daily habit" (2004b: 24). Most of the handbooks surveyed adopted this more conservative approach, choosing to focus predominantly on teaching creative writing as a craft focused practice, with little time spent on examining notions or possibilities associated with the intangible and mysteriously magical elements of writing practice.

Dorothea Brande, however, takes a contrary view and embraces and celebrates the magic of the writing process, as its most important component, and in her book, *Becoming a Writer*, uses headings such as "The Great Discovery;" "The Root of Genius;" "Come to Terms with the Unconscious;" "The Artistic Coma and the Writer's Magic;" "Releasing Genius;" "The Writer's Magic" and "The Magic in Operation" to emphasise the mystique of the process of writing (1981: 147, 149, 151, 152, 158, 163 & 167).

(c) Writing Discipline

Most handbook authorities place more emphasis on writing practice, as a disciplined, production process designed to produce a writing product, as opposed to an inspired and imaginative creative activity designed to generate a work of art. The chaos and disorder of writing freedom required to activate the writer's imagination tends to be avoided in favour of the more exact approach of explaining creative writing as a disciplined process of teaching craft: "Good writing depends on practice, like sports; the more limbered up you

are, the better you perform" (Bell, 2001a: 3). [See also Julia Bell (2001a: 6) and Ashley Stokes (2001: 211-212)]

Some handbook authors recognise that writing freedom is a valuable component of the practice of writing and acknowledge the duality of the writing process requiring balance between chaos and organisation (Smartt-Bell, 1997: 21), between disorder and order (Ziegler, 1981: 40). [See also Stephen King (2000: 174 & 180), Rollo May (qtd in Ziegler, 1981:40), Alan Ziegler (2008: 20) and John Gardner (1983: 35, 104, & 127)]

The process of writing also requires an adherence to the discipline of reading, not only as an aid to craft, but also as a means of enriching the writer's language (Maitland, 2001: 55) and as a means of 'self-reading,' "reading back" (Magrs, 2001g: 235) or "reading yourself" (Lodge, 2001: 244), which has been described as a fundamental part of the writing process and is considered to be "part of the *ritual* of writing," which is "not just reactive, but also proactive" (Lodge, 2001: 244). [See also Andre Dubus (2000: 93)]

Some of the creative writing handbooks also deal with more writer focused factors such as the physical aspects of time and place and bodily effort, the writer's environment and psychologically based aspects such as writers' obstacles, attitudes and motivations. Prospective writers are warned that writing calls for "solitude and immobility" (Brande, 1981: 71), [See also Ali Smith (2001: 24) and Pam Schneider (2003: 26)] concentration and focus (Schneider, 2003: 26), an investment in 'writing time' (Wood Ray, 2001: 9) [See also Alan Ziegler (2008: 11)] and an established 'place' of writing. [See Donald M.Murray (2004b: 31) and Alan Ziegler (2008: 15)]

Those handbooks dealing with creative writing as a process also emphasise the need for the writer to have the psychological strength in order to sustain a successful writing practice. A level of mental toughness, persistence and perseverance is required to write creatively. Peter Elbow describes "learning to write [as] an exercise in slow, underground learning" (1998: 84).

Pat Schneider's analysis of writing discipline, however, questions and subverts these traditional notions of requiring psychological strength to write by arguing that writing is

about “belief, not discipline” (2003: 48) and that accordingly writers should view their writing time as a “reward, not a duty” (2003: 51). The writing process should be fundamentally based on the writer’s primary, intrinsic motivation of wanting to write. [See also William Burroughs (qtd in Schneider, 2003: 40), Alexander Steele (2003: 15) and Julia Bell (2001d: 89)]

(d) The Role of Observation

In contrast to writing from one’s own experience, perhaps the most important component of the writer’s writing process is her observational astuteness and skills and her ability to translate those observations into imagination-capturing words. [See Julia Bell (2001b: 20) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 5)] Those handbooks addressing the role of observation emphasise that the translation of what has been observed should be done in an original manner offering the reader an alternative, less conventional perspective. [See Alison Fell (2001: 50) and Paul Magrs (2001a: 40 & 42)]

(e) Subject Selection

While some handbooks discuss the issue of subject selection and usually also offer triggering type exercises to initiate the selection process, the process itself, as Stephen King points out, is mysterious and unteachable: “We are writers, and we never ask one another where we get our ideas; we know we don’t know” (2000: x).

The handbook authors suggest that writers find their material (Wood Ray, 2001: 9) from their own feelings, experiences, and imaginations (Dunn, 2001: 79), draw on their observations of life, the “mystery and magic [of] divine inspiration [and] the writer’s unconscious [as] the wellspring of creativity” (Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 11) and base their subject choice on what “agitates” (Dunn, 2001: 79) them, “ignites” their interest (Steele, 2003: 11) and answers the questions they may have (Murray, 2004: 12). [See also Katie Wood Ray (2001: 9)]

Prospective writers are reminded that the subject matter must offer the reader some form of intrigue, tension and conflict. Janet Burroway provides some situational examples, which

may ensnare the reader's attention: "The Dilemma, or Catch-22 ... The Incongruity ... The Connection ... The Memory ... The Transplant ... The Revenge …" (2007: 11 & 12). Donald M. Murray suggests that writers "make connections between pieces of information, observations, ideas, theories, memories, fears, hopes that, when connected, create a new meaning" (2004b: 13). [See also William Faulkner (qtd in Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 245)]

A number of handbooks provide "fictional triggers" to assist students with topic generation and selection. Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter provide an imaginative range of these trigger type exercises:

> Five Different Versions and Not One is a Lie ... Accounting: How Did We Get Here? ... Psycho: Creating Terror ... The Newspaper Muse: Ann Landers and the National Enquirer ... The Letter Home ... Stranger than the Truth ... Make Almost Anything Believable ... Stirring up a Fiction Stew … (1990: 111-128). [See also Ailsa Cox (2000: 81-97) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 20-24)]

(f) Voice

The concept of voice is seldom uniformly defined and can become an emotionally charged phenomenon when it becomes entangled with notions of the writer's personal voice. Sometimes textual voice is simply equated to the different narrative points of view, namely, first, second and third person voices [See Kate Grenville (1990: 181) and Elizabeth George (2004: 111)] or explained as different types or styles of writing voices, namely the "Conversational Voice ... Informal Voice ... Formal Voice ... Ceremonial Voice" (Griffin, 2003: 172-9). [See also Josip Novakovich (1995: 202-7)]

The concept of "voice in fiction ... can be interpreted as ... personality" (Bell, 2001a: 4), as "the writer's signature ... the writer's 'special way of looking at things'" (Bailey, 2000: 73). [See also Donald M. Murray (2004b: 175)]

Certain authorities, however, go so far as to bestow upon the fictional voice magical and mystical attributes. Donald Murray declares voice to be "the most important element in writing" (2004b: 207), "the music in language" (2004b: 195) and "the magic of writing

[when] the voice rises from the spaces between the words ... carrying meaning to the reader" (2004b: 200). [See also Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 29)]

When the concepts of the voice of fiction and the writer's voice become muddled or intertwined it becomes a writer-focused phenomenon, which leads to phrases such as "finding your own voice" (Schneider, 2003: 93), "finding your voice" (Griffin, 2003: 192) and "finding out who we are in your prose" (Bailey, 2000: 74). In those handbooks in which the writer's voice has been raised as an issue, the handbook authors have offered three different responses to the writer's dilemma: that it is a "sad question" (Schneider, 2003: 93); because writers should not worry about their writer's voices (Griffin, 2003: 194); that it is a simple matter of the writer hearing her own writing (Murray, 2004b: 196) and listening to what her voice says (Elbow and Belanoff, 1989: 29) and that writers should master numerous voices, if they want to be considered to have a great writing range (K. Grenville, 1990: 81). [See also Alan Ziegler (2008: 53) and Pat Schneider (2003: 95-104)]

3. Audience Focused Skills and Techniques

(a) Introduction

Audience focused skills and techniques are those, which ensure an intimate relationship with readers, eliciting reader involvement, participation and co-creation. These audience focused writing practices are difficult to master and their implementation is risky, but when successfully achieved, the results are magical in capturing the reader's imagination, which is the ultimate objective of all authors of fictional texts.

The audience focused skills and techniques are given more attention by the writing process specialist handbook authors and, while the craft focused handbooks may also mention the more well-known audience focused skills and techniques, they do not do so in much breadth and depth.

(b) The Audience

(i) Target Audience

The authorities on writing process offer detailed analyses of the audience, as a means of assisting the writer in her writing practice.

Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff emphasise that writers should use the audience as a "focusing force" (1989: 151) on their minds and that while writing, they should perform "a little three-step dance with readers: first a step *toward* readers, then *away* from them, and finally *back toward* them …" (1989: 152).

Patricia Duncker maintains that every piece of writing "constructs an audience" and that every writer creates her text for an "implied reader" (2001: 201-2). This type of theoretical audience has also been referred to as the "anonymous reader" (Taylor, 2001:239), the "common reader" (Magrs, 2001h: 253) and the " ideal reader" (King, 2000: 263).

Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff recommend that writers should write for "real readers" (1989: 5) and Elbow reminds us that "writers don't write for just one person," that "different people have different reactions" (1998: 133) that the same person can have different reactions on different days and that the reader's reaction to a set of words is only partly a function of the words, but is also a function of the mood, temperament and background of the reader, which are liable to be combined in shifting proportions from minute to minute (1998: 133).

(ii) Audience Objectives

Elbow and Belanoff suggest that writers should be thinking about what they want their words to do and to whom, that they should be focusing on "purpose and audience" (1989: 268).

The handbook authors offer prospective writers various objectives for their texts: establishing a "'contract' between the writer and the reader ... to deliver some literary

goods" (Ziegler, 1981: 83); "... to write a story that a total stranger will enjoy" (Steele, 2003: 14); "... to lure a reader from the actual world he or she inhabits" (Lodge, 2001: 244); helping an individual to get away from his "personal circumstances" towards "finding his way into another world" (Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 62); to get "things inside someone else's head" (Elbow, 1998: 76); "to keep readers engaged" (Baines, 2000: 133); "to hook the reader's attention" (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 1); to get good "'grades from readers" (Wood Ray, 2001: 219); and to "'leave in the mind of the sensitive reader an intangible residuum of pleasure'" (Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 4).

(iii) Audience as Co-Creator

A number of the more non-traditional handbook texts acknowledge and discuss the concept of the audience as collaborator and participant in the actualisation of the text. The reader is given the responsibility of contributing towards the creating of meaning in the text (Elbow, 1998: 152) not as a "passive witness" (Conroy, 2000: 82), but "walking beside" (Murray, 2004b: 92) the author, or in a "dance of two minds" (Conroy, 2000: 82) with her.

It is generally accepted that in the reading of the text there is a "responsibility that must be borne by the reader" (Ziegler, 2008: 60) to apply her creativity to the text (Wood Ray, 2001: 219) so that there is a "meeting of the minds" (King, 2000: 117), because the text "kicks into life only when a reader's imagination collaborates with that of the writer" (Clarke, 2001: 256).

It is because the 'success' of the fictional text is reliant on the active participation of its readership that the handbook authors warn prospective writers of the pitfalls of not allowing or encouraging their readers to want access to their work. They point out the negative aspects of textual "underwriting" and "overwriting" (Clarke, 2001: 258-9), warning of the dangers of lengthy explanations (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 1) and telling the reader "too much" (Magrs, 2001h: 253) and they stress the importance of "implicit gaps" (Magrs, 2001h: 253), which leave "room for readers to project their own imagination into a narrative" (Bell, 2001c: 48), which sees the writer achieving her ultimate objective of capturing the reader as willing participant, co-creator and inhabitant of the text. [See also Alicia Stubbersfield (2001: 30) and Patricia Duncker (2001: 201)]

(iv) Manipulation of Audience

Certain handbook authors contend that the text should also manipulate and "change the readers in some way" (Ziegler, 2008: 26) by "limiting and expanding their point of view" (Magrs, 2001d: 135). Following the lead of Franz Kafka in his often quoted maxim that the text should be "'an axe to break up the frozen sea within us'" (qtd in Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 5), Mary Luckhurst and John Singleton suggest that for the writer, in her relationship with her audience, it is "a question of ignition, and setting [her] reader alight," of cutting "through familiarity ... to startle readers with a new and unexpected view of things" (2000: 6).

(v) Showing, Not Telling

Showing and not telling is the only audience focused skill and technique that has been accepted as one of the traditionally recognised core skills and techniques of the craft of writing and, as such, has already been dealt with under the Writing Craft section of this handbook analysis.

(vi) Comparison

As is the case with Showing and not Telling, it can be argued that Comparison sits more accurately in the category of audience focused skills and techniques, rather than the writing craft section, given its potential to engage the reader's mind, creativity and emotions in the process of making meaning of the text. Comparison is a collective term for figures of speech, similes and metaphors, what Chris Lombardi describes as a "shorthand ... a stealthy way of reaching into ... the readers' subconscious ... pulling up visual images, remembered experiences, bits of their own dreams, and showing them anew," giving the writer's descriptions "double the power" (2003: 114). The specific elements of Comparison (usually referred to as Figurative Language and Figures of Speech) are Metaphor, Simile and Symbol (Burroway and Stuckey-French, 2007: 336-7), [See also Josip Novakovich (1995: 191) and Tom Bailey (2000: 68)] Image, [See Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, 1983: 403]

Personification, [See Kate Grenville, (1990: 82)] and Allusion. [See Robert De Maria (1991: 215) and James M. McCrimmon (1967: 184)]

James M. McCrimmon provides a useful description of Comparison in writing and an important explanation of its value to the writer when used appropriately and correctly:

> Figurative language communicates by analogy. One thing is likened to another, usually familiar, and the comparison invites the imagination to visualize the similarities or the differences ... Good figures of speech grow out of active thought and strong feeling in the writer, and they arouse similar responses in a reader ... The effectiveness of metaphors and similes lies in their power to evoke images, emotions, even the very flavors of experience, which are difficult if not impossible to communicate in literal terms. They picture vividly in a few words what would be less effectively described in many (1967: 183-4).

So powerful, and perhaps mystical, are the effects of the successful use of the elements of Comparison in textual creation that the handbook authors are lyrical in their descriptions of those effects. (See Josip Novakovich (1995: 191), Janet Burroway (2003: 11) and Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 401-2)]

However, to successfully harness, capture and utilise the powerful, magical and mystical properties of Comparison in the development of their fictional texts, writers need to display the ability to be creative, original and innovative in their use of metaphor, simile, symbol, image, personification and allusion. The *sine qua non* of the effective use of these figurative instruments and techniques is “freshness” (Singleton and Sutton, 2000: 48) and newness. [See also Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1989: 147)]

Use of the techniques of comparison in ways which are clichéd, stale or inaccurate usually result in scorn, rebuke and humiliation for the writer [See John Singleton and Geoff Sutton (2000: 48) and Stephen King (2000: 209)] with the result that, given the negative repercussions flowing from the failed application of the elements of Comparison, most writers refrain from using figurative language and refrain from the creation of novel and innovative figures of speech.

(vii) Diction and Lyricism

Diction, defined as the choice and use of words and phrases in speech or writing, receives relatively little handbook attention when compared to the more mainstream craft components of creative writing teaching. This may be because the word selection and choice represents the basic actions of writing itself and that this fundamental and basic writing activity cannot in fact be taught. There are, however, basic issues, techniques and skills, which would be of benefit to prospective writers, if they were made aware of them and given exercises to sensitise them to the importance of diction and the value, which creative word selection can add to the fictional text and the reader's experience of that text.

The most important characteristics of diction include "word choice" (De Maria, 1991: 303); [See Robert De Maria (1991: 304-305)] accuracy in word selection; [See Stephen King (2000: 125) and Raymond Carver (qtd in Bailey, 2000: 75)] "the words should be relished and enjoyed" (Singleton and Sutton, 2000: 45); and words should have sensory characteristics. [See James M. McCrimmon (1967: 168 & 181), Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 177) and John Singleton and Geoff Sutton (2000: 42-45 & 69)]

The analysis of diction can extend to include implications of the denotative and connotative uses of words (McCrimmon 1967: 166), a focus on the values given to different types of words with nouns and verbs being allocated prime importance and adjectives and adverbs playing a lesser more selective role. [See Donald M. Murray (2004b: 157), Alan Ziegler (2008; 59) and Josip Novakovich (1995: 184)]

Some of the handbooks extend their discussion of diction into examinations of the sentence, as the "primary unit of expression" (George, 2004: 176), "the basic unit of writing — a place where coherence begins and words stand a chance of becoming more than mere words" (King, 2000: 152). Tom Bailey describes sentences as "the basic building blocks of communication between writer and reader ... words in and of themselves lack direction; sentences give a language place to go, work to do" (2000: 75). [See also John Singleton and Geoff Sutton (2000: 46), Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 221) and Gordon Lish (qtd in Bailey, 2000: 74)]

One of the least examined aspects of word selection and sentence structure is lyricism and the sounds of words. Chris Lombardi reminds prospective writers that "lyricism in prose that plays with sound and rhythm ... sinks your story deeper inside the subconscious of the reader" (2003: 115). Word and sentence sounds and rhythms are important aspects of the creative writing process, which can bring an added dimension, difference and memorability to fictional texts. [See also Robert De Maria (1991: 215) and John Singleton and Geoff Sutton (2000: 46-7)]

(viii) Theme

There are varying points of view on the definition, role and importance of theme in works of fiction. Theme is important to readers, because "people seem to have a basic need to seek meaning" and require answers from the text to questions like "what's the point?" and "what does it mean?" (Elbow and Belanoff, 1989: 99) in order to achieve some form of reading closure.

Those handbook authors, who choose to focus on theme, agree that it is the central element of the fictional text and that "every literary work must have a point, a raison d'être" (De Maria, 1991: 10) because "the *theme* of a literary work is the author's central message or the central dramatic impact of the work" (De Maria, 1991: 12). [See also Terry Bain (2003: 197 & 210) and Elizabeth George (2004: 181)]

(ix) Tone and Style

One of the few authors to provide a brief discussion on tone and style and to put forward workable definitions on the subject is Robert De Maria in *The College Handbook of Creative Writing* (1991: 108-126).

4. Teaching Components

The majority of the reviewed writing handbooks spend little time on the methods, principles and processes of teaching creative writing. Those handbook authors, who do provide

information on writing teaching methods and process, tend to be writing process specialist authors.

(a) The Writing Workshop

In terms of the teaching of creative writing, there appears to be an assumption that the writing workshop will be the environment in which the teaching and learning will take place and that the workshop will provide the structure, the behavioural parameters and the rules within which prospective writers will learn to write. It is perhaps for these reasons that most of the craft focused, and largely American writing handbooks provide little in the way of examination of writing workshop processes, procedures and structures.

It is the composition and process theorist authorities that devote the most attention to examining and evaluating the writing workshop, as a pedagogic phenomenon, and suggesting ways to improve the traditional structures and processes in the interests of optimising student learning. These authorities include Peter Elbow, (*Writing Without Teachers*) Pat Schneider, (*Writing Alone and With Others*) and Pat Belanoff (*A Community of Writers: A Workshop Course in Writing*).

Alan Ziegler maintains that the writing workshop is "a studio, not a gallery," which students attend to "improve their work, not to perform and be judged" (2008: 97). Workshop activities include "generating, developing and revising material ... receiving and giving criticism ... discussing the writing process [and] sharing and attempting to solve problems (Ziegler, 1981: 9). [See also Pat Schneider (2003: 215)]

The primary attraction of the writing workshop for prospective writers is the ready made audience that it provides and the comments and responses offered by those dedicated readers (Murray, 2004: 194). These comments and responses take the form of both verbal and written feedback (Conroy, 2000: 80). Peter Elbow suggests that participant diversity results in 'better feedback' (1998: 79) and that the student writers are often "better readers" than the writing teacher, because they represent a more general and "inferior" (1998: 127) readership than the instructor, who is an expert and a specialist in writing.

Some authorities approach the teaching of writing as a social, community orientated practice using the workshop to eradicate romantic symbols of the writer as a lonely artist by encouraging "the process of mutual inspiration as well as mutual feedback and support" (Baines, 2000: 133). These authorities frequently use the phrase 'a community of writers' and seem to portray this community as a caring, supportive and nurturing environment with uniform and common teacher and student objectives (Wood Ray, 2001: 18).

Process specialist authorities have started to argue that workshop objectives should not be to "achieve agreement," that the "need to settle things" should be inhibited, that ambiguity should be tolerated (Elbow, 111) and that "diversity" (Elbow, 115) should be encouraged. [See also Pat Schneider (2003: 215-218)] Experienced writing teachers point to the presence of natural emotional forces in the workshop's dynamics, which tend to negate utopian notions of community (Ziegler, 2008: 105-9) with workshops sometimes being driven by jealousy and "motivated by competition and a desire for revenge" (Ziegler, 1981: 21). [See also Madison Smartt Bell (1997: 6) and Frank Conroy (2000: 80)]

In contrast to those writing authorities that subscribe to all the positives inherent in the teaching of creative writing in a workshop environment, other more pragmatic and perhaps experienced authorities also list some of the negatives and pitfalls inherent in the process. Madison Smartt Bell describes the "pressures to conform in those Iowa fiction workshops" that he attended as " enormous" and "crushing," which resulted in an "unconscious exercise in groupthink," which was "quite frightening" (1997: 5). Smartt Bell refers to the "democratic ... depressing revisions of students trying to please the group mind ... to satisfy 15 different line editors" leading to the pulling of the "work toward the middle ... where mediocrity flourishes …" (1997: 7). [See also Frank Conroy (2000: 86 & 87)]

Workshops tend to be skills and technique based given the focus on writing craft (Smartt Bell, 1997: 9) with the result that often content and artistry play a secondary role to technical ability with the primary focus on fixing the texts and not on textual creativity. [See Alan Ziegler (2008: 111 & 112), Pat Schneider (2003: ix-xii) and Liz Almond (2001: 21-38)]

Stephen King is averse to the writing workshop as a means of learning to write, because he believes that the constant "pressure to explain ... your prose and your purpose" negates and diffuses "your creative energy" (2000: 281 & 285). [See also Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff (1989: 4)]

(b) The Teaching Process

Those handbook authors that do provide insights into the teaching process provide a balance between the workshop based handbooks, particularly those of Alan Ziegler and Katie Wood Ray, and the handbooks written by composition and process specialist writing teachers such as Peter Elbow, Pat Schneider, Donald M. Murray and others.

(c) The Teaching Environment

The workshop environment should be an inviting and supportive one (Murray, 2004: 127) and one in which the teacher should always be considering the answers to questions such as "Can Writing be Taught?" and "Where is the Evidence to Prove They Have Learned to Write? (Murray, 2004: 128).

In this environment writing teachers should base all the writing teaching processes on the contrary aspects of and polarity inherent in the creative writing process in "realizing imaginative work in a concrete form" (Smartt Bell 1997: 10-11) by emphasising the mastering of writing craftsmanship, while not losing sight of the importance of the unconscious mind and the power of the imagination and the vital role these play in the creation of the fictional text (Smartt Bell 1997: 369-70). [See also Peter Elbow (1998: xxii-xxiii)]

Peter Elbow argues that both these processes are crucial to the practice of writing, but because of the dominance of critical thinking in "our *conception* of the intellectual process" there tends to be a gap between our

> generating and ... revising mentalities ... a frequent chasm between *instruction* and *learning* [resulting in] people learning without or in spite of teaching [and] people teaching without producing learning (1998: xxix).

The writing teaching environment should be aimed at nurturing and developing students, as writers, and not as students. It is more conducive to effective writing teaching and learning when the environment is writer focused and the broad establishing principle is "teaching and the development of writing identities" (Elbow and P. Belanoff, 1989:5), and students are encouraged to think of themselves as writers and to discover their own answers to questions such as "What does it mean to be a writer?" (Wood Ray, 2001: 29-30).

Relatively few handbook authors identify experimentation and failure as key components of the teaching and learning of creative writing. Donald M. Murray contends that the creative writing teaching environment must always "emphasise the necessity of failure and the advantage of failure" in the writing process, because "writing that is written to avoid failure guarantees mediocrity" (2004: 86). [See also Alan Ziegler (1981: 19) and Donald M. Murray (2004: 138)]

In this environment the practice of reading is seen as being an integral and valuable component of the teaching and learning of creative writing, as a means of inspiring and motivating prospective writers (Murray 2004: 87), as a means of generating an awareness of the techniques and processes used by other writers (Murray 2004: 149), as a means of improving vocabularies, and word options and choices, (Ziegler (1981: 21-3) and as a means to teach young writers not to forget the needs and expectations of their prospective readers in the creation of their texts (Elbow and Belanoff, 1989:5).

(d) <u>The Skills Required of Writing Teachers</u>

An amalgamation of the different notions of each of the handbook authorities provides the basic pre-requisites, experience, skills and teaching styles suggested as being valuable, if writing teachers are to successfully teach creative writing. One of the primary requirements is that teachers should have some writing experience:

> Teachers should write so they understand the process of writing from within. They should know the territory intellectually and emotionally: how you have to think to write, how you feel when writing. Teachers of writing do not have to be great writers, but they should have frequent and recent experience in writing

(Murray 2004: 74). [See also Alan Ziegler (1981: 5) and Katie Wood Ray (2001: 12)]

Writing teachers should also be extensive readers acquainted and familiar with a broad range of "books about writing" (Wood Ray 2001: 12) and about the teaching of writing, as well as knowledgeable in a significant breadth of fictional texts on which to base the examples given to students in the workshop teaching process (Wood Ray 2001: 13).

Donald M. Murray warns that the teaching of writing is not the place for "traditional teachers, who believe it is their mission to inject all their knowledge into the student" (2004: 84), but that teaching creative writing has more probability of success, if the teacher "invites writing [and] teaches less so the student can learn more ... giving the student the experience of self-exploration and self-discovery" (2004: 120-9). Pat Schneider affirms Murray's recommendation and provides a reminder that students' affiliations with their writing are very different to their affiliations with more traditional, historical academic fields and disciplines, because "writing puts the [student] into active relationship to literacy where the emphasis is on the [student's] own words and on the [student] as a builder of meaning" (2003: 202).

There are some contrasting opinions in respect of the nature of the roles played by creative writing teachers in the classroom with Donald M. Murray and Pat Schneider arguing that writing teachers should display a "diminished authority" (Murray, 2004: 189) in a less controlled writing-teaching environment; while Alan Ziegler prefers to establish [his] leadership with the group [and] when [he] feel[s] respected by the students, [he is] then strong enough to stand back and let things happen …" (1981: 11). Ziegler is in favour of a more conservative and restricted teaching foundation in which he maintains "behavioral or literary discipline," because "when you veer away from a highly structured routine, the classroom may occasionally get too disorderly" (1981: 11).

(e) <u>The Curriculum</u>

Of all the writing handbooks examined, Katie Wood Ray in her book, *The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They're All Hard Parts)*, provides one of

the most comprehensive examples of a writing teaching curricular structure, its components and processes. In broad terms Katie teaches

> five kinds of things … strategies (ways to do things); techniques (ways to fashion things); questions (ways to think about things); relationships (ways to connect things); and conventions (ways to expect things) (2001: 108).

Katie Wood Ray lists her primary teaching objectives as being "to see students developing ... a sense of self as writers;" to see students embracing "ways of reading the world like writers [and] ways of reading texts like writers;" to see students adopting "a sense of thoughtful, deliberate purpose about their work as writers [and] as members of a responsive, literate community;" and to see students appreciate a "sense of audience and an understanding of how to prepare writing to go into the world …" (2001: 131-2).

In terms of her teaching approach, style and process, she bases it on a "show and tell ... objective," using lessons that 'show and tell' things, which give the lessons their "concreteness" (2001: 147).

(f) Assignments and Exercises

Most writing handbooks provide the teacher and student with numerous writing assignments and exercises designed to facilitate regular writing routines, to encourage the students' writing practice by assisting in the ultimate choice of writing subject matter or theme and to utilise the writing exercises to support the teaching of specific skills and techniques.

As Donald M. Murray points out, because the teaching of writing is based on the texts of the students, production must take place before instruction (2004: 83) and writing assignments and exercises are a fundamental part of creative writing pedagogy. The assignments must be provided in a form, which "creates invitations that attract writing" (2004: 83), while helping students to aim and focus by "narrowing the field ... of literary vision so that students can spot a starting point" (Ziegler, 1984: 5). Alan Ziegler contends that the students "need an external spark to ignite writing" (1984: xix) and that assignments assist students to overcome the initial inertia.

Pat Schneider provides an overview of what makes for good writing exercises: exercises are "specific and concrete" and not "too cosmic" (2003: 296); exercises make "use of surprise;" the mood of exercises should be varied requiring different types of responses, such as "serious, playful, outrageous" (2003: 297); exercises are always offered "as an invitation, not a command" (2003: 298); and should sometimes be risky, outrageous, humorous or taboo (2003: 299).

The writing handbooks contain a host of examples of these types of assignments. [See Alan Ziegler (2008: 71-77) and Ziegler (1984: 17-73 & 93-240) and Pat Schneider (2003: 301-353)]

The analysis of the creative writing handbooks also revealed process focused writing exercises and assignments aimed at assisting the prospective writer in the development of her writing process. Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff's "spectrum of writing tasks" include free writing, focused free writing and invisible writing (1989: 10-11). Their writing tasks and exercise repertoire also include the valuable loop writing exercise, which is aimed at enabling the student writer to "think more productively and write more interestingly" (1989: 55) by causing the writer to address the topic anew with each 'looping' pass from different viewpoints, angles and perspectives (1989: 55-62).

(g) Imitation, the Sentence and Freewriting

Three of the most frequently recommended teaching and learning methods are imitating successful author writing skills and techniques, [See Pat Schneider (2001: 87) and John Gardner (1983: 142)] focusing on the sentence as the primary writing foundation and creative building block [See John Gardner (1983: 148) and Pat Schneider (2001: 106)] and using the freewriting process as a means to initiate and explore notions, themes and topics in a more productive and effective manner than attempting to capture everything correctly the first time. [See also Janet Burroway (2007: 3), Peter Elbow (1998: 4), Alan Ziegler (1981: 34), and Pat Schneider (2001: 35), Alexander Steele (2003: 18) and Elizabeth George (2004: 57)]

(h) Feedback

While the handbook authors agree that feedback is one of the cornerstones of the creative writing teaching and learning process, few provide detailed descriptions of and guidelines to this valuable practice. They also agree on the importance of high levels of trust between students and between the students and the writing teacher and how vital trust is to the process of providing feedback, [See Alan Ziegler (1981: 112) and Pat Schneider (2001: 245] but there is a marked difference between the objectives of the craft based handbooks, which concentrate on the feedback process as an editing and critiquing function, and the writing process focused handbook authors, who see the objective of the feedback process as the simple provision of readers for student writers from whom they receive their responses, as an audience rather than critics and textual 'repairers.'

The one role of giving feedback to students on their writing is an editing function, which includes both positive reinforcement, as well as negative criticism (1981: 95-100). This feedback process has a technical, fault-finding bias aimed at the rectification of errors and it is an analytical process, which Ziegler's terminology certainly seems to support. He talks of getting "'inside' the piece." [See Alan Ziegler (2008: 81, 83, 84, 86 & 89)]

In contrast to the use of feedback as a means to edit and critique the student text, there is the notion that feedback provides the student writer with a reader, and not an editor, as a means to giving the student writer guidance, not an analysis and critical evaluation. The feedback process is one during which there is "*Sharing and Responding* [and] students learn to respond ... to each other's writing" in order to give students more guidance (Elbow and Belanoff, 1989: v). The student writer does not receive a literary judgment from her peers, but simply a description of their experience of reading the text, "a sense of how [her] words were experienced" (Elbow, 1998: 77).

The capacity of the feedback process to reveal reader experiences of the text is one of the most powerful writer teaching mechanisms, because student writers learn

> how people are reacting to [their] words ... taking [them] out of the dark ... about how [their] words are experienced ... making it easier to produce meaningful

> words on paper [because] they have learned the feel of real readers … (Elbow, 1998: 124-6). [See also Pat Schneider (2001: 247]

According to Peter Elbow, reader orientated feedback can also be one of the primary motivators for student writers in their enthusiasm, passion and perseverance in developing their writing practice:

> ... the main experience that makes people write more is that [their] words got through to the readers. [They] sent words out into the darkness and heard someone shout back. This made [them] want to do it again, and this is probably the most powerful thing that makes people improve their writing (1998: 130).

Elbow reminds writers that their position in the feedback process is a dichotomous and often ambiguous one, requiring them to "be quiet and listen," but not to be "tyrannized" by what their readers say, while accepting that as a writer "you are always right and always wrong" (1998: 101-6). He describes good readers as those, who "supply great effort, attention, and energy" (1998: 99) and tell the writer what they are perceiving and experiencing in the text, how they reacted and what they were seeing and where (1998: 141).

(i) <u>Assessment</u>

Certain handbook authors take an academically biased view of creative writing teaching by insisting that student work must be graded to ensure that creative writing teaching is recognised as being "among the 'real' goods of education" (1981: 25). Alan Ziegler maintains that "with no threat of penalty" some students may not make "an honest effort" and that "students who work hard at their writing" should not be deprived of "the reward of a good grade" (1981: 25). Pat Schneider takes the diametrically opposing view that "grading of student writing should be avoided" (2001: 212), because "grading hurts the creative process" (2001: 210). [See also Pat Schneider (2001: 199)] With high grades being the primary objective of the student's writing practice, it is logical and natural for students to focus on the teacher's parameters by identifying what the teacher wants and manipulating their writing according to the teacher's specific requirements (Schneider, 2001: 15).

There are various ways of measuring students for the purposes of assessment: grading students on "what they have learned in the course: (2004: 142); assessment should focus on the student's "own 'personal best'" (Schneider, 2001: 212) and the extent to which the student's writing has improved during the course of the programme (Ziegler, 1981: 25). Some authors suggest that the assessment process should consist of an extended range of creative writing teaching and learning components beyond the students' fictional texts to include the students' "journals, and all in-class work, including participation and writing" (Schneider, 2001: 212).

Assessment and grading remain important issues for further investigation.

5. Writer Focused Issues

A number of handbooks explore and address aspects of life as a writer, which may be of value to writing teachers and students of creative writing as a means of preparing and motivating students and prospective writers.

In his response to the question, "Why Write?" Donald M. Murray provides a valuable platform from which to discuss and debate the reasons for taking up the practice of writing:

> To be surprised ... to find out what we will say ... to learn, to describe and ... see, to speak ... hear, to entertain, to inform, to persuade, to celebrate, to attack, to call attention, to think, to make money, to promote, to advocate, to connect, to relate, to make, to share ... the secret excitement of discovery: the word, the line, the sentence, the page that achieves its own life and its own meaning (2004: 8).

The authorities point out that writing is a dedicated, long term practice, that "writing ... is a way of life" (2004: 8), which can start "at different stages in life" (Magrs, 2001: 16) and which adds another dimension to an individual's existence with the experience of the real augmenting the writer's imagined experiences, resulting in the "twice-lived life of the writer ... the double experience ... of living" (Elbow and Belanoff, 1989: 29).

There is a broad range of characteristics associated with becoming and being a writer, which provide a valuable basis for student discussion and debate and which add another dimension

to the traditional teaching elements of writing craft and the processes of writing. According to the handbook authors, the following are some of the attributes and characteristics necessary to develop and sustain a writing life:

> A writer must be disciplined (George, 2004: 280), persistent (Bernays and Painter, 1990: xvii), display "infinite patience [and] ruthless intolerance" (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 146), while "maintaining faith ... in self ... in the subject ... in its form [and] its voice" (2004: 41).
>
> With "persistence and passion" the writer writes through the "frustration and anger" to experience the "delight and joy" (Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 8) of creation.
>
> "The writing life is one of extreme isolation ... fraught with anxiety, unmet needs, and frustration [and] requires forced introspection ... placing yourself in a highly exposed position (George, 2004: 221).
>
> Writers take risks (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 160).

Successful writers "do innovative and unconventional things in their literary efforts" (De Maria, 1991: 317), they have a "unique and exact way of looking at things and finding the right context for expressing that way of looking" (Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 3) and their writing "cuts through familiarity and the dull patina of habit to startle readers with a new and unexpected view of things" (Luckhurst and Singleton, 2000: 5). [See also Dorothea Brande (1981: 36), John Singleton and Mary Luckhurst 2000: 8), Stephen King (2000:118 & 164), Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 20), Katie Wood Ray (2001: 7), Josip Novakovich (1995: 1) and John Gardner (1983: 201)]

6. Ancillary Questions and Issues

(a) Creative Writing

This textbook analysis suggests that the word 'creative' has been largely avoided pedagogically due to a lack of agreement as to its importance, its definition, its ultimate role in the teaching and learning of creative writing and because of the disruptive emotional responses it ignites in students.

Katherine Haake banned the word 'creative' in her writing classes (2000: 240) and Robert De Maria has pronounced that the word 'creative' "is not a value judgment" and that it is actually another way of saying imaginative and inventive writing (1991: 4). [See also Elizabeth George (2004: 1 & 3) and Katie Wood Ray (2001: 6)]

The experienced novelist, writing teacher and handbook author, Madison Smartt Bell, provides a succinct evaluation and summation of the persistent creativity dilemma inherent in creative writing pedagogy:

> The great defect of craft-driven programs is that they ignore the writer's inner process. Creativity, the inner process of imagination, is not discussed. So far as the craft-driven workshop is concerned, creativity is sealed in a black box; you're supposed to remember that the box is there, but there is a tacit agreement not to open it in public ... What this means for creative writers is that the two hemispheres must somehow be trained to cooperate in the process of realizing imaginative work in a concrete form ... Much of the time in workshops is spent on developing the critical faculty. It is indispensable for talking about texts, for finding their flaws and also their merits, for both appreciation and troubleshooting. But critical intelligence *originates* nothing ... Everything of *primary* importance happens inside the black box. Difficult and dangerous as it is to talk about it, it is the most important thing of all (1997: 9-11). [See also Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: xvii), Alan Ziegler (1981: 27 & 31), Pat Schneider (2003: 143) and Stephen King (2000: 164)]

Contrary to the rules and prescription based instruction handbooks of the craft focused handbook theorists, as embodied in Robert De Maria's 'shoe-horning' of the creative writing process into a recognised and accepted generic format and style, John Gardner argues that

> there are no rules for real fiction; the beginning writer needs [to master] the art of breaking so called rules; university education is in many ways inimical to the work of the artist; invention, the spontaneous generation of new rules is central to art; for the young writer ... there can be no firm rules, no limits, no restrictions ... whatever works is good ... [she] must develop an eye for what — by [her] own carefully informed standards — works (1983: 7-16). [See also Alan Ziegler (1981: 40)]

(b) Writing Quality

The complexity of creativity is also present in descriptions and explanations of the concept of writing quality. Authors such as Dorothea Brande are in no doubt that "the great key to success in authorship is originality" (1981: 123); while Willa Cather describes quality writing as an art form, which is "new and untried, where the values are intrinsic and have nothing to do with standardized values and the writer has the courage to go on without compromise …" (qtd in Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 121). John Gardner provides the reminder that "all great writing is in a sense imitation of great writing" (1983: 11) and warns of the dangers inherent in forcing 'originality' into fictional texts by means of 'stylistic' methods through which the author tries to "include [herself], prove [herself] different from all other authors" (1983: 119).

Writing quality is inexorably linked to writing as an artistic practice (Schneider, 2003: xxii-xxiii). [See also John Gardner (1983: 121), Joseph Conrad (qtd in Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 194), Francine Prose (qtd in Bailey, 2000: 4), Pat Schneider (2003: 39) and John Gardner (1983: 121)] and to create works of art appears to be the distinguishing feature between great writing and simple, acceptable writing quality, which can never achieve the memorability, longevity and endurance of quality writing (Gioia and Gwynn, 2006: 194). [See also John Gardner (1983: 200)]

John Gardner distinguishes between the serious writer and the writer, who has more average expectations. The serious writer focuses on "one major goal: glory [and] the shoddy writer wants only publication" (1983: 200).

Most handbook authors agree that reading plays a very important role in the writer's development of her own textual quality parameters (Grenville, 1990: 3) and in terms of inspiration for her own writing practice (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 221). Donald M. Murray provides the reminder that "every writing course is a reading course" with those writers, who are being read, establishing "the tradition or standards in our language" (2004: 244). Reading provides the writing student and prospective writer with a valuable "foundation ... a reference point ... of what has been done before" (Schneider 2003: xxiv), a foundation usually based on positive connotations:

> We ... read in order to measure ourselves against the good and the great, to get a sense of all that can be done ... we read in order to experience different styles ... what has been done and what hasn't, what is trite and what is fresh, what works and what just lies there dying ... on the page (Schneider 2003: xxiv). [See also Stephen King (2000: 166)]

There are still the perennial factions, either for or against the notion of a literary canon, which canon may be seen to be a quality measurement instrument against which to compare all fictional texts. Alexander Steele, for example, provides a list of fictional works as references for quality writing, which list represents "great works of fiction throughout the ages ... from the past two centuries" (2003: 7). In contrast, Paul Magrs takes a distinctly postmodern view criticising the canon "as a body of literature which has been/is taught within a culture ... enshrining that culture's values [with] a narrow and biased view of 'literature'" (2001: 13). Magrs asserts that the salvation of the canon lies in "Postmodernism, [which] has allowed for a plurality of voices and a variety of 'Englishnesses' …" (2001: 14).

Highly prolific writers such as Joyce Carol Oates and Stephen King argue that exceptional texts are the products of adherence to specific writing formulae. Oates maintains that a focus on storyline, characterisation and a metafictional approach is the basis for good writing: "fiction of a high quality possesses depth because it involves absorbing narratives and meritorious characters and is at the same time a kind of commentary upon itself" (2000: 24); while King suggests that it is all about focusing on the basics: "good writing consists of mastering the fundamentals (vocabulary, grammar, the elements of style) …" (2000: 160).

7. Supplementary Writer Support Components

A number of handbooks provide additional supplementary guidance and information of a more practical nature to the writing teacher and prospective writer. These supplementary components include pronouncements about and explanations of the different types and classes of fiction; a focus on the short story as the preferred creative writing teaching genre; lists of suggestions for further reading; the style and format of the manuscript and the intricacies, processes, methods and sources to be utilised for successful publication.

(a) Types and Classes of Fiction

Those handbook authors, who include a section on the different types of fiction, tend to only deal with the traditional genres, that is, the short story, the novella and the novel [See Anne Bernays and Pamela Painter (1990: 188) and John Gardner (1983: 179-183)] and more recently the short-short story format or flash fiction, as these micro-fiction pieces are popularly called. [See Alexander Steele (2003: 4)]

(b) The Short Story

Probably the best references for studying all aspects of the short story are the two short story focused and anthology based handbooks, *On Writing Short Stories* and *The Art of the Short Story*. [See also John Cheever (qtd in Gioia and Gwynn, p. 132.), Francine Prose (qtd in Bailey, 2000: 3-12), Dana Gioia and RS Gwynn (2006: 3-6) and Alan Ziegler (1981: 59)]

(c) Suggestions for Further Reading

Most of the handbooks offer some recommendations for additional reading relating to writing processes, skills and techniques, as opposed to a suggested fictional text reading list. Two of the most extensive reading suggestions are to be found in Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* and in Robert De Maria's *The College Handbook of Creative Writing*. Burroway's suggestions include references to writing based magazines and periodicals.

(d) Publication Guidance

Certain handbook authors also provide detailed guidance, advice and recommendations to teachers and prospective writers on what is involved in and how to optimise the chances of having manuscripts published. [See Elizabeth Baines (2000: 133), Michael C. Curtis (2000: 112-123), Katie Wood Ray (2001: 132 & 251-264), Pat Schneider (2003: 254-5) and Stephen King (2000: 289 & 326)]

F. Conclusions

The demand for short stories by American magazines contributed to the growth of 'how-to' books, which in turn led to the system of academic workshops. The persistent demand for all forms of creative writing has resulted in an increasing number of contemporary handbooks.

Authors have different objectives for compiling handbooks. These objectives range, amongst others, from focusing on technique based literary study, on the needs of the student as writer, on the needs of the readers, on problem solving and error avoidance and on writing as an art form.

In order to ensure multiple and alternative perspectives, a number of criteria were used to ensure that a broad range of handbooks would be analysed.

An examination of these handbooks reveals that the following components are used in the teaching of creative writing:

- The craft component with its primary elements (structure, plot and storyline, fictional place and fictional setting, fictional time, building character, dialogue, point of view, showing, not telling and the revision process) and its secondary elements (resolution and final meaning, titles and beginnings and endings). The writer's journal, reading as a writer, the use of textual examples, textual excerpts and references are also given attention as instruments and practices, which support the development of craft;
- The writing process with its two conflicting elements of freedom and discipline. Other elements investigated are the role of observation, subject selection and the textual voice and the writer's voice;
- Audience focused writing practices, which include concepts such as the target audience, objectives for the audience, the audience as co-creator, manipulation of the audience, showing, not telling, comparison, diction and lyricism, theme and tone and style;
- The teaching components of creative writing, including the writing workshop, the teaching process, the teaching environment, the skills required of writing teachers, the curriculum, assignments and exercises, imitation, the sentence and freewriting, and, finally, feedback and assessment;
- Writer focused issues such as life as a writer;

- Other ancillary issues such as creative writing and writing quality; and
- Supplementary components such as the explanation of the different classes of fiction, the short story as the preferred creative writing teaching genre, suggestions for further reading and guidance for successful publication.

This analysis now provides an empirically developed theoretical pedagogic foundation from which to develop alternative creative writing pedagogies.

VIII. STUDENT WRITER CONCEPTIONS OF CREATIVE WRITING

A. Background

Before continuing with an analysis of the results of the specifically selected research studies, it is necessary to provide an outline of the responses of institutions and their creative writing faculty staff to the creative writing needs, conceptions and expectations of their creative writing students. This will contextualise the significant need for and the ultimate value of converting the research findings into core components of the teaching of creative writing, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

1. Lack of Student Focus and of Empirically-Based Analyses

Thus far the findings of this thesis suggest that there is a lack of focus and a lack of reference to the needs and expectations of creative writing students at academic institutions. The creative writing student, who drives the demand and the popularity of creative writing as a financially attractive academic discipline, on which, in turn, the well-being and financial livelihood and academic careers of so many creative writing teachers are reliant, have seldom been given a voice or allowed to provide input into the form or pedagogy of the teaching of creative writing.

The empirically-based evaluations and analyses usually required by academic institutions for other disciplines as a foundation for the development of legitimate curricula, syllabi and pedagogy is lacking when it comes to the academic subject of creative writing. The structure and content of creative writing modules and programmes appear to be justified informally and retrospectively with little substantiation for the form and content of the teaching. Ritter and Vanderslice corroborate this phenomenon of an un-academic, idiosyncratic and lore-based approach to the teaching of creative writing. (2007: ix)

2. Student Research Stalled

Creative writing authorities continue to dither, still asking the same old questions: “What do we expect? What do students expect?” (Woods, 2008) and “what motivates our students …”

(Donnelly, 2012c: 97), while other authorities bemoan the fact that little is being done to develop the teaching of creative writing within the academy: there is a "relative lack of current public research on creative writing" (Harper, 2012b: 105); there is an "absence of any analysis of the nature of student demand" (Brooke, 2010); and there is a lack of empirical data and investigative studies into creative writing's teaching praxes …" (Donnelly, 2012c: 17)

3. Creative Writing Teacher Authority and Assumptions

The authority of creative writing teachers continues to dictate the form and development of creative writing pedagogy, while the students' creative writing needs are largely ignored and left unexplored by higher education institutions, their staff and the umbrella organisations, which guide them.

Much of the creative writing discourse is based on assumptions with little research or investigation into the actual needs and expectations of the students themselves. Patrick Bizzaro is in no doubt that "teachers of creative writing are influenced by their own assumptions" (qtd in LaFemina, 2011). The following are a few examples of some of the didactic assumptions made by creative writing teachers and authorities:

> … the needs of the student [are] integrated learning about the self … we can create writing pedagogy that integrates the strengths of literature, composition, and creative writing … creative writing teachers can be a unifying, authoritative force in English departments and classrooms (Yoder Miller, 2005: 48).

> [Creative writing teachers] must re-examine their curricula … to best prepare the students for the new order … [to] help their students meet the challenges of the present and the future … [to] constantly revise themselves and their abilities (Vanderslice, 2010b: 7, 10 & 17).

> Almost every undergraduate I've encountered in my creative writing teaching has either no specific literary ambition at all, or only, the vaguest desire 'to publish a book someday' (Healey, 2012:62).

> The future success of creative writing depends on … creative writing programs [staying] attuned to their students' needs, to the modern economic critical academy and the community coalitions (Donnelly, 2012: 3).
>
> … Teachers respond to the shifting nature of students' reading and writing by crossing the interstices between disciplines (Donnelly, 2012: 8).
>
> There has been a gradual shift from a 'cultural' context in which the few provided works of Creative Writing to the many, to one in which the many want to experience the learning of Creative Writing (Graeme Harper qtd in Vanderslice, 2008: 68)
>
> The 'strategic learner' … was one of the particular modern breed who didn't have time to read widely or to develop understanding, but just really wanted to be 'told' what to do (Dobson, 2007).
>
> Students don't enrol in large numbers in order to become best-selling authors anymore. They enrol to learn about writing (Krauth and Webb, 2007).
>
> The idea of 'a cult of authorship' has about it a hint of mysticism and intrigue. The opposite is clearly the case for writing programs: students are now enrolling in these courses for practical and overt reasons concerned with future personal and career communications demands (Krauth and Webb, 2007).
>
> I impart how I would like them to situate themselves … (Day, 2005: 166)

The extent of the use of teacher authority in the creative writing classroom can be seen from Stephanie Vanderslice's reference to Mimi Thebo's response to student dissatisfaction with Thebo's creative writing programme. In response to student unhappiness with the inclusion of journalism in the programme, with some students admitting that they hate the subject, Mimi Thebo's response is simply to "make them learn it anyway, they might like it better than stocking shelves three years on" (Vanderslice, 2010b: 44) No choice about curriculum content appears to be a key characteristic of Thebo's creative writing programme. She states that she has developed a "professional academic development course that will be compulsory for all writing students" (Vanderslice, 2010b: 44).

Steve Healey identifies the irrationality and futility, particularly in these modern times, of the extent of the students' demand and passion for creative writing and its instruction. He asks why, "if publishing and reading as we know them are becoming extinct … would creative writing be thriving?" and he is unable to understand, "given how unlikely the chances of any one creative writing student going on to a successful career," how creative writing students persist with this dream and what, pragmatically, can only be termed a "profound-delusion" (Healey, 2012: 62).

Perhaps the answer to Healy's question is that creative writing students still think of creative writing in traditional terms and do not subscribe to the newly developed academically defined and institutionalised, professionalised form of creative writing. Despite repetitive attempts in the discourse on creative writing to abolish, mythologise and eradicate notions of a romantically-based creative writing practice, in favour of a more academic version, the students appear to remain passionate about the traditional writing form. Quoted by Jeff Sparrow, Jyotsma Kapur may be providing a glimpse of the form and nature of the type of creative writing students seek to be taught and want to practice:

> An older narrative about the arts still persists in the academy: it is that artists are genius outsiders, voices of dissent, rugged lonesome individuals who live on the margins, victims of economic marginalisation and social misunderstanding, with special, even sacred, relationships to the art which must be protected from the intrusions of the world. (Sparrow, 2012: 88-9)

4. Institutionally Focused Research Predominates

Most of the independent research initiatives in the development of creative writing pedagogy relate to academically focused research studies, which have institutional staff, primarily in the form of creative writing teachers, as the primary respondents. Here are a few recent examples of this type of research project:

> Chris Morgan's research study was located primarily in British and Australian institutions and sought to investigate "how university academics in the creative arts conceptualise creativity, both as a general concept and also as a set of situated disciplinary beliefs and practices" (Morgan, 2012).

> Dianne Donnelly's research includes "one hundred and sixty-seven creative writing teachers … from a base of 174 undergraduate creative writing programs (Donnelly, 2012c: 75).
>
> Robert Sheppard's investigation uses "a mixture of surveys and interviews with teaching staff across 2002-3" (Sheppard, 2012:111).

Having been commissioned by the Higher Education Academy in the UK "to investigate the current state of Creative Writing teaching and research in higher education … following the rapid and sustained growth of Creative Writing degree programmes over the last decade" (NAWE), the National Association of Writers in Education have undertaken a study involving 27 universities with apparently no student dialogue, questionnaires or interviews to get direct student input into the process. All questions appear to be aimed at teaching authorities and teaching personnel. The following are the primary questions of the study, which is ti be released soon:

1. Your setup
2. Recruitment and Transition
3. Student Satisfaction and Retention
4. Professional Development and Employability
5. Pedagogy and Assessment
6. Research
7. Change and Challenges (NAWE)

5. Student Research

Recently some attempts have been made to gauge student conceptions, needs and expectations relative to the teaching of creative writing. It would appear, however, that these surveys and studies are sometimes undertaken informally, in an anecdotal fashion based on the creative writing teacher's own experience with a lack of clearly communicated research objectives. Research projects, which have the conceptions, needs and expectations of creative students as their primary research objective, remain few and far between.

Some creative writing authorities base their assumptions simply on their own personal experiences: “almost every undergraduate I’ve encountered has either no specific literary ambition at all, or only the vaguest desire to publish a book someday” (Healey, 2012: 62).

When research objectives are provided, they tend to be either too broad or too narrow to be of value. Cristine Sarrimo undertook her research project to find out “how … students and teachers perceive their own work and their roles as authors" (2010: 179), while Claire Baldwin and Jonathan Taylor explored “‘Peer Feedback in Creative Writing at De Montfort University’” (2010).

A number of the assessed research projects displayed questionable methodological bases, processes and principles, which casts doubt on the accuracy of their findings and conclusions. In an international research survey undertaken by O’Donahoe (as described by Claire Woods, 2008) the research survey was based on a questionnaire completed by groups of students in the USA, the UK and France, who were studying a broad range of writing subjects: “writing and creative communication … general composition or writing for academic purposes … literature, first level writing or education” with the “data … from the survey questionnaire adapted for each context but covering a shared set of issues and questions” (2008).

Compare the complexity and myriad of variables in O’Donahoe’s study with the impractically narrow scope of Woods’ own study: “We decided to conduct the survey as an in-class exercise so that there was opportunity to engage students in a discussion (as a large focus group activity)” (2008).

In some instances the formulation and focus of the research questions appear to reveal a particular bias. The research study undertaken by Donna Lee Brien and Philip Nielsen in 2001 appears to take the hybrid form of both a quantitative and qualitative investigation, which, judging by the survey questions, was designed not to delve too deeply into student conceptions of creative writing, but was aimed more at assessing current creative writing teaching practices and processes. For example, the survey focused on why students enrolled in creative writing classes; when students were reading; what they were currently reading; how much TV they watched; and what their attitude to writers and writing were (2001).

6. Gregory Light's Research Study

In recent times authorities have increasingly made reference to the results of Gregory Light's student and institutional research into the teaching of creative writing in higher education institutions in the UK. While Dianne Donnelly refers to "Light's provocative *new* understanding of students' conceptions of voice" (2012c: 119), [my italics] it should be noted that his study formed the basis of his PhD thesis, which was written in 1992 already and subsequently took the form of articles in three journals, the latest appearing in 2002.

Alicita Rodriguez and DG Myers identify the primary significance of Light's findings to be that students associate creative writing with their 'personal' or private experience (2008: 170). Myers emphasises the fact that Light's findings revealed that

> … in contrast to essay writing, Creative Writing provides a writing opportunity which permits students to tap into a much more private, personal and emotional reality for their ideas and material. It is characterized by freedom from the non-personal, external demands of facts and other people's ideas, comments and forms. For the most part it is concerned with original, creative, personal experiences and feelings that can be discovered by the self and which provide the basis for their material (Gregory Light qtd in DG Myers, 2012: 28).

7. Personal Freedom Inherent in Student Creative Writing

Light's finding of the significance of the personal and the importance of writing freedom in his study has been echoed in a number of more recent books and journal articles. Steven May describes how his respondents are seeking to write in a more "personal way … for themselves" (2012: 69). Lisa Roney notes that creative writing students find the subject attractive, because it is "directly personal for them" (qtd in Donnelly, 2012c: 75).

Fiona Doloughan contends that many creative writing students "are drawn to the subject because of its perceived focus on the personal and subjective and on learned as well as imagined experience" (2012:184).

In her own research into student reactions to the teaching of creative writing, Cristine Sarrimo's findings mirror and support Light's discoveries. Her respondents commented that "'creative space is different from public space … writing is part of [their] innermost core.'" Sarrimo concluded that

> … uniqueness appears to be the central aspect of [the] writing process. Creative space seems to be private in the sense of being separate from public, 'outer' space and also to be what expresses you and what one is: primarily a person who writes and secondarily one who works for a living. (2010:182)

Despite this recognition that students' conceptions of their creative writing practice are characterised by their personal and private feelings and experiences and the contrast between the creative private space and public outer space, some creative writing authorities continue to resist the notion that for creative writing students, creative writing is a pure, romantic practice they undertake for themselves, primarily. These authorities lament and reject the students' "emphasis on feelings … their Romantic notions" (Donnelly, 2012c: 90), "the rise of the overly self-absorbed student … the return of the Romantic artist who displays a relative inability to appreciate and relate to the work of other students" (Edmonds, 2005).

Overall creative writing student needs have been neglected and subjugated to the motives and interests of creative writing authorities and their institutions, as appears from Marcel Freiman's cynical view:

> Students tend to bring their notions about creativity and writing to the study of the subject, a kind of 'dangerous dreaming' which involves a number of illusions about what they will do and what can be achieved. (2003b)

8. For Students Creative Writing is the Antithesis of Academic Writing

Certain creative writing authorities within higher education institutions reject notions of the Romanticism in Creative Writing as being sentimental, mystical, unmeasurable and inexplicable, hence the continual integration of creative writing into all other forms of writing, particularly formal, expository writing. The research will show that this reshaping

of the practice of creative writing into a more academically appropriate form runs counter to student conceptions and expectations, which are quite unambiguous: creative writing and academic writing are diametrically opposed processes and practices. Students' responses are quite clear: "critical writing distracts them from creativity itself" (Anna Leahy, 2005b: 14).

Yet, creative writing teachers persist in presenting creative writing as one of a number of other writing forms with which they and their departments are more familiar:

> Rather than segregating writing courses according to the writing product … writing courses should ideally work together … we can create writing pedagogy that integrates literature, composition, and creative writing (Yoder Miller, 2005:48)

There is quite clearly a chasm between the creative writing conceptions, needs and expectations of creative writing students and the nature, characteristics and form of the subject of creative writing, as taught by academic institutions. Andrew Cowan, Sam Kelly and Richard Beard have recognised this state of affairs and suggest a reconsideration of the location of creative writing within academic institutions. They emphasise the need for

> confidence in the autonomy of artistic practice … and overwhelming concern with creating an environment over other pedagogical considerations … it's the ideology that students … buy when they hand over their fees. Which isn't any kind of problem, except in academia … [a] pragmatic solution [is] removing the discipline to a different marketplace where it can define itself wholly in response to demand (2012).

B. Introduction

Within the institutional academic environment the principles, philosophies and pedagogic foundations for the teaching and learning of creative writing stem from the traditional processes handed down from one teaching generation to the next, either based on the American model of writer as teacher, master and mentor, or on the British education based model, which relies on English literature support with explanatory texts for academic authentication.

Given the demand of the students to be taught to write creatively, the research results of the needs and objectives of the students underlying that demand could be used to augment traditional creative writing teaching practices and to be one of the primary components of the pedagogy of creative writing. As has been identified earlier there are, however, very few student focused investigations.

As creative writing tends to be a student driven field of study, which is highly personal and individualistic, it is essential to identify and analyse these specific student needs and objectives and to reflect them in the design and development of creative writing modules and programmes for the teaching of both undergraduate students, who are aspiring writers, and for the teaching of postgraduates, as aspirant teachers of writing.

Based on the research findings from his Ph.D. study into student conceptions of creative writing, Gregory Light had already in 1992 called for a realignment of institutional teaching focus, from course to student, which is a variation of fundamental significance,

> a paradigm shift … a shift of focus from course to students, from teaching to learning, from student compositions to student conceptions … a shift 'downward,' 'beneath' the surface of the [pedagogical anomalies and conflicts] (1992: 21).

Twenty years later in 2012 Cowan, Kelly and Beard, acting on Light's recommendation, advocated that a "pragmatic solution" be sought for the development of creative writing pedagogy by focusing "wholly" on a response to the student demand for the subject. Despite repeated references to the need for empirically researched initiatives to provide a solid, legitimate basis for the teaching and learning of creative writing in academic institutions, the pedagogic development inertia continues.

C. The Research Studies

Four research studies have been selected for analysis. The principles extracted from this analysis will serve as a foundation for the development of further key pedagogic principles for the teaching and learning of creative writing.

Two of the studies were undertaken in the UK, one in Australia and, the most recent one, in South Africa. The studies were all undertaken in academic institutions with British based educational systems. These institutions require a more knowledge based pedagogic format than their American counterparts, with more emphasis on ancillary subjects and skills and a strict adherence to the requirement for supplementary texts, or exegeses, to explain and complement the primary fictional text.

Three of the studies are qualitative in format. *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education* (Light, 1992) and *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* (Oberholzer, 2005) contain in-depth analyses and specific conclusions and are more detailed than Steven May's study described in his article, "Teaching Creative Writing at Undergraduate Level: Why, How and Does it Work?" (May, 2003)

The fourth study, "True Lies? 1997 Survey of Creative Writing Students" (Deller and Deller-Evans, 1998) is a quantitative study undertaken by way of questionnaires completed by students at two Australian universities.

The studies of Light and Oberholzer were done in the process of obtaining the PhD and Masters qualifications. The empirical accuracy and methodology of these two studies have accordingly been academically approved, supervised and certified and their findings may accordingly be more persuasive.

D. The Findings of the Research Studies

1. "True Lies? 1997 Survey of Creative Writing Students."

The quantitative study of Steve Evans and Kate Deller-Evans formed the basis for their article, "True Lies? 1997 Survey of Creative Writing Students," which appeared in the online magazine, *TEXT*, and consisted of quantitative responses to research questionnaires completed by

- 11 out of 15 students at Flinders University undertaking a BA degree first semester course, *The Craft and Culture of Imaginative Writing*; and
- 15 out of 21 students at the University of Adelaide, who had completed the first semester of a Diploma course in Creative Writing.

Evans and Deller-Evans' research study was aimed at identifying the reasons for students enrolling in creative writing based programmes and investigating what students expected "to get out of Creative Writing courses." (1998)

This study contains little in the way of in-depth analysis or findings. The researchers simply relate the comments made by the students in response to the research questions and note the numbers of students making the specific comments. The responses are not grouped or categorised and the themes and trends emanating from the research are not identified or extrapolated.

(a) <u>Enjoyment of and Interest in Creative Writing</u>

The less experienced creative writing undergraduate students at Flinders University focused distinctly on the practice of writing as a personal and emotional pastime — "enjoyment and interest in writing" — with the majority of responses encompassing writing practice orientated objectives — "study of writing technique ... wanting to write a book ... wanting to explore fiction ... simply to write ... a chance to gauge one's own talent." (Evans and Deller-Evans, 1998)

Evans and Deller-Evans' confirm the predominance of the students' focus on the internal, personal benefits and objectives inherent in pursuing creative writing as a course of study:

> ... it could be inferred that most students were not particularly looking for improved writing skills and publication. Instead they could be seen as pursuing a less focused goal of reading and talking about writing, a broader 'pleasure' motive. (1998)

The postgraduate students at the University of Adelaide, perhaps being more experienced in creative writing and having committed to a dedicated diploma writing course, were more goal directed and tended to justify

> their investment in a more particular way ... improving skills and repertoire ... improving publication prospects ... a need for discipline, structure, pressure, motivation ... wanting the culture and company of other writers ... increasing earnings and employment prospects (Evans and Deller-Evans, 1998).

There were significantly less responses relating to the enjoyment of writing and writing for writing's sake — "love of writing ... doing something imaginative ... to be a writer" (Evans and Deller-Evans, 1998).

(b) <u>An Absence of Assessment and Feedback Criteria</u>

At Flinders University, the undergraduate respondents expressed concern

> with matters of marking ... a lack of a clear basis of assessment and of formal feedback ... the assignments were unclear, that marking was contentious or unexplained and that marking relativities between students were unsound (Evans and Deller-Evans, 1998).

(c) <u>Increased Student Numbers Detrimental to Workshop Effectiveness</u>

At the University of Adelaide, the postgraduate students were dissatisfied with the large number of students in the workshops and the negative effects of that on productive class interactions:

> The class contained more than 20 students which was considered too many. There were complaints that too little of some individuals' work or opinions could be heard due to the number of students or the dominance of a few students (Evans and Deller-Evans, 1998).

2. "Teaching Creative Writing at Undergraduate Level: Why, How and Does it Work?"

Steven May reported the findings of his research in his article, "Teaching Creative Writing at Undergraduate Level: Why, How and Does it Work?," which he compiled for the *English Subject Centre* in 2003. May's research base consisted of 8 academic institutions "ranging from places with well established single honours degrees, to others just starting to add creative writing elements to existing courses" (2003). He interviewed 18 teachers of creative writing and 80 creative writing students. May describes his research objective as simply being "to ask some basic questions" (2003). The following institutions and courses provided the foundation for May's research study:

Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College – *BA Joint Honours in Creative Writing and English Studies*
Bretton Hall, University of Leeds – *Single Honours BA (Hons) Creative Writing*
Bath Spa University College – *Single Honours Programme: Creative Studies in English*
University of Glamorgan – *BA in Creative and Professional Writing*
University of Gloucestershire – *BA Creative & Contemporary Writing*
King Alfred's College, Winchester – *Single Honours Programme: Creative Writing*
Sheffield Hallam University – *Creative writing modules* that form part of the English Studies degree
University of Warwick – *BA Honours Degree in English Literature and Creative Writing*

(a) Institutionally Focused Research Objectives

In contrast to the focus on the student in Gregory Light's study, Steven May's research has a predominantly educational and institutional focus, as is indicated by the title of his article. His research is aimed at identifying the means of successfully teaching creative writing and his perspective is on creative writing as an academic subject and field of study. The conceptions and experiences of the creative writing students play a secondary role and May

makes no mention of Light's key finding that in terms of student conceptions and experiences creative writing is distinct from other forms of writing. May proceeds with his research on the assumption that, as an academically assimilated field of study, creative writing can and should be considered and treated no differently to other subjects and other forms of discursive writing. The following questions put to the 80 students in his sample reflect an institutionally based perspective of the teaching of creative writing:

> *Why did you choose creative writing?*
> *How does creative writing differ from other subjects/courses?*
> *What are you learning?*
> *How does the personal nature of some of the work affect learning/teaching?*
> *Do you do as much work for creative writing as for other subjects?*
> *Can you get a good grade without attending classes?* (2003)

The questions asked of May's writing teacher respondents highlight the concern educators appear to have with the legitimacy of creative writing as an academic subject:

> *Can you teach creative writing?*
> *Why teach creative writing?*
> *Is teaching creative writing different from other disciplines?*
> *Is there any correlation between fun and learning?* (2003)

This study is less concerned with using the conceptions and experiences of creative writing students as potentially key components in the development of appropriate creative writing pedagogy, than with the fact that "the recruiting power of creative writing courses" has necessitated "institution-led initiatives" (2003) to develop and offer creative writing courses and programmes. Creative writing teaching is developed and offered more for the benefit of the institution than with the objective of responding to the learning needs of student writers:

> Institutions everywhere are now looking to writing courses to bring in students and make money. There is also competition between departments as to where such courses should be based (2003).

(b) Creative Writing is Personal and Enjoyable

Even May's institutionally focused research findings uncovered the strongly internalised, personal nature of student creative writing conceptions and experiences, as identified and analysed in Light's study :

> Motivations appear to be mixed, and complex: some see it as a more personally relevant form of English, or something they were good at, when much younger, which they haven't been able to pursue. Many ... stress that they've chosen it because they want to do a degree for themselves — one they'll enjoy (2003).

(c) The Diversity of Creative Writing Teachers

May confirms that, certainly in the universe of the institutions forming the basis of his study, the teachers of creative writing are made up of a diverse range of teaching personnel: "usually writers ... some successful and respected teachers who haven't published ... conventional academics ... others have arrived through school teaching …" (2003)

(d) The Dangers of Pressures on Students to Conform

Steve May also identifies and emphasises the risks inherent in the academic assimilation of creative writing, as just another discipline, and warns of the conformity and artificiality, which may result from rigid and uncreative assessment processes and techniques:

> ... some students consciously or unconsciously edit to please or to avoid embarrassment and conflict ... Others consciously write for the workshop, while doing their real writing at home ... if workshop tasks are artificial and assessment is linked to workshop tasks, there's a real danger that the writing we are encouraging and then assessing is intrinsically artificial, and we shouldn't be surprised if it lacks what we sometimes call originality, or voice, or commitment (2003).

3. The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education

Gregory Light's research study formed the basis of his 1992 PhD thesis and consists of interviews with 40 diverse students attending a range of creative writing programmes at the following education institutions:

> The Middlesex Polytechnic based in London and offering a *Practice of Writing* course as a part of a A/Bed Degree;
> The City Literary Institute based in London and offering a *Writing Short Stories* course in The Writing School; and
> The University of East Anglia in Norwich offering an *MA in Creative Writing* course (1992: 115).

Light's study was "designed to obtain a broad, qualitative description of conception" (1992: 115) and despite remaining 'unpublished,' as identified earlier in the *Background* to this Chapter, there have been a number of creative writing authorities, who have fairly recently been referring to Light's research study and its conclusions. While authorities such as Dianne Donnelly (2012c: 119), Alicita Rodriguez (2008: 170) and D.G. Myers (2012: 28) make direct references to Light's findings, an increasing number of authorities have through their own investigations affirmed and corroborated one of Light's primary findings namely that for students of creative writing, the practice of writing creatively is a personal and private experience. These authorities include Steve May (2012: 69), Fiona Doloughan (2012: 184) and Cristine Sarrimo (2010: 182). Stephanie Vanderslice considers Gregory Light's study to be the "seminal research" on student writing in academic institutions (2006: 150).

(a) Creative Writing is a Personal and Private Experience

Within the diversity of his research universe, Gregory Light's research study reveals a distinct uniformity in the students' conceptions of creative writing. Light identified a "thematic 'convergence' in student accounts" of their

> perception of the relationship of 'creative writing' to 'personal' elements in their experience in a way which is qualitatively different from perceptions of their relationship to other kinds of writing (essay, journalism etc) on their courses or in their experience. This is often expressed in terms of 'freedom' and related to the material and genesis of their writing which is not perceived as being external or 'out there' but rather as private (1992: 132).

Light emphasises that for the students "creative writing is strongly associated with the ... particularly personal or private experience" that results in the creation of "'subjectivist or expressionist rhetoric ... [in] which the writer is trying to express ... the product of a private and personal vision'" (1992: 148).

(b) Creative Writing is Distinct from Other Writing Experiences

While often considered to be just another form of writing in the academic environment, Light's research findings highlight the distinction made by the students between writing creatively, which is an internal personal practice, and all other forms of writing, which are externally derived and focused. Students distinguish between creative and non-creative writing experiences emphasising the feelings of self satisfaction derived from their creative writing activities, a type and level of satisfaction not gained from other forms of writing:

> For most students on all courses, creative writing is perceived as being distinctively 'free,' a quality associated in their accounts with the idea that this kind of writing focuses on personal lived experience, experience which they 'own' ... Strongly linked with this sense of freedom are accounts of the writing being more emotionally engaging and more interesting, saturated with 'layers of feeling' and 'satisfaction' that is not as available in other kinds of writing (1992: 148).

Respondents' notions of the "freedom and emotional engagement" inherent in their creative writing practices, which are derived from their "personal, private experience," are diametrically opposed to "the external world of discursive academic or journalistic disciplines" and students also perceive creative writing to be "untainted by the critical controlling principles of external academic discourses" (1992: 149-50).

(c) Creative Writing is Based on Notions of Freedom, Form and Truth

Light identifies the "three interrelated concepts [of] (i) freedom, (ii) form and (iii) truth" (1992: 148) with freedom forming the primary component of creative writing and form and truth reliant on the writing freedom, which students deem to be the key to their creative writing activities. Writing freedom carries dominant notions of non-conformity, originality, novelty and spontaneity:

> ... the freedom of not having to accept or conform to the impersonal, neutral facts and implacable forms of an external world, but rather being free to create one's own new, spontaneous and personal forms (1992: 149).

Light's description of the students' notions of "a different kind of truth" (1992: 150) gives an impression of a heightened sense of honesty, of authenticity and originality, all stemming from a concentration on the respondents' personal focus on the self. He concludes that the predominant emphasis in writing creatively is subjectivist:

> The general assumption is that creative writing taps into a reality which is more alive, true and spontaneous, a place in which to escape and come to terms with oneself. It is concerned with original, unmediated, authentic, private experience which can be discovered by the self and only by the self, the focus ... is on the personal (as private) and those characteristics associated with the personal: 'private experience,' 'originality,' 'self discovery,' 'truth,' 'freedom,' 'creating/ making,' 'ownership,' 'emotion,' 'escape' and so on (1992: 151).

(d) Creative Writing Pedagogy Should Embrace the Notions Derived from Student Conceptions and Experiences

Gregory Light's student based research findings can be of considerable value in the development of student focused creative writing programmes, which have as their essence the motives, conceptions and experiences of student writers. He identifies the need for creative writing teaching and learning to embrace creative writing's distinctiveness and the need for its ideal separation from the traditional institutional pressures. The key findings of Gregory Light's research study can be summarised as follows:

- Conception or understanding in creative writing generally appears to move in the 'opposite direction' to that in the more 'academic' disciplines or discourses;
- In creative writing the material is linked much more closely to the student, whereas in the academic discourse, it is linked much more closely to the discipline;
- In creative writing the student integrates (or not) his/her own material with an awareness of readership ... during the activity of writing, whereas in the academic discourse the student integrates (or not) the public material and forms with his/her own stance in the material acts of understanding; and
- In creative writing the student is ... making public the personal while in academic discourse the student is making personal the public (1992: 231).

4. Student Conceptions of Creative Writing

Based on the work of Gregory Light and using his study and findings as a foundation, my own research study consisted of a qualitative research process, the results of which formed the basis of a Masters Research Report, *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing*, completed at the University of the Witwatersrand in 2005.

The research consisted of interviews with 22 first year English Literature students, who were selected as a result of their positive responses to questions relating to their propensity for personal writing and their interest in enrolling in creative writing modules and programmes. These questions formed the screening component for a quantitative study aimed at gauging and tracking student interest in and demand for creative writing instruction at a university, which does not offer any undergraduate creative writing modules or programmes. The profile of the respondent base represented a microcosm of contemporary South African society with its multi-racial flavour and large disparities in financial, lifestyle and educational characteristics.

The research study was designed to obtain a broad, qualitative understanding of the respondents' conceptions of the practice of creative writing and their views and expectations relative to the teaching and learning of creative writing. This study differs from those of Light and May in that the respondents in their research programmes were students, who had institutional experience of creative writing teaching and learning, whereas the undergraduate

students, who formed the basis of the *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* study, had no institutionally biased preconceptions beyond their creative writing experiences at school.

The study was aimed at 'marrying' the needs and desires inherent in the high levels of student demand for the teaching of the subject creative writing, as captured and expressed in their conceptions and experiences of creative writing, with the current realities and practicalities of creative writing theories and pedagogy. This would in turn be used to formulate an academically sound framework for the practical development of undergraduate creative writing modules and programmes. The following is a detailed summary of the research findings and conclusions:

(a) Student Creative Writing Experiences at School

The students' experiences of and attitudes towards their writing during their school years are clearly founded on the personalised nature and notions of the freedom their writing practices provided within a highly controlled educational environment:

- Students are initially attracted to the process of writing creatively, because of the freedom it offers them to use their imaginations and express themselves within the regimented and structured school environment;
- Once experienced, the personal satisfaction, which accompanies their writing freedom, is strong enough to sustain their interest in writing, despite the dominance of the focus of English studies on language and literature and an absence of creative writing instruction, criteria and assessment processes at school;
- The motivation and inspiration provided by specific teachers in many instances act as a 'spark' and become an enduring catalyst, which spurs respondents on to continue to pursue and develop their writing practice; and
- All of the respondents actively wrote outside of the school requirements. Many of them displayed an active interest in writing competitions and publishing opportunities and more than half of the respondents had considered developing their creative writing skills by attending specific writing programmes or modules (Oberholzer, 2005: 99).

(b) Student Creative Writing Interest and Intentions

The students' reasons for their interest in creative writing provide valuable insights into the question, why students write, and their explanations of the intentions underlying their writing are an indication of their commitment to writing and their future writing plans:

- The primary interest in creative writing stems from the need for personal expression as a therapeutic outlet, which allows students to avoid confrontation, to clarify their thoughts, to release emotional tension and to order and store thoughts and emotions, which are causing confusion;
- An admiration for and a desire to emulate the achievements of authors is another factor, which instils the interest in writing in some of the respondents;
- Respondents also find the joys and rewards of creation an attraction, which allows them to escape their everyday lives and create and control their own universe;
- Respondents' writing intentions are both internal and external in nature. Internally focused students cling to their writing activities, as a therapeutic support, and strongly defend their reluctance to share their writing with other readers;
- At the other end of the scale, those respondents with external intentions want to share their work with others and their aim is to express themselves and communicate with readers. This desire to communicate ranges from writing for personal enjoyment and sharing the writing, if it is of some value to others, through to a confident determination to write specifically for publication;
- The clearly visible differences between respondents with internal intentions and those with external intentions may signify their different stages on a continuum of creative writing development; and
- Respondents were surprisingly realistic in their descriptions of their intentions to publish their work. They were under no illusions as to the complexity of the process and their chances of success. Respondents were also acutely aware that pursuing a career in writing would necessitate additional financial support (Oberholzer, 2005: 104).

(c) Student Definitions of Creative Writing

Students, definitions of creative writing revolved almost exclusively around concepts of personal expression and freedom and encompassed a mixture of the elements underlying their interests in writing and the intentions underlying their writing practice.

Respondents' definitions did not contain any references to value, or quality judgments or criteria and there were no mentions of 'publishability.'

The students were unanimous in their insistence that creative writing is all about freedom (Oberholzer, 2005: 105), which they use as a 'marker' when defining creative writing and distinguishing it from other forms of writing. Other forms of writing are deemed to be restrictive, formatted, containing boundaries and rules, with set topics and set standards, based on facts and aimed at providing information. These types of writing can be 'right' or 'wrong' and tend to drastically limit the writer's choices and therefore her freedom (Oberholzer, 2005: 106). The dominance of freedom in their definitions of creative writing and the distinctions they draw between creative writing and other forms of writing are identical to and corroborate Gregory Light's findings.

(d) Student's Writing Processes

The students' creative writing processes can be classified as instinctive, informal or formal. This classification resembles the categorisation of the students' writing intentions into internal and external and therefore suggests that this process classification could also be used as a valuable indicator of the stage of development of a student's writing practice. The inability of students to achieve writing finalisation or 'closure' stems from the personal nature of their writing and the absence of a formal, 'final' reader or readers (Oberholzer, 2005: 114).

As inexperienced writers, the students had no preconceptions and relatively minimal formal knowledge of writing genres and are therefore open to genre experimentation and development.

In the main the students' writing processes are audience 'detached,' but some students realise the benefits of exposing their work to a broader readership beyond family and friends and admit that at varying stages in their writing processes they do become audience aware.

The respondents' evaluation of the quality of their writing is a self-reflexive, internalised process with the acceptance of reader responses, as a measure of quality, being the exception and not the norm.

The concept of quality writing is strongly associated with elements such as substance, truth and meaning and writing timelessness, longevity and originality (Oberholzer, 2005: 115).

(e) Creative Writing and Literature Studies

As a result of creative writing's historical affiliation with English Studies generally, and English Literature specifically, it was important to interpret the students' conceptions of and attitudes towards literature and its relationship to creative writing, as being possibly one of the primary influences in the design of creative writing modules and programmes, particularly at the undergraduate level.

Most of the respondents attributed their decision to enrol in English literature to their love of reading (Oberholzer, 2005: 123) and the students' definitions of literature included an array of descriptions, which served to highlight an absence of any prior teaching and/or preconceptions of what literature means or what the 'category' includes, or excludes.

References to quality or value judgments in describing conceptions of literature were the exception, rather than the norm, with respondents referring to "deeper" writing, to writing that has been published, to writing longevity and to writing that is artistic and of cultural significance. When defined as "classic" literature, questions of subjectivity were raised, as well as the undesirability of the "dictation" of history.

In terms of the benefits to their own writing from their study of literature, responses were overwhelmingly positive, but the descriptions of those benefits were mostly confined to

seeing the literary texts, as examples of writing, and not as criteria against which students could evaluate the quality of their own work, while the rejection of any benefits from the study of literature was based on the perceived curtailment of the student's writing freedom and the "uninspirational" and the "tendency to kill the book" nature of literary analysis.

Descriptions of the benefits of studying English literature contained subtle differences between exposure to, and the analysis of, the texts. Students' conceptions of the positive influences on their own writing, include an extension of perspectives, the provision of a writing foundation, the generation of writing ideas, examples of craft, processes and techniques, and a means to self-discovery.

A small number of respondents mentioned a heightened awareness of the authors' processes. While the majority of respondents confirmed an affiliation between English literature and creative writing, some were of the view that the teaching of literature should undergo an adaptation to accommodate the needs of students, who are studying both creative writing and English literature and the suggestion of a compulsory link between creative writing and selected English literature modules and courses generated an overwhelmingly positive response indicating the opportunities inherent in a mutually beneficial and collaborative relationship (Oberholzer, 2005: 124).

(f) Creative Writing Teaching and Learning Needs

When asked to describe their creative writing learning needs, respondents went beyond the concept of 'writing freedom' — writing without boundaries, restrictions or standards — and began to list the techniques, processes, criteria and critical feedback they believed would assist them in becoming better writers. In essence a creative writing module should provide them with the structures and framework within which to exercise their creative writing 'freedom.' The analysis of the responses revealed a common need amongst the respondents for a structured learning environment, which would give them access to

- Writing Processes;
- The Concept of Audience;
- Genre Experimentation and Development (Oberholzer, 2005: 125);
- Writing Discipline;

- Critical Feedback; and
- A Community of Writers (Oberholzer, 2005: 126)

E. The Common Findings of the Four Research Studies

1. Personal Freedom and Enjoyment

Despite the dissimilarities in the research universes and the diversity of the array of respondents in time, location, demographics, and in terms of writing experience, Gregory Light's discovery of a "thematic convergence in student accounts of their perception of the relationship of creative writing to personal elements ... often expressed in terms of 'freedom' …" (1992: 132) was confirmed in all the later studies, albeit with varying levels of emphasis. According to Light, "in the diversity of student background and experience [there exists] a thematic convergence or 'uniformity'... for personal expression ... and writing" (1992: 143).

The research findings in *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* also identified the fact that students are initially attracted to the practice of writing creatively, because of the freedom it affords them to use their imaginations and to express themselves and in so doing allows them to satisfy their need for personal expression (Oberholzer, 2005: 105).

Steven May's study echoes the students' strong internalised and personal focus on creative writing for enjoyment and personal satisfaction: "Many ... stress that they've chosen it because they want to do a degree for themselves — one they'll enjoy" (2003) and, similarly, the study of Evans and Deller-Evans in Australia displayed, more so amongst undergraduate students, a distinct student focus on the practice of creative writing as a personal and emotionally laden process and activity. The students sought to undertake creative writing courses, because of their "enjoyment or interest in writing," because they wanted "to write a book ... to explore fiction ... simply to write" (1998)

2. Freedom vs Control: An Unequivocal Distinction Between Creative Writing and Other Forms of Writing

The highly personalised nature of the students' relationship with their creative writing practice, with its positive associations of enjoyment and freedom, forms the basis of the clear cut distinction students make between creative writing, on one hand, and the more traditional, non-fictional and academically-based texts, on the other. Student's creative writing practice exhibits primary notions of 'personalness' and freedom, "as private," and "other kinds of writing ... as ... external or 'out there" (Light, 1992: 132) Students deem creative writing to exist within their "personal, private experience" (Light, 1992: 149) in a space seemingly diametrically opposed to "the external world of discursive academic or journalistic disciplines" (Light, 1992: 149). This desirable freedom of form carries dominant notions of non-conformist practice.

Students' perceptions of the practice of writing creatively are that it is "untainted by the critical controlling principles of external academic discourses" and that creative writing emanates from "a 'freer' self which is less controlling and controllable" (Light, 1992: 149-50). The students insist that creative writing is all about freedom, which they use as a 'marker' when defining creative writing and distinguishing it from other forms of writing, all of which are considered to be restrictive, formatted, containing boundaries and rules, with set topics and set standards, based on facts and aimed at providing information. These types of writing can be 'right' or 'wrong' and tend to drastically limit the writers' choices and, therefore, their freedom (Oberholzer, 2005: 105)

3. Students Experience the Joys and Rewards of Creation

Students, through their writing, experience the joys and rewards of creation, which allows them to create and control their own private universe. While their evaluation of the quality of their texts is a self-reflexive and internalised process, the students' concept of quality is strongly associated with notions of substance, meaning, writing timelessness, longevity, originality and truth (Oberholzer, 2005: 115). Light's explanation of this truth, as a "different kind of truth" (Light, 1992: 150), gives the impression of a heightened sense of

honesty and of originality, all stemming from a concentration on the students' personal focus on the self:

> The general assumption is that creative writing taps into a reality which is more alive, true and spontaneous, a place in which to escape and come to terms with one self. It is concerned with original, unmediated, authentic, private experience which can be discovered by the self and only by the self, the focus ... is on the personal (as private) and those characteristics associated with the personal: 'private experience,' 'originality,' 'self-discovery,' 'truth,' 'freedom,' 'creating/ making,' 'ownership,' 'emotion,' 'escape,' and so on (Light, 1992: 150).

F. Creative Writing Teaching Principles

After analysing the results of the four studies, certain principles can be extracted, which will add significant theoretical value to creative writing pedagogy generally, but to the two creative writing programmes, which are the subject of this thesis, specifically. The following five extracted principles will form a primary component of the pedagogic foundation of the envisaged creative writing programmes:

1. Writing Freedom

The students' desire for writing freedom should be respected. It is this emotional sense of freedom inherent in their creative writing practice, which maintains and prolongs the writing passion and motivation to write that is so crucial to the writer's energy, persistence and courage. The student's need for writing freedom should therefore form the epicentre of all creative writing teaching and learning and should permeate all elements of creative writing teaching processes and the environment in which creative writing workshops and instruction take place.

2. Creative Writing Separation

Creative writing teaching and learning should always remain demarcated and separate from the instruction of other forms of academic writing. The common practice of seeking to integrate creative writing into the practices of other controlled and prescribed forms of

writing dilutes and may smother the creative writing freedom the students so eagerly seek to possess and maintain. This integration process is generally used to academically validate creative writing, but in doing so, the characteristics, creativity and independence of the students' creative writing practices may be destroyed.

3. Creative Writing as an Intrinsic Practice

Creative writing should be separated from its common role as "an instrument in the study of literature" and its teaching should have, as its "primary goal the development of writing as a practice in and of itself" (Light, 1995: 15).

4. Student Conceptions Should Form the Core of All Course Design

In developing creative writing pedagogy, the historical trend of being "tied to hierarchical ways of thinking" (Light, 1992: 296) should be avoided and instead creative writing instruction should be developed by "investigating the nature of the student experience of learning" before considering and addressing the issues of teaching. Creative writing courses should have as their objective "comprehensive learning and understanding — not simply the production of polished, 'publishable' texts meeting particular 'literary' criteria" (Light, 1992: 297). The development of creative writing pedagogies should therefore "address the question of conception across the whole gamut of course design, teaching and assessment issues" (Light, 1992: 297).

5. The Basis of a Life Long Writing Practice

The ultimate objective of the teaching and learning of creative writing should be to encourage and develop inexperienced, 'natural' writers into more mature, confident, disciplined and productive writers, who maintain their passion for and dedication to their writing pursuits and are equipped to either continue with their personal writing journey outside of the academy, or to participate comfortably and successfully in any postgraduate creative writing endeavours.

IX. THE STUDENT WRITER

1. Introduction

In this chapter the available literature on the student writer is examined. The documented experiences and insights of a number of authoritative creative writing teachers and a number of experienced authors support and augment the five creative writing teaching principles extrapolated from the student research findings in the previous chapter.

The pertinent texts and authorities, which form the basis of this analysis, include writing teachers such as Wallace Stegner, Nicolas Delbanco, John Gardner, Janet Burroway, Katharine Coles, Wendy Bishop, Joseph Moxley and Peter Elbow. The authors, most of whom have had creative writing teaching experience, include John Irving, R.H.W Dillard, E. B. White, Elie Wiesel and the poet Philip Larkin.

2. Support the Students' Need for Writing Freedom

(a) Acknowledge and Welcome Student Writer Uniqueness, Diversity and Sensitivity

Student writers should feel that they have the freedom to be themselves. The authorities warn against treating students as homogenous and identical, suggesting that writing teachers should be aware of the fact that student writers are all unique, diverse and highly sensitive. There are further distinct differences in the students' varying degrees of writing experience and the subtleties inherent in writing experience variations are not always recognised or appreciated. Stephanie Vanderslice suggests that

> ... we ... recognise that graduate and undergraduate creative writing populations (the last further subdividing into beginning and advanced undergraduates) are inherently unique and require more tailoring than the one-size-fits-all workshop to which both have traditionally been subject (2006: 151).

Katharine Coles emphasises that writing teachers need to bear the additional responsibilities of recognising and responding to the plurality and diversity of students' writing needs and

desires as individuals and always bear in mind the variances in the students' writing objectives and their writing talents and futures:

> … the rare one who will write her name across the literary firmament, the one who will publish a few modest stories here and then settle into a suitable career in accounting or law, and the one who chafes herself until she finally realises she's sitting on a pearl (2006: 11-12).

Wallace Stegner provides a reminder of how important it is to always remain sensitive in the creative writing teaching environment and to tread gently, to respect student feelings when judging their writing and to always remember "how intimate a thing writing is and how raw the nerves that surround it" (1997: 50).

(b) Respond to Students' Questions About the 'Writer's Voice'

For many student writers the discovery of their writers' voices can become a major obstacle to their development and negatively affect their writing freedom. It is a subject, which requires discussion and debate in the writing classroom.

While there are no definitive answers to the question, 'How do I go about finding my Writer's Voice?' there are certain perspectives from which to approach and respond to the question.

Judith Harris and Michelle Cross seem to equate the writer's voice to the writer's personal writing style arguing that it is a fixed and a relatively easily explained phenomenon, which has at its core the personality of the writer with all her experiences and human complexities. Harris uses a musical analogy to explain her version of the concept of the writer's voice:

> Teachers should help students to locate a voice that is not merely a collection of language bits and pieces, but an agency, one that brings language to harmonised articulation — so that within the manifold order of words, a particular ethos, signature, or even writing 'melody' can be heard. A student evolves through voice, into an instrument that can be trusted to play a variety of sounds and melodies. Voice is not synonymous with 'sound' but with the power to produce sound, without which a text would be mute (Harris, 2001: 179-80).

Michelle Cross in her essay, "Writing in Public: Popular Pedagogies of Creative Writing," seems to view an author's voice as a symbol of the individual's uniqueness, like a signature or fingerprint. She quotes Gabrielle Rico from *Writing the Natural Way*:

> Natural writing is first of all an act of self-definition of what you know, what you discover, what you wonder about, what you feel, see, hear, touch, taste — all of which reflects the many-faceted crystal that you are. The result of expressing your experience is a unique voice: yours (2007: 70).

The writer, John Hersey, remarked in the 1988 *Paris Review Interviews* that in his experience it was an "intense ... struggle" for "[s]tudents who were trying to find themselves as writers ..." and that, in his opinion, the writer's voice remains ever-elusive, ever-shifting and ever-changing: It never achieves a fixed and constant form and adapts and is shaped relative to the requirements and nature of the texts being created:

> A writer never really finds his voice, but is always striving, I think, to find it. This is one of the reasons I've had a horror of repeating myself. I believed that if I ever concluded that I knew exactly what my voice was, I would stagnate. The writer grows, has experiences, feels joys and pains that somehow accrete and change him, so that the voice that was appropriate when I wrote *A Bell for Adono* was not appropriate for *The Call* (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 128).

3. Teaching Creative Writing as a Practice In and of Itself

(a) Avoid Academic Subjugation in the Teaching of Creative Writing

Unlike the majority of the authorities, who accept the 'institutionalisation' of creative writing as a field of study, there are authorities, who offer a counter-perspective and who advocate a demarcation and separation of creative writing from all other writing forms. This accords with one of the primary student research findings that creative writing should be demarcated and be taught as a practice in and of itself.

In contrast to Kevin Brophy's call for creative writing to be "integrated with departments and courses focusing on literature and cultural studies" (qtd in Uppal, 2007: 48), Peter

Elbow argues that this type of forced integration leads to a "conflict between the role of writer and academic" with the creative texts of student writers being judged alongside their literary and cultural texts, with the result that "when students write to teachers they have to write 'up' to an audience with greater knowledge and authority [and] the basic subtext in a piece of student writing is likely to be, 'Is this okay?'" (1995: 81).

Peter Elbow warns that "we are transforming the process of 'writing' into the process of 'being tested'" and that as a result students "are behaving as test-takers rather than writers." Instead of writing from a reactive, subordinate position of "Is this okay? Will you accept this?" Elbow recommends that the student writer be allowed to approach her writing with a more proactive and authoritative attitude: "Listen to me, I have something to tell you" (1995: 82).

A good example of this institutional need to integrate creative writing with more traditional academic writing forms in order to legitimise it is the requirement for supplementary and explanatory documents to the fictional text to explain the creative text's development, content, and existence.

In her article, "Writing in the Dark: Exercising the Exegesis," Gaylene Perry highlights Jeanette Winterson's perplexity and puzzlement at having to compile and provide a secondary text explaining and seemingly ratifying her primary, fictional text:

> It is a strange time; the writer is expected to be able to explain his or her work as though it were a perplexing machine supplied without an instruction manual. The question 'What is your book about?' has always puzzled me. It is about itself and if I could condense it into other words I should not have taken such care to choose the words I did (1998).

Peter Elbow's call to writing teachers to make their student writers "feel like writers, and [to] avoid setting things up to make them feel like academics" (1995: 82) also supports the findings of the student based research.

(b) Introduce Student Writers to a Readership and Develop their Sense of Audience

One of the most effective ways to shift student writers from a predominantly academic perspective of writing for an authority figure and having to ask, "Is this okay? Will you accept this?" (Elbow, 1995: 82) is to develop and instil in the creative writing classroom the notion of a more public readership, which affords the student writer the freedom and confidence to say "Listen to me, I have something to tell you" (Elbow, 1995: 82).

On the one hand, one of the primary attractions of participating in a creative writing course is that students are given access to a dedicated and focused readership, which provides valuable feedback for all workshop participants. The workshop has been described as a "sacred space ... where they will find readers for the first time ... readers who care as much about the written word as they do" (Vanderslice, 2006: 151).

On the other hand, however, creative writing assessment processes have tended to remain restrictively narrow in nature with the writing teacher playing the role of sole arbiter and final judge and awarder of grades and ultimately the student's academic writing qualification. As a result there tends to be less focus on developing the student writers' sense of a 'public' readership, or as Katie Wood Ray puts it, teaching the student writers "a sense of audience ... an understanding of how to prepare writing to go into the world" (2001: 58), but a concerted focus on writing to the specifications of the writing teacher in order to optimise grades and perform academically. This academic, teacher-as-reader-and-grader pedagogy leaves little room for the development of 'public' reader awareness and notions of the quality components and levels expected and insisted upon by a more general reading audience.

(c) Explore and Expose Student Writers to Concepts of Writing Quality

In 1994 in her essay, "Teaching Creative Writing: If the Shoe Fits," Katharine Haake identified as one of the primary deficiencies of the institutional teaching of creative writing the fact that, while the academic system requires the texts of creative writing students to be assessed and graded according to internal measurement criteria, the students are not exposed to the concepts of quality against which to measure their own writing:

> We judge their success or failure by how good their work is, without adequately defining what is 'good.' We proceed as if these are indeed natural concepts, without tracing how and why they came into our culture (1994: 88).

The concept of quality and the process of identifying and explaining writing quality has always been and will remain problematical, but it has in recent years become an even more controversial and complex issue due to the increasing migration of readers towards alternate entertainment media. Now traditional notions of writing quality need to compete against a declining and less literately curious and fastidious reader base, which insists on instant gratification.

(d) Establish and Celebrate Creativity in the Teaching of Creative Writing

Based on its complexity, its subjectivity, its intangibility and hence its perceived unteachability the concept of creativity in the teaching of creative writing has remained detached from the practice of writing creatively. There has accordingly been little debate at both institutional and classroom levels about the concept of creativity.

In one of the rare academically based documented examinations of and references to creativity in the writing classroom, Linda Sarbo and Joseph Moxley in their essay, "Creativity Research and Classroom Practice," suggest that the creativity research findings of cognitive psychologist, Teresa Amabile, may be of value to the development of creative writing pedagogy.

Firstly, Amabile concludes that creative behaviour includes "*Domain-relevant skills*," which encompass a "mastery of knowledge about a particular area, the skills necessary to produce in that area, and 'talent' for that particular area" (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139). Domain relevant skills point to the importance of domain knowledge and expertise as a core feature of students establishing a personal quality measurement mechanism against which to position their own texts, as well as a benchmark for notions of originality within that domain.

Secondly, Amabile describes the "*Creativity-relevant skills*," (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139) which relate to the experiences and processes of the writer and the primary writer characteristics of desire, persistence and determination. She describes these skills specifically as "underlying potentially creative responses" (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139).

> They include cognitive skills such as trying new problem-solving strategies, keeping response options open, and breaking out of routine performance patterns, conducive work styles such as the ability to concentrate for long periods of time and to abandon fruitless strategies; and personality factors such as self-discipline, the ability to delay gratification, perseverance, and the absence of conformity (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139).

Thirdly, Amabile identifies "task motivation" (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139) as having "both intrinsic and extrinsic elements" (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139).

> Attitudes toward the task are determined intrinsically by assessing the degree to which the task matches one's own interests. On the other hand, one's motivations for undertaking the task are largely determined by external social/ environmental factors which constitute the 'objective reasons' for undertaking a particular task (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 139-40).

Amabile's findings emphasise and corroborate the student based research findings that the student's writing freedom is of primary importance to the student's creative writing practice and hence in the teaching and learning of that practice. Amabile demonstrates "that choice in whether or how to engage in a particular problem increases creativity and that expressed interest in an activity is positively related to creative performance" (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 140). She also verifies the finding identified by Gregory Light in his study that "creative writers write best when they engage in writing for its own sake" (qtd in Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 140).

Creativity research findings, such as those of Amabile, along with those of a number of other creativity experts, have generated minimal interest amongst the traditional creative writing authorities. The findings of Teresa Amabile, as described here, would seem to have

more resonance with creative writing as an arts based field of study, than with creative writing as an English Studies and literature based practice and activity.

Over the years there have been tentative suggestions that writing teachers have "the obligation ... to serve ... students ... and to continually invent and re-invent the workshop with them in mind" (Vanderslice, 2006: 156); that students should be allowed "to develop their writing ability, to learn more about who they are and what they can do, to test the limits of their imagination" (Moxley, 1989: xii); and to reduce the overwhelming focus on craft in favour of teaching "the intransitive act that is writing itself" (Haake, 2007: 16). Despite this, students continue to experience the teaching and learning of creative writing in the shape and form described by Priscila Uppal in her essay, "Both Sides of the Desk: Experiencing Creative Writing Lore as a Student and as a Professor:"

> Too often my experience as an undergraduate student was structurally and contextually constrained in the classroom rather than transformed. In a strictly workshop-based model of creative writing, we wrote, photocopied, and discussed. Rarely were we introduced to theories of creativity and literature, historical or political artistic movements, or competing traditions. The model is troublesome because it encourages faulty impressions of art and the artistic process. Such a model does not introduce or expose the student to the ways in which art has been conceived, debated, judged, or experienced over time. Neither does it offer students adequate writing models or an understanding of the various stages through which works of art pass before being introduced to an audience (2007: 48).

There has always been a conflict between the motives of the artistic and the academic. George Kalamaras refers to this conflict as a "blurring [of] discourses in [the] creative writing class" and he confirms, given the personal, freedom focused writing motives of creative writing students, that "[s]tudents ... upon entering the course (and sometimes throughout) often offer strong resistance to this model of teaching that is at once 'creative,' yet seriously academic and cultural" (1999: 82).

4. Teach Students as Writers

(a) Immerse Student Writers in the Writing Life

The call by some writing teachers and a number of authors for the immersion of students in the writing life supports three of the five key findings of the student focused research studies, namely, the preservation of the students' sense of writing freedom, the demarcation and separation of creative writing instruction from other forms of academic writing and the development and teaching of creative writing as a practice in and of itself. Creating a teaching environment and teaching principles and processes, which treat students like potential writers and not simply like all the other students of the academy, encompasses notions of writing freedom, including the power of authorship; writing identity; the role and responsibilities of a writer as artist; the realities of the writing life and the motivational and attitudinal characteristics required by writers to achieve writing 'success.'

(b) Teach Students as Writers and Not as Academics

Peter Elbow maintains that successful creative writing pedagogy is embedded in enabling and sustaining the students' "pleasure or power of authorship" and their "feeling the power of their own sensibilities" (qtd in Bartholomae, 1995: 69). He emphasises that "students will not be authors … [u]nless we produce this effect in our classroom" (qtd in Bartholomae, 1995: 69). The students' need for writing freedom and the significant role it plays in the teaching and learning of creative writing is mostly disregarded by many academically based creative writing authorities. Joe Amato and Kassia Fleisher claim that the student's identity as author is "an issue we have glossed all along" and that it is "most pertinent," because it is how the students will "come to understand themselves as authors, as human beings, as social beings" (1989). Katharine Haake admits that writing teachers have been guilty of "[assuming] that our students want to be writers without distinguishing between writing itself and the life of a writer …" (Haake, 2000: 54)

Focusing on the students as writers may be as simple as "putting the [creative writing] workshop in service to the student and the speech communities they represent," instead of

treating creative writing as a field, which is designed to support, bolster and extend the broader discipline of English and its related fields of study. Teach writing students as writers and artists rather than like the general mass of students of the academic institution. Michelle Cross calls on

> those who study creative writing pedagogy … to begin looking beyond their frequent compare-and-contrasts with literary and composition/rhetoric pedagogics, to ask what pedagogical strategies have been employed in other areas of the fine arts — 'a more thorough consideration of the artist in the university context, where … studio arts curricula have diverged so neatly from creative writing tenets' (Amato and Fleisher qtd by Cross, 2007: 74).

Those authorities, who adopt this approach, endorse Gregory Light's research findings that student creative writing conceptions and the attraction of undergoing creative writing instruction are rooted in the student writers' perception of the "freedom and emotional engagement … grounded in the personal and in the power that comes with 'ownership' of the personal" (1995: 8), which the practice of creative writing offers them. The freedom provided by this emotionally charged, personal ownership of the writing is diametrically opposed to the "external world of discursive academic or journalistic disciplines" (1995: 8). Peter Elbow admits that in his writing teaching processes he attempts to demarcate and separate creative writing from other academic writing forms and processes: "… I do what I can to make them feel like writers, and avoid setting things up to make them feel like academics" (1995: 82).

(c) Expose Students to Writer Experiences and Processes

Some authorities maintain that it is important in the teaching of student writers to make students aware of and to distinguish between the glamorised, public perceptions of the writing life and the realities of committing oneself to the life of a writer and the drudgery, discipline and sacrifice, which form a part of a successful writing practice. Stephanie Vanderslice contends that students will "benefit from continual reference to an emphasis on the true realities of the writing life as opposed to the Romantic myths they have been exposed to throughout their lives …" (2006: 151)

It is clear that for these authorities the teaching and learning of creative writing is an experiential process, as opposed to a knowledge transfer pedagogy, and that students should therefore "be allowed to experience fully the processes that professional writers experience every hour of their writing lives" (Bishop, 1990: 40). Creative writing teachers should highlight and explore the "disparity students feel between the role of student to which they have been accustomed and the role of creative writer" (Leahy, 2007: 57). The "responsibilities of the writing life" (Vanderslice, 2006: 151) and "roles of creative writer" (Leahy, 2007: 57) have been described as including being a "literary reader" (Vanderslice, 2006: 151), "a citizen, and critical thinker" (Leahy, 2007: 57).

Katie Wood Ray contends that in the teaching of creative writing it is all-important for students to be made aware of the basic processes employed by writers in their writing practice, namely to "learn the habits of mind that writers use to fill their lives with important writing" by "reading the world like writers, collecting ideas with variety, volume, and thoughtfulness" (2001: 35).

(d) Expose Students to the Key Characteristics of a Writer – Desire, Stubbornness and Persistence

Experienced creative writing teaching authorities, such as Janet Burroway, have discovered that it is not always the most talented students that become successful writers and that it is almost impossible to predict which students will become successful writers of quality. Most often those students, who have the highest levels of passion, desire and determination, will win through:

> At the end of two or three years in the Writing Programme, some who arrived with talent will not have moved on, while some who showed nothing but dedication and cliché will become writers. Some will have acquired the dedication. Some will make an evolutionary leap. If my students have taught me one thing in 20 years of teaching writing, it is that though I can assess their achievement, I cannot predict it (1992: 62).

Burroway lists, what for her, constitutes the characteristic by-products of the desire to write, namely, "ferocity, arrogance, self-doubt, determination, dull despair," and notes that the

student's desire to write, "bears no relation whatever to ability" (1992: 62). This desire has also been described as a "love of writing" (Williams 1983: 215), which is so strong and pervasive that it requires the writer to display extraordinary levels of "determination" (Dillard, 1994: 84), "stubbornness" (Gardner, 1983: 45) "stamina and resolution" (EB White qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 13).

Successful authors, who are also experienced creative writing teachers, such as Nicolas Delbanco, R.H.W Dillard and John Irving, agree that the most important underlying characteristic of being a writer is persistence, even more so than what could be construed to be writing talent. Delbanco postulates his view that "the *real* writer could not be discouraged" (1994: 67) and John Irving identifies the source of this stubbornness as being "'a fire in the belly' … you have to be *passionate* about something … something or someone must be an *obsession*" (1994: 148). Dillard suggests that a passionate and obsessive mindset forms the core of an enduring and substantial writing practice:

> I've had people who have written like angels and then stopped … I've had other people who just plodded along and then suddenly did very well. They had that determination and they pushed right through (1994: 84).

Creative writing "is not about knowing, but making …" it is about creating by using the medium of language and it requires the students as artists to "see far beyond where they are when they begin" (Haake, 2000: 118). A writer must have a vision or projection of what she wants to achieve with her writing to work towards, because she may find that "nothing is as painful" (Ali Weisel qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 242) and that "writing is a struggle and a risk" (Elbow, 1995: 81). Ali Weisel warns students against taking up the writing life saying that it is much easier not to write:

> I'd … say to a young writer, if you can choose not to write, don't. Nothing is as painful. From the outside, people think it's good; it's easy; it's romantic. Not at all. It's much easier not to write than to write. Except if you are a writer. Then you have no choice (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 242).

What seems to be an ever present and ever growing pressure on the writer is further exacerbated by the writer's need "to measure up" and "to achieve excellence, or as close to excellence as he can get" (EB White qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 13).

In the face of all of these obstacles and pressures, it is important not only to identify and examine these very important and pervasive aspects of the writing life, but also to ensure that creative writing programmes contain teaching processes and exercises which have the capability and capacity of testing and exposing students to their own levels of stamina and resolution. Katie Wood Ray suggests that creative writing teachers instil in their students "a sense of thoughtful, deliberate purpose about their work as writers, and a willingness to linger with those purposes" (2001: 35). She describes how a writing teacher friend undertakes the process of "developing rigor and stamina" amongst the students in her creative writing class:

> She wants the students she teaches to learn, over time, to write a lot, to write a long time, and to carry ideas out through long pieces of writing. She wants her students developing and following through with bigger and bigger plans and projects as writers. To put it simply, she wants to see her students pushing themselves to do harder and harder work as writers (2001: 35).

5. Creative Writing Instruction Should be Encouraging and Nurturing

Even Valerie Miner's insistence that the notion of the "isolated writer in the garret" (qtd in Moxley, 1989: xvii) is a myth and that it be replaced by the more pragmatic "understanding of the role of the writer in the publishing world" (qtd in Moxley, 1989: xvii), cannot eliminate the reality that the practice of writing is a painful, solitary and lonely pursuit requiring discipline and focus. Hence the need for the establishment and maintenance of an encouraging and nurturing environment: "Encouragement is very necessary to a young writer" (Philip Larkin qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 155), because "writing is something that you do, not something that you know … that is an incredibly important understanding for us to have as teachers of writing" (Wood Ray, 2001: 30).

Student writers are particularly sensitive and impressionable and therefore the teaching environment should accommodate their vulnerability:

> For the most part, young talent tends to be fragile and highly insecure. If not treated delicately, with respect, talent can be easily destroyed. While we cannot teach talent, we can nurture it and provide an atmosphere to help it grow and flourish. We do this by creating a learning environment that is free [and] safe" (Epps, 2006: 48).

6. Teach Creative Writing as a Lifelong Practice

As Katie Wood Ray points out "Writing is something that you do, not something that you know" (2001: 30) and there is no 'Best By Date,' which provides an indication of when, during her lifetime, a student writer will produce her best work. So within the relatively short time while the student attends the institution, it is important to broaden the scope of the teaching parameters and processes to accommodate the notion that perhaps the teaching of creative writing encompasses not only specific short term goals, but also more holistic long term objectives, which the student writer may only achieve many years after leaving the teaching establishment.

Nicolas Delbanco and Katharine Haake endorse the notion of an author's writing practice being a never-ending pursuit. Delbanco stresses that the "process of being a writer is a lifelong one" (1994: 71) and Haake commits herself to promoting the longevity of her students' writing activities: "Throughout my teaching life I have proceeded with the primary objective of helping students frame the guiding questions that will sustain writing for them throughout their lives" (2007: 22).

X. READERS AND AUDIENCE

A. Introduction

For the purposes of this exploration the word ‘reader’ and its plural ‘readers’ represents the notion of the immediate ‘consumers’ of the text; while the word ‘audience’ is interchangeable with the broader, more collective and distanced notion of ‘readership.’

This examination of Readers and Audience, as key components of creative writing pedagogy, will analyse the tripartite relationship between the reader, the text and the writer. The following aspects of readers and audience will be examined:

1. The range of readers available to the writer and the reader’s participation in the fulfilment of the text as active creator, as meaning-maker, collaborator, interpreter and imaginer.
2. The text as the meeting place of the writer and the reader and the connotations of contractual obligations, joint venture relationships and the contrast in the textual freedom of the writer and reader.
3. The concept of the reader in an academic setting; educational interpretations of the concept of the reader; the teaching implications of audience and the complexities of the layers of readers confronting the student writer in an academic setting.
4. The reader’s reaction to the text as an indication of the reader’s textual criteria, which includes movement and motion; emotional entanglement; detailed description; familiarity and association; newness; originality, surprise and meaning; and plurality and indeterminacy.

As such this examination goes beyond the scope of the traditional creative writing handbooks, which confine their examination to the audience as a target for the writer, audience focused objectives, the manipulation of the audience and specific audience focused techniques.

The full list of the pertinent texts and their authors, which have been consulted in this examination, is contained in the *Literature Review*. The wide range of authorities consulted can be segmented into the following specialist categories:

1. Creative Writing and Composition Teaching Theorists and Practitioners
2. Authors, Poets and Playwrights
3. Literary Critics and Theorists
4. Education Commentators
5. Psychologists

Of all these writing authorities, Peter Elbow is a specialist on the reader and audience, particularly as they effect the writer and her writing process. Elbow's insights, experiences and suggestions provide the foundation for this analysis. Wolfgang Iser is an authority on reader response theory and the reader-text relationship. The recorded experiences and insights of the Authors, Poets and Playwrights, as practising writers, tend to support and substantiate the contentions and statements of the more theoretically oriented authorities.

B. Background

The structure of most universities, their teaching processes and their assessment requirements, tend remove the student from the general reading public. Nigel Krauth's description of the reading procedures and requirements in Australian universities is an example of what creative writing students face and how their fictional work has to be adapted for a specific academic readership in order for them to be academically successful:

> Although the academic novel is required to be 'of publishable quality,' it is written initially for a series of very small readerships — the principal supervisor, the associate supervisor, the supervisory panel, the confirmation process assessors, the pre-submission examining board and so on — each of them gatekeepers set in place before the final examiners (in a way, the 'ultimate' readership) are reached (Krauth, 2008: 14).

Krauth's contention that "[p]leasing academic examiners may not be more difficult than pleasing the world" (Krauth, 2008: 14) is another example of the academic refusal to consider creative writing to be vastly different to all other forms of writing. 'Difficulty' is not the issue, the issue is whether a text, written for a small specialist, academically trained and focused audience for the purpose of gaining successful university accreditation, can at the same time be attractive to an audience outside the academic enclave.

While not subject to the bureaucratic assessment processes of Australian universities, in the United States the workshop-based processes and structures also restrict the scope of the readers of creative writing students. Dianne Donnelly refers to Patrick Bizzaro's contention that the "[t]eacher is the final authority, as exemplary reader," who has historically appropriated … students' writings …" (Donnelly, 2012c: 34). Tim Mayers confirms this student-reader isolation arguing that "writing workshops create an audience problem" (Mayers, 2010: 97) because "[as] much as I [as teacher] might emphasise audience in … commentary and … discussions with students, the students themselves tended (consciously and unconsciously) to think of me as the audience and try to figure out what I wanted to see …" (Mayers, 2010: 100).

There will always be a "gulf of purpose between academics and general readers" (Saje, 2004), which has severe repercussions for student writers, who in an isolated and regulated academic environment may not learn "how to write for a reader instead of other writers" (Vanderslice, 2010: 59). Mike Harris warns that the

> lack of an audience outside the creative writing academy will encourage private languages, the obscurity which will raise theoretical walls against the rest of the reading and writing world, and inside which strange ideologies and intellectually self-indulgent, self-referential forms … will thrive (2006).

It would seem that 'readers theory' has been and continues to be ignored as a significant component of the teaching of creative writing. Alicita Rodriguez claims that creative writing programmes do "not include a section on audience" and that "young writers often have no clear audience in mind …" (2008: 175). Mayers supports Rodriguez's contention by confirming that students "report that they have never before been asked to think of audience …" (2010: 101) and suggesting that an emphasis on audience "is not only helpful but … long overdue" (2010: 101). He also recommends that "at the heart of the workshop" should be the fundamental teaching of "writers to consider real or potential audiences …" (qtd in Vanderslice, 2010: 91)

Philip Edmonds goes one step further, in practical terms, and suggests a means to overcome and alleviate the specialised and isolated academic reader-focused burden placed on creative writing students:

> … we … can be involved in interrogating a third space containing general readers, rather than just other writing students, or people trained in particular university discourses. Ultimately that is something that has to happen for any author to move from the cloistered environment of mentorship into any notion of readership (2007).

Edmonds suggestion of the introduction of a general readership into the teaching of creative writing is one of the valuable findings of this analysis of the reader theory discourse. As a result the assessment process designed for and contained in the two creative writing programmes, which form the ultimate objective of this thesis, is based on the responses to student texts by an anonymous range of individual readers, whose composition provides a more general and accurate readership against which student texts may be judged and graded.

In this alternative creative writing assessment process, the tendency of institutionalised creative writing teaching to 'shrink the world to the size of a campus' (Harris, 2009) will be reversed with the students' writing being "directed towards the world not just universities" (Harris, 2009).

C. The Reader, the Text, and the Writing Process

1. The Reader

a. The Concept of Reader in an Academic Setting

As the *Background* to this chapter has identified, a prospective writer being taught to write at a university faces a far more complex and confusing myriad of audiences and readers than a prospective author sitting in her room writing her first novel for submission to a literary agent, publisher or for on-line publication.

The direct line between the student writer and an end reader is broken by multiple readers of varying importance placing various pressures on the student writer to first successfully complete a creative writing course before exposure to the ultimate audience can even be contemplated. Student writers need to adjust their texts to successfully (academically)

complete their creative writing programmes to become qualified as writers and while doing so may write texts of satisfactory quality, form and content for their intermediate academic readers. These same texts may, however, have little appeal for more general audiences. Hence the importance of the academically based literary journals, which become the primary textual outlet for student writers, who have come to know and have become comfortable with writing specifically for academically based readers and audiences.

The power relationships inherent in academia, literary specialisations and the idiosyncrasies and subjective nature of the teacher, as mentor, marker and reader has had a profound effect on the creative freedom of students to deliver creative texts, which will capture the imagination of ordinary readers.

b. Educational Interpretations of the Concept of the Reader

Teaching creative writing in an academic environment restricts the levels of latitude afforded. Everything is measured in terms of correctness or incorrectness. Teachers, specifically literature based ones, often adopt interpretations their "professors approved as 'right'" and "there seemed to be an 'ideal reading' against which [students are] judged." (Phyllis Tashlick, 1987: 171)

As creative writing teaching has become assimilated by academic institutions, it has become a professional activity with the pleasurable aspects of writing and writing freedom, with the writer as artist, being replaced by writing as a profession and the writer's duties as a professional. [See Frank O'Connor (qtd in Cowley, 1957: 155)]

In the United States in those academic institutions in which student writers create and develop their texts in accordance with the criteria and specifications of specialist academic audiences and become published in academically located and funded literary magazines and journals, those students are not writing to move, delight and instruct readers (Gioia, 2003), but to secure publication credits for career progression and teaching tenure.

This closed writing and reading loop is based on the "professional language of academe" (Gioia, 2003) and it tends to avoid and alienate 'ordinary' audiences. So

entrenched has this academic isolation of the student writer from the ordinary reader become that Mark McGurl in his book, *The Program Era*, maintains that in the United States, the American academic world has displaced the real world as the ultimate writing and reading universe:

> ... university creative-writing programs don't isolate writers from the world. On the contrary, university creative-writing courses situate writers in the world that *most of their readers inhabit* — the world of mass higher education and the white-collar workplace. Sticking writers in a garret would isolate them. Putting them in the ivory tower puts them in touch with real life (qtd in Menand, 2009). [my italics]

c. <u>The Teaching Implications of Audience</u>

There is an 'hierarchy' of categories of readers that exists within academic institutions.

(i) The Creative Writing Teacher as Reader

The teacher, as a student writer's primary reader, has the most powerful influence on the student writer and yet little is written about this significant relationship and its effects on the student writer and her creative output. Peter Elbow and Patrick Bizzaro are two writing theorists and teachers, who have examined the role of the teacher as a reader.

Elbow describes a writing teacher as a 'remote' reader, who is at the same time a "teacher, critic, assessor, or editor ... always giving feedback," but rarely considering "what it means to *be an audience* ... 'replying'" (1994: 272) to student texts. The writing teacher is an "assessment machine" (Elbow, 1994: 272), who in an academic environment has the ultimate power as a "reader and grader ... to decide what the student text means" (Elbow, 1995: 76).

In his essay, "Reading as a Writer, or What Happens When the Lights Go On," Patrick Bizzaro reveals the extent to which the authority and stature of the writing teacher affects the behaviour and learning outcomes of students, when he describes an assignment he uses in "an effort to get students past their loyalty to the teacher as authority" (1998: 157).

Bizzaro maintains that "the authoritarian teacher ignores entirely the *interpretant* by enforcing a narrow perspective on subject matter appropriate to [writing]" (1998: 160) and identifies the problem as being

> ... that teachers are more interested in making certain their students produce poems, stories and essays that satisfy the teacher's expectations than in enabling students to improve as writers in some lasting way, even at the expense of having students write works the teacher might deem ineffective ... if the *interpretant*, the idea that mediates the text and the reader's interpretation of the text, is ignored, little learning will take place (1998: 162).

While there is a general consensus that the workshop provides student writers with a "sacred space ... where they will find readers for the first time ... who care ... about the written word" (Vanderslice, 2006: 151), the quality and value of the responses provided by a student's peers and fellow workshop attendees are not rated very highly in academic terms. The evaluations and assessments of peer texts in workshop settings have been described as "elementary reader responses ... and ... a series of unexamined first-level reader responses" (Tassoni, 1998: 22). While access to peer level readers is highly significant to the motivation and processes of student writers at an individual and personal level, this peer based audience plays a secondary role in the final shape of students texts, with the teacher as a primary arbiter, editor and grader. [See also Don Zancanella (1988: 243)]

(ii) Public Readers

Outside the creative writing classroom the dilemmas inherent in the complexities of audiences and readership await all student writers. Writers are categorised by the readers and audiences, who are attracted to and read their work. At the upper end — or lower end, depending on one's perspective and intellectual location — are, what Robert Stone calls, the financially successful "best-seller writers ... almost industrial figures ... hacks" (qtd in Plimpton, 1988:361), who write for the mass market and are measured against the number of books they have sold.

At the other end of the scale are the "serious" writers, who are writing "marginal fiction ... of ... real quality" (1988:361), but whose work is receiving less and less published exposure,

because their work is not “immediately bankable” (1988:361). Between these two extremes have evolved the writers, who are products of the “academic writing programs ... writers who write primarily for other writers” (1988:361).

According to Robert Stone, this increasingly financially focused publisher, writer and audience conglomeration has over recent years created a highly risk averse publishing universe, which has led to a “ kind of reduced, duller national literature” (1988:361), not only in the United States, but in most English-speaking countries.

(iii) Academic Peer, Teacher and Writer Readership

Chris Altacruise in his *Lingua Franca* article, “Stepford Writers: Undercover Inside the MFA Creativity Boot Camp,” contends that, in his experience, in the American MFA-based creative writing programmes “the public world vanishes,” giving way to a

> new tradition of insularity [in which] no workshop students ever mention the public voice, the notion that a writer may have a real audience, or the sense that they are working out of a tradition that predates Salinger (1990: 30).

Frederick Busch’s pessimistic summation of the expectant shapes of the lives of the majority of academically trained creative writers is overly broad, yet probably accurate in the bleak picture it paints of the failed writing futures awaiting many young writers. In his essay in *American Literary History*, Busch also provides a glimpse of the possible paths and options that await academically trained and based writers.

> Our system of high school and college creative writing courses, our college creative writing majors, our graduate school programs specializing in the writing of poetry, prose fiction, and non-fictional prose ... will continue to turn out writers. The best of them will have learned about their craft and will be in an accelerated apprenticeship; the worst, full of passionate intensity, will stop sending out their uninteresting stories and dull poems only when life ... tells them there is no hope. Where will these people publish? Where writers always have — in the literary quarterlies ... occasionally in the slick magazines (*New York, Harper’s, Atlantic*) ... Many writers turn to the Internet, posting their stories in the air, hoping to find an audience; they find net surfers, and I don’t

know if they are the same as readers (1999: 227).

(iv) The Reader as Writer's Companion, Collaborator and Co-Creator

Instead of focusing specifically on institutional readers and generally on broad globular categories of readers, students may receive greater benefit by becoming more personally acquainted with their readers, their needs and expectations and fulfilling those expectations. This aspect is dealt with below in the section under *Reader Participation*.

(d) A Variety of Audiences

There are a variety of perspectives relating to the audiences that authors need to focus on in the creation and releasing of their texts. These perspectives differ between academics, theorists and experienced writers. George McFadden in his essay, "Literature: A Many-Sided Process," in *What is Literature?* provides a useful explanation of the concept of the reader from an academic perspective:

> First there is the 'reading public.' It's normal tendency is to read as consumers, that is, to impose its fantasies or expectations upon a work without full and accurate response to what the work determines or allows. Second are the academic scholars or critics, professionally aware of the existence of innumerable works, but as a group displaying marked shifts of concentrated interest ... the academics antagonise the third group, the writers, because works perceived as living by the academics are dead to the writers, and works enthusiastically concretized by the writers are not yet adequately read by the academics … (1978: 55)

The academic discourse surrounding notions of audience and readership are riddled with factional words such as elitism, high culture and popular culture (Murphy, 1999: 22). [See also Ben Marcus (2005: 40)]

The writing process theorist, Peter Elbow, and reader response specialist, Wolfgang Iser, provide a valuable, positive, non-hierarchical and apolitical glimpse of readers from an internalised writer and reader focal point. Iser supports Sartre's contention that "texts always take place on the level of their readers' abilities" (1978: 207) and Elbow offers a

glimpse of the writer's complicated readership dilemmas from a writer-reader-text perspective:

> There are many entities called audience: (a) the actual readers to whom the text will be given; (b) the writer's conception of those readers — which may be mistaken; (c) the audience that the text implies — which may be different still; (d) the discourse community or even genre addressed or implied by the text; (e) ghost or phantom 'readers in the head' that the writer may unconsciously address or try to please (1994: 258).

The insights of authorities such as Elbow and Iser are more closely associated with the pragmatic methods, processes and principles adopted and used by experienced authors in addressing questions of and problems surrounding readership, than with the theories of the traditional craft focused authorities on the subject. Authors have developed personalised mechanisms to address readership dilemmas and to overcome their concerns regarding their own position and that of their texts in relation to the writing world and the audience. [See Frederick Busch (1999: 228)]

Authors agree that the pinnacle of writing achievement is to appeal to audiences at all levels (Anthony Burgess qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 327), to create texts that would be "equally stirring to a bus driver and an English professor" (Turow, 2001: 232). Some authors attempt to simplify potentially problematical notions of readership by embracing the constant view of writing as simply a process of telling stories, which appealed to "Neanderthal man" (Turow, 2001: 232) and other "primitive audience[s] ... of shockheads" (Kermode, 1985: 122) and continue to engage audiences in the modern day.

John Steinbeck warns against the generalisation of audience when one writes, because "the nameless, faceless audience will scare you to death and ... it doesn't exist" (qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 185). He recommends writing to an audience of one, a real or imagined person. Other authors suggest that most writers write for themselves and that the writer's "primary audience is a mirror" (Anthony Burgess qtr in Plimpton, 1976: 327). [See also John Steinbeck (qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 186)]

American authors, Jim Harrison and John Updike, characterise their readership and

audience in geographic terms with Harrison identifying the region "west of the Mississippi [and] also the South" (1999: 74) and Updike aiming his writing "not toward New York, but toward a vague spot a little to the east of Kansas" (qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 431). In contrast, William Gass displays a less pragmatic, more philosophical approach in his belief that "if a book is good the right eyes will eventually arrive" (1999: 256).

The methods, techniques and processes adopted by experienced, published writers in addressing their audience and readership concerns tend to be relatively uncomplicated when compared to the audience layers, which confront student writers in academic environments. Stephanie Vanderslice summarises the multi-tiered, writer-student-peer-teacher-master world of the creative writing workshop:

> ... most of us recognise these various definitions of the writing workshop — a place where a 'master writer or mentor discusses the drafts of student writing in near finished state;' fellow classmates 'respond orally and often in writing, suggesting changes, offering interpretations and responses to the piece;' a place where ... a manuscript is put into a 'posture of dignity, demanding' the kind of critical attention that will 'help it to be what it wants to be' (2006: 147).

Vanderslice's composite definition of the creative writing workshop supports Chris Altacruise's earlier contention that in the workshop "the public world vanishes" (1990: 30) and is replaced by the academic world of the writing workshop, with its teacher and the participating attendees. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that many contemporary writers, who are products of the creative writing education assembly line, end up continuing to appeal to and writing for this specific audience of poets, professors and students. [See Rachel Blau DuPlessis (1999: 248), Rolando Hinojosa-Smith (1999: 284) and John Irving (qtd in Plimpton, 1988: 431)]

The remoteness of the writers and of the writing coming out of academic environments may lead to a 'reader-entitled' attitude when releasing texts for the consumption of a more general readership: "there is no shortage of wonderful writers ... what we lack is a dependable mass of readers" (Kurt Vonnegut qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 238); "there are as many good writers as there ever were ... the problem is that there are so few good readers" (Fry, 2003: 50-1).

Ordinary readers are described as "the 'material' reader who exists in the world beyond the workshop" (Dawson, 2005: 73); "the ordinary, intelligent non-professional ... expecting an illusion of life" (Dawson, 2005: 93) and "readers of restricted competence" (Kermode, 1983: 73).

Compare the contrasting mindset of poet Philip Larkin in his attitude towards his readers: "You write for everybody. Or anybody who will listen" (qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 154). John Gardner said he wanted everyone to love his books (qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 238), while John Barth admits to a "sneaking wish [to] have it both ways, as Charles Dickens did ... to write novels that are both shatteringly beautiful and at the same time popular ... of stunning literary quality and democratic of access" (qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 238-9). [See also Raymond Carver (qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 317)]

(e) Reader Participation

(i) Background

The recognition of the theory of reader participation is not always an accepted, regular component of traditional, craft focused creative writing pedagogy.

In 1984 Frank Kermode remarked that it is "surely extraordinary" that "the contract between the 'I' that undertakes and the 'you' that reads [and] what it entails [has] eluded our attention for so long" (1983: 123). Kermode explains how important it has become to study the writer reader relationship, but especially the role of the reader as a textual participant:

> That all readers need an ability to sense in the manifest that which is latent ... is a fact that has come only recently to exercise those who speculate about narrative. It is now possible to say, quite seriously, that we need not histories of literature but histories of reading; a little while ago the observation would have seemed inane. The decisive role of the interpreter is now seen to be worth study (1983: 123).

In 1994 in his essay in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and*

Pedagogy, Garber declared that there had been a "shift in focus from the text as autonomous object to text as a construction of the reader" (10) and he proceeded to award the reader full status as an "active participant" (10) in textual formation, [See also Phyllis Tashlick (1987: 171)] when as long ago as in 1957 Frank O'Connor had already contended that "the reader is part of the story" (qtd in Cowley, 1957: 162).

The importance of the reader's role in textual formation and completion has also been accepted and confirmed by literary critics such as Terry Eagleton, who recognises the active role readers play and ponders "how much a reader brings to the literary work, and how much the work provides itself" (2003: 91). Eagleton accepts that writers "are to some extent at the reader's mercy" and that writers have a responsibility to write in such a way that readers have an "uninterrupted engagement with the text" (2003: 91). [See also Terry Eagleton (2003: 54)]

Katie Wood Ray supports Katherine Paterson's contention that the publication of the text amounts to a process of transfer of ownership: "The work now belongs to the creative minds of my readers ... I have no more right to tell readers how they should respond to what I have written than they had to tell me how to write it" (2001: 219) and she follows Paterson's logic by adopting an almost anti-academic, counter-educational principle, which apportions more power to the reader than the teacher or the academic grading and marking regimen:

> Writers don't get grades from teachers ... but from the reader. Readers decide whether the work of writers is worthy of attention, and it is that evaluation that drives our work. It is that evaluation that must be in our minds even as we begin the work. Writers get grades from readers (2001: 219).

An examination of the characteristics of readers, as textual participants, reveals the following:

(ii) The Reader is an Active Creator

The reader of the text is always an active participant, "not a passive witness" (Conroy, 2000: 82), but someone, who pours her energy into the text. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, the writer achieves little, if the reader does not inject her energy into the text: "Nothing is

accomplished if the reader does not put himself up ... does not invent it …" (1950: 30) does not awaken the words and sentences of the text. This notion of the reader awakening the text as a dormant entity supports the active energising, setting in motion and "dynamism" (Iser, 1978: 21) of the reader in relation to the text.

The reader has been described in various ways as the co-creator of the writer's text. The role of the reader has been described by Frank Kermode as that of "co-producer" (1983: 113), "individualised performer" (1983: 73) and "co-writer" (1983: 103); by Jean-Paul Sartre as "inventor" (1950: 30); by Wolfgang Iser as "aesthetic realiser" and "composer" (1978: 221); and by Eugene Garber as "constructor" (1994: 10). [See also Frank Conroy (2000: 82), Terry Eagleton (2003: 96), David Hayman (1882: 177), Wolfgang Iser (1978: 112 & 222) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1950: 32)]

(iii) The Reader Makes Meaning

The reader is the participant in the text, who is ultimately responsible for formulating and capturing the meaning within the text.

> Reading (like writing) is an active process of making sense or making meaning. The text is not an autonomous object that in itself contains meaning: it is the reader, actively engaged in the reading process, who creates it (Tashlick, 1987: 171).

The reader's creation of this textual meaning requires her to "unconsciously supply information which is needed to make sense" (Eagleton, 2003: 91) of the text in what Wolfgang Iser calls a 'performance of meaning' (1978: 27).

(iv) The Reader Collaborates and Interprets

Readers do not merely listen to what the text has to say, but actively collaborate and interpret the text and in effect create or make the text (Kermode, 1983: 129). [See also Margaret Boden (1990: 178) and Graeme Harper (2006: 40)]

(v) The Reader Imagines

The most important faculty in the reader's creation of the meaning of the text is widely agreed as being her imagination, without which "absolutely nothing will happen" (Conroy, 2000: 82). The activation of the reader's imagining faculties is more complex than just flicking a switch, because in order to "create images and verbal transformations," readers "generate meaning ... by constructing relations between their knowledge, their memories of experience, and the written sentence, paragraphs and passages" (Marcelle Freiman, 2005).

The actualisation of the text in fact takes place as a result of the imagination of the *writer* in her creation of the text and the imagination of the *reader*, who re-creates or co-creates the 'experience' of the text. The text is the place where the imaginations of the writer and her readers meet. This active "imaginative participation" by the reader has contributed to the view that the writing/reading process and the writer/reader relationship is "the most democratic of the arts" (Dybek, 1999: 251). In his essay in *American Literary History* Stuart Dybek contends that the "participatory relationship with a Reader is a great gift bestowed upon writers" (1999: 251).

The extent of the reader's use of her imagination when reading the text influences the degree of the reader's pleasure in co-producing that text (Bloom, 2004: 300). [See also Katharine Haake (2000: 273), Frank Kermode (1975: 114) and Eudora Welty (1978: 106)] It is the absences, the gaps and the indeterminacy of the text which elicits, engages and ensures that the reader's imagination will emerge to fill the spaces and interpret the textual pluralities. Wolfgang Iser argues that

> ... no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the whole picture before his reader's eyes. If he does he will quickly lose his reader, for it is only by activating the reader's imagination that the author can hope to involve him and so realise the intentions of his text (qtd in Bloom, 2004: 301).

It is the unwritten parts of the text that stimulate the reader's creative participation to "supply what is not there" (Wolfgang Iser qtd in Bloom, 2004: 301).

Authorities refer to the "glories in a gap" (Kermode, 1975: 130), the "gap between text and

meaning, in which the reader operates" (Kermode, 1975: 136) and which is the source of the reader's enjoyment, as it is the spur for her own creative and productive reading practice (Iser, 1978: 108). [See also Katherine Coles (2006: 13), Frank Kermode (1975: 135) and Wolfgang Iser (1978: 108)]

Besides the capturing of the reader's imagination in the creation of the text, if the text is to be a memorable one for the reader, [See Maia Wojciechawska (1996: 5-7) and Wolfgang Iser (1989: 1222)] it must also encompass certain levels of emotional experience, which affect the reader "in his heart and mind" (Morton and Zavarzadeh, 1988-9: 164). [See also Thomas Uzzell (1935: 16)]

(f) The Reader's Textual Criteria

Extrapolated from the characteristics above, it would appear that the criteria required by readers, if their optimal enjoyment with the text is going to be realised, include the following:

(i) The Text Should Capture and Maintain the Reader's Attention

Playwrights and literary critics alike highlight the basic requirement that the writer must not bore her audience (Tennessee Williams in Plimpton, 1984: 118) and that readers will not find "comfort in fiction in which nothing significant happens [and is] a kind of literary tranquilizer" (Aldridge, 1992: 77). The writer's work must at the very least be interesting to the reader (Lodge, 1996: 176) [See also John Gardner (1983: 28)] so that the reader finds it rewarding and worthwhile to invest her time in the fulfilment of the text (Smiley, 1994: 218). She should not feel that her "time has been wasted" (Kurt Vonnegut qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 232) and she should willingly follow the author around in the text (Gardner, 1983: 28).

John Irving suggests that to maintain the required levels of interest from the reader, the writer has to provide a "*compelling* reason for the reader to keep reading" (1994: 148-9). Irving devised a demanding, reader profile to ensure that, while writing, he stays focused on giving his reader captivating reasons to keep reading his work:

> I write to a stranger, someone who I imagine is a hyperactive child; much smaller than me, but more restless, and not very disciplined. And they're very busy, they have a much more interesting life than I have, they have much more to do than I have, and my book must simply *seize* their attention and keep it, or I'll lose them ... and they'll never come back to my book because they have so many other, more interesting entertainments all around them in their fascinating lives (1994: 149).

(ii) The Text Should Entangle the Reader

John Gardner describes this successful compulsion of the reader as slipping into a dream (1983: 4); while Samuel Taylor Coleridge spoke famously of eliciting a "'willing suspension of disbelief' on the part of the audience" (qtd in Iser, 1978: 37). Wolfgang Iser develops and extends the traditional capturing of the reader in the text with notions of reader "involvement or entanglement" (1978: 131) to such an extent that the text becomes the "present" to the reader with the reader's "habitual" self receding into the "past" (1978: 131) and the reader "forgetting" herself" (1978: 156) and losing herself in the text. Henry James described this reader experience of becoming someone else as a wonderful "transformation ... of having lived another life for a short while" (qtd in Iser, 1978: 156)

(iii) The Text Should Have Movement and Motion

In slightly broader terms readers require texts to have movement and motion, a sense of some form of progression with a constant thread of tension (1983: 29) and a certain level of suspense so that the reader is curious as to how things are going to develop and end (Irving, 1994: 151).

(iv) The Text Should Capture the Reader Emotionally

Many writers also suggest that the text must capture the reader's emotional interest and attention to be successful. Frank Kermode maintains that writers should not only provide a "horizontal reading," but also explore and reveal the verticals (1983: 107), the emotional depths of their characters. Joseph Conrad describes art as appealing to the reader's

temperament with authors attempting to reach the reader's "secret spring of responsive emotions" (1925: ix). Conrad describes his task as an author as "by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel — it is, before all, to make you *see*" (1925: ix). [See also Jorge Luis Borges (qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 126)]

According to Fred Lewis Pattee "the only lasting fictions are those which have spoken to the reader's heart" (1975: 197). Robert Frost considers the importance of emotion to be a bilateral requirement of successful and memorable writing. The writer as artist must express genuine emotion in the text, if that emotion is to be successfully transferred to the reader: "No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader" (qtd in Barry, 1973: 127). Nietzsche supports Frost's principle, as a reader, proclaiming that "of all writings, I love only that which is written with blood" (qtd in Larson, 1985: 19).

(v) The Text Should be Detailed, New and Original

Readers find large amounts of detail in the text intriguing (Coleridge, 2004: 53) and such detail serves as a mechanism to 'show' readers, rather than 'tell' them the components of the story (Gardner, 1983: 22). The newness and originality of the text also play a role in securing and maintaining the reader's attention and interest. [See Roland Barthes (1976: 40) and Robert Frost (qtd in Barry, 1973: 146)]

(vi) The Text Should Provide the Reader with Familiarity and Association

The requirement of the text containing elements of familiarity and association stands diametrically opposed to the notion of textual originality and enjoying textual surprises as additional reader criteria. Discovering the familiar and associative in the fictional text provides the reader with the "pleasure of conformity" (Kermode, 1983: 130) as the reader can recognise (Robert Frost in Barry, 1973: 146), share (Dawson, 2005: 106) and associate with the experiences portrayed in the text.

(vii) The Text Should Contain Elements of Indeterminacy

Indeterminacy in the text is vital to the reader's active participation through her imagination in the ultimate realisation of the text. What the reader sees should not be all that the text is about (Divakaruni, 2003: 40) so the writer should "not tell too much at once" (Eudora Welty qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 291), because, as Frank Kermode maintains in his book, *The Classic*, it is the reader's "'repair of indeterminacy,' [which] gives rise 'to the generation of meaning'" (1975: 131).

Kermode describes this indeterminacy as consisting of textual gaps "in which the reader's imagination must operate" (1975: 131) as the author transfers the authority to interpret to the reader (1983: 109). Textual indeterminacy also includes a plurality of possible meanings and interpretations, a "multiplicity of alternatives" (Murphy, 1999: 73), affording readers a "spectrum of actualizations" (Iser, 1978: 24). [See also Frank Kermode (1983: 73)]

While writers specifically employing textual indeterminacy techniques in their texts always run the risk of potentially alienating their readers by exceeding the boundaries of indeterminacy by making the gaps too big and the pluralities onerously numerous and making their readers feel inadequate, the rewards would appear to be well worth the risk if one considers the levels of pleasure experienced by readers and the "erotic and perverse delight" (Kermode, 1983: 130) they enjoy when they imaginatively fill those gaps and create the meanings within the text by themselves.

It is the active, creative participation of the reader elicited and enticed by textual indeterminacy, which results in the readers' "private delight" (Kermode, 1983: 130) in reading the text, which in turn establishes the subjective quality of the text, because surely textual quality is measured against the quality of the readers' reading experience, which in turn influences the ultimate measure of textual quality, the memorability of the text as a reading experience.

Importantly, the significance of the reader's creative participation in the fulfilment of the text, influenced by textual indeterminacy, supplements and strengthens similar reader activity and participatory components and techniques of the creative writing process such as

showing and not telling, detailed specificity, imagery and figurative and metaphoric devices. All these textual elements attempt to elicit, coax and influence the reader's own imaginative and creative faculties and responses in the mystical and magical actualisation and experiencing of the text.

(g) The Writer as Reader

It is a common refrain within established creative writing pedagogy that students don't read enough and that in order to become writers they must first become active, consistent readers (Haake, 2007: 17). The reasons given for this need to read includes the cultivation of an awareness of what has preceded the prospective writers within the writing domain. This is a sort of canonistic, historical reason for reading, because it is argued that "you can't write seriously without reading the greats" (Cheuse, 2003: 28) and, according to Anthony Burgess, the author should be aware of "all the other books that have been written" (qtd in Plimpton, 1976: 326) before her book.

At a more pragmatic level, creative writing teaching theorists insist that prospective writers undertake the "necessary preparation" (Shelnutt, 1994: 205) for becoming writers by first becoming serious readers, because "their writing is informed by their reading" (Conroy, 2000: 86). Other authorities tend to narrow the writer-as-reader requirement by institutionalising the practice of reading by insisting that the student reader be a literary reader, as opposed to an ordinary reader.

Very few authorities consider the importance of the student writer reading as an ordinary reader. By being an ordinary reader the student writer gains an awareness of what readers are looking for and enjoy in their reading practices, and student writers can develop a principle or philosophy of *write unto others what you would have written unto you*.

2. The Text

(a) Background - The Writer and Reader Connection

Having examined the reader's interaction with the text, it is necessary to supplement that analysis with an examination of the text as the meeting place of the writer and reader and to determine what can, does and may, or may not, happen in that space and during that time.

The process is explained by William Gass and Terry Eagleton:

> So you hear me read me see me begin — I begin ... don't both of us begin? Yet as your eye sweeps over these lines — not like wind, because not a limb bends or a letter trembles, but rather more simply — as you read do you find me here in your lap like a robe? And even if this were an oration, and we were figures in front of one another, columns perhaps, holding up the same thought, it still would not be the first time I had uttered these sentences (though I might seem to be making them up in the moment of speaking like fresh pies), for I was in another, distant, private, country covered place when I initially constructed them, and then I whispered them above the rattle of my typing (expert and uncaring as the keys); I tried to hear them through the indifferent whirring of their manufacture as if my ears were yours, and held no such noise. My mind was book-bound and mist-mixed. Then no snow had intervened. God knows what or where I am now — now as you read (Gass, 1985: 9).

> [It] is sometimes assume[d] that there is an ideal distance to be established between the reader and the work. But this is an illusion. Reading, viewing, listening involves constant focus-changing as we sometimes swoop in on a stray particular and sometimes pull back to pan the whole. Some readings or viewings approach a work head-on, while others sidle shyly up to it. Some cling to its gradual unfolding as a process in time, while others aim for a snapshot or spatial fix. Some slice into it sideways, while others peer out at it from ground level. There are critics who start off with their noses squashed against the work, soaking up its primitive first impressions, before gradually stepping backwards to encompass its surroundings. None of these approaches is correct. There is no correctness or incorrectness about it (Eagleton, 2003: 93).

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, this notion of the inexactness, malleability and uncertainty of

the process of reading the text is based on the variability in interpretation of the text as language, because "no prose-writer is quite capable of expressing what he wants to say [and] no one can understand the word to its very bottom [from] it's clear and social meaning [to] obscure resonances" with the result that the text cannot be regarded as a simple means of communication for its ultimate shape and meaning is also reliant upon "grace and chance" (1950: 25).

The fictional text is rarely a straightforward means with which to communicate "an empirical object [or] predicative fact," but is always the reader's reaction, to what the reader has produced (Iser, 1978: 128), while reading the text. It is this reaction, which enables the reader to "experience the text as an actual event [to] animate the meaning of the text as a reality" (Iser, 1978: 129). [See also Frank Kermode (1983: 115)]

(b) The Contract in the Text

The meeting of the writer and the reader in the writer's words has been described as necessitating the "acceptance of a contract [that] signifies a willingness to play the ensuing game according to rules" (Kermode, 1983: 115). Some authorities specify that in this contract the writer has an obligation to be "true to the rules of the world he has created" (Patterson, 2005). Jean-Paul Sartre describes the text as a "go-between ... a whole world which the author and the reader have in common" (1950: 52) and which comes into existence through the joint effort of both the writer and the reader:

> ... the operation of writing implies that of reading as its dialectical correlative and these two connected acts necessitate two distinct agents. It is the joint efforts of author and reader which brings upon the scene that concrete and imaginary object which is the work of the mind" (1950: 29-30).

This notion of a contract, clearly defined textual rules and an equality in sharing the creativity and responsibility of bringing the text into being by both the writer and the reader is an idealistic notion, which presupposes an equal writer-reader relationship epitomised by phrases such as "it is writers who celebrate presence and readers absence" (Elbow, 1995: 76); "the convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence" (Iser, 1989: 1219) and "the text [is] the zone where the two arcs of energy [writer's and reader's]

overlap" (Conroy, 2000: 82). [See also Frank Kermode (1983: 127)]

While these objectives of establishing an equal, cooperative and complementary relationship between writers and readers, which is based on joint effort, equal energy participation and following the agreed rules, may form the basis of successful publication of popular and formulaic texts, there will also always be writer based texts written by authors, who have alternative objectives for their textual creation. John Updike emphasises the fact that writers do not always have the reader as their primary focus when creating their texts:

> I think it would be a hypocrisy to pretend that these other people's welfare, or communicating with them, or desire to ennoble or radicalize or terrify or lull them is the primary reason why one writes (1976: 36).

It follows, therefore, that both the writer and reader always have the freedom to operate outside the contractual and general rules of the textual game.

(c) The Writer's Textual Freedom

The writer can write what she pleases even writing simply to please herself or writing for a self-imagined reader, on the subject matter and in the style and form, which is determined by and for herself and her imaginary audience. This unilateral textual creation may limit the author's audience somewhat, but self-satisfaction and simple personal self-expression may be the writer's primary objectives. Roland Barthes provides an interesting example of how an offended reader may react to such a disrespectful, writer-centric text:

> I am offered a text. This text bores me. It might be said to *prattle*. The prattle of the text is merely that form of language which forms by the effect of the simple need of writing ... you address yourself to me that I may read you, but I am nothing to you except this address; in your eyes I am the substitute for nothing, for no figure ... for you I am neither a body nor even an object (and I couldn't care less, I am not the one whose soul demands recognition); but merely a field, a vessel for expansion (1976: 5).

The key word in Barthes' description of the unattractiveness or undesirability of a writer-centric text is "bore," because a writer-centric text can still be appealing or interesting to

read even if it is not aimed specifically at that reader and does not offer the reader the opportunity to fully collaborate or equally partake in generating the meaning of the text.

In contrast, despite complaining bitterly about how 'badly' James Joyce has treated him as a reader, Carl Jung obviously found *Ulysses* intriguing, albeit emotionally infuriating. Joyce was perhaps not simply creating a selfish, author centred text, but introducing readers to new textual options and attempting to break and extend the traditional textual rules. Jung describes *Ulysses* as a text that "turns its back" on him and that is "uncooperative" (1972: 116) signifying an unacceptable break from the equal, joint venture form of traditional writer-reader relationships:

> Yes, I admit I feel I have been made a fool of. The book would not meet me halfway, nothing in it made the least attempt to be agreeable, and that always gives the reader an irritating sense of inferiority ... this infuriating disdain for the assiduous reader ... has aroused my ill will. One should never rub the reader's nose into his own stupidity, but that is just what *Ulysses* does (1972: 116).

(d) <u>The Reader's Textual Freedom</u>

Ultimately, however, it is the reader who has the overriding power in the final creation of the text, because without a reader, the writer's text amounts to little more than a scribbled note or an entry in a diary confined to the darkness of a locked bottom drawer. The writer needs the reader for the text to be realised and fulfilled. According to Jean-Paul Sartre the writer must appeal to "the readers freedom to collaborate in the production of his work" (1950: 32), because

> ... reading is an exercise in generosity, and what the writer requires of the reader is not the application of an abstract freedom but the gift of his whole person with his passions, his prepossessions, his sympathies, his sexual temperament, and his scale of values (1950: 36).

For textual creation to take place there must be a writer reader relationship, which in the reading of the text requires a "pact of ... generosity between author and reader" (1950: 39).

3. The Writing Process

(a) Background - Writer and Reader Focus

The concentrated focus on the reader may be so overwhelming that it causes writers to experience, what Peter Elbow terms, "cognitive overload" (1994: 260) and, what J. Schafer calls impaired fluency (1983: 77). It is vital, therefore, to identify and determine how and when to use this readership knowledge to enhance the writer's writing process and the quality of the text that ensues from it and not to restrict it.

Schafer refers to Linda Flower's research into the writing processes of inexperienced writers (1983: 79), in which Flower's findings established the concept of 'writer-based' and 'reader-based' prose (Elbow and Clarke, 1987:26), as the two opposing states of mind of the writer during her writing process. Flower's research revealed that writers experienced "cognitive overload ... by trying simultaneously to worry about readers and work out new thinking" and that their "natural response [was] to produce a discourse without awareness of readers" (Elbow and Clarke, 1987: 26).

In two essays, "Desert Island Discourse: The Benefits of Ignoring Audience" in 1987 and "Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience," in 1994, and in an article, "Being a Writer vs. Being and Academic: A Conflict in Goals," in 1995, Peter Elbow set about evaluating and extrapolating this concept of writer and reader based prose into a valuable instrument and technique for consideration and use during student writer writing processes.

While at first glance it would appear that a writer based writing process is an individualised, personalised and inwardly-focused activity, Elbow is quick to remind writers that ultimately all writing is part of a broader social process. While writers consider themselves to be "solitary individuals with private selves ... they're just congeries that derive from their discourse community" (1994: 265). The writer may be judging her writing as private, internal work, but it is actually always social in nature.

> What I get from Vygotsky and Bakhtin is the notion that audience is not really out there at all but is in fact 'always already' ... inside, interiorized in the

> conflicting languages of others — parents, former teachers, peers, prospective readers, whomever — that writers have to negotiate to write, and that we do negotiate when we write whether we are aware of it or not. The audience we've got to satisfy in order to feel good about our writing is as much in the past as in the present or future. But we experience it (it's so internalized) as *ourselves* (1994: 268).

David Lodge's description of the extreme complexity of the creative writing process provides the student writer with an awareness of the difficulties she may encounter in her writing efforts to demarcate and separate, and keep separated, her writer based and reader based focus:

> So many factors are involved in the production of a literary text: the writer's life-experience, his genetic inheritance, his historical context, his reading, his responsiveness to language ... even a single sentence in a novel is a complex product of innumerable chains of cause and effect which reach deep into the writer's life and psyche. To distinguish, analyse and retrace them all would be impossible. Even the most sophisticated literary criticism only scratches the surface of the mysterious process of creativity; and so, by the same token, does even the best course in creative writing (1996: 178).

The task for the writer is a daunting, yet crucial one. The writer must split her writing process into two halves, the writer focused half, which excludes, as far as practically possible, all thoughts of or intrusions by an audience and readers, and the reader focused half, which needs to be accommodated in order to ultimately produce texts accepted by readers. The writing process can contain two distinct paradigms, the one is "social communication" and the other "private exploration or solitary play" (Elbow, 1994: 266). The writer has to understand and cope with opposing objectives, to establish the "private dimension of writing: to learn to be *less* aware of audience, [and] to ... enhance the social dimension of writing: to learn to be *more* aware of audience" (Elbow, 1994: 271-2).

Elbow describes the difference between writer based writing and reader based writing as the difference between "writing 'private' words for no one to read [and] writing 'public' words for others to read" (Elbow, 1994: 269).

(b) Writer Based Writing

It is generally accepted that many experienced and inexperienced writers can become hamstrung by excessive focus on audience and that they can, as a result, "produce mediocre pieces *because* they are thinking too much about how their readers will receive their words." The mediocrity of the writing is attributed to its "staged, planned or self-aware" (Elbow, 1994: 261) characteristics.

J. Schafer points out that "many pre-writing techniques are writer-centred because ... excessive concern for audience early in the writing process impairs fluency" (1983: 77). One such technique, free writing, does even more than avoid focus or attention on the audience or reader, it seems to even remove the writer herself as audience, as Peter Elbow explains:

> Freewriting to no one: for the *sake* of self but not *to* the self. The goal is not to communicate but to follow the train of thinking or feeling to see where it leads. In doing this kind of freewriting ... you don't particularly plan to come back and read what you have written. You just write along and the written product falls away to be ignored, while only the 'real product' — any new perceptions, thoughts, or feelings produced in the mind by the freewriting — is saved and looked at again. (It's not that you don't experience your words *at all* but you experience them only as speaker, sender or emitter — not as receiver or audience [1994: 271).

Elbow describes "the ability to *turn off* audience awareness" as a "higher skill" and one that requires "learning, growth, and psychological development" (1994: 264) and in an effort to overcome this audience-obstacle, which inhibits their writing processes, writers have formulated various target readers such as an inviting audience (1994: 269), an implied reader (Bernays and Painter, 1990: 134) and an ideal reader (Iser, 1978: 156), while other authors attempt to ignore readers altogether (Elbow and Clarke, 1987: 26).

Donald Murray admits that his sense of audience is so strong that he has to suppress his consciousness of audience to hear what the text demands (qtd in Elbow and Clarke, 1987: 31). A number of authors, including one playwright and one poet, describe their solution to the problem of audience awareness as simply writing to the "audience of self" (Elbow,

1994: 268). [See William Faulkner (qtd in Cowley, 1957: 116), Rachel Blau DuPlessis (1999: 249), Georges Simenon (qtd in Cowley, 1957: 132), Samuel R. Delany (1999: 351), Tennessee Williams (qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 90) and Philip Larkin (qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 165)]

An extreme outcome of the unrestricted practice of audience avoidance during the writing process is the development of a dislike or "disdain for readers," which can lead to a reciprocally negative reaction from readers (Elbow, 1995: 76).

(c) Reader Based Writing

In contrast to the writers, who visualise alternatives to real audiences, Virginia Woolf describes how she creates her texts with an ever present focus on what effect her words will have on her audience:

> But how does one make people talk about everything in the whole of life, so that one's hair stands on end ... how can one weight and sharpen dialogue till each sentence tears its way like a harpoon and grapples with the shingles at the bottom of the reader's soul? (qtd in Harper, 2006: 40).

While Virginia Woolf, as an author, appears to be an exception in focusing on the reader throughout her writing process, academically focused creative writing theorists and teaching practitioners also appear to place more emphasis on audience than on avoiding audience by utilising writer based principles in the student writer's writing processes. As examples, Patrick Bizzaro's suggests that both the "teacher-reader" and the student writer must "envision the audience that the writer's text produces" (qtd in Green, 2001: 160). Jeri Kroll argues that students "must think about this concept of audience ... they must aim to produce something coherent and interesting enough to warrant someone's attention (2000) and David Lodge's description of what is required from the author in the writing of a novel, including the envisaging of how the reader will react to the text, puts audience awareness pressure on all writers, both experienced and prospective:

> To write a novel is to conduct imaginary personages through imaginary space and time in a way that will be simultaneously interesting, perhaps amusing,

> surprising yet convincing, representative or significant in a more than merely personal, private sense. You cannot do this without projecting the effect of what you write upon an imagined reader. In other words, although you cannot absolutely know or control the meanings that your novel communicates to its readers, you cannot *not* know that you are involved in an activity of communication, otherwise you will have no criteria of relevance, logic, cohesion, success and failure, in the composition of your fictional discourse (1996: 197).

Peter Elbow cautions that reader based writing should not be rejected and ignored in favour of writer based writing only. Both are required, if the text that is ultimately created and released is to have any value and both are necessary during the writing process at specific times:

> It's not that writers should never think about their audience. It's a question of when. An audience is a field of force. The closer we come — the more we think about these readers — the stronger the pull they exert on the contents of our minds. The practical question, then, is always whether a particular audience functions as a helpful field of force or one that confuses or inhibits us (1994: 259).

Writer based writing, which avoids audience, is ideal for the early development of the thinking behind the content of the text and its ideas, format and intentions, because by avoiding audience, the writer's textual process proceeds in a freer and more uninhibited manner, which may lead to new and unexpected developments and discoveries. Where a reader based writing focus is of value is during the revision of the text. As Elbow suggests, "ignoring audience can lead to worse drafts but better revisions" (1994: 260).

The authorities examining the writer based and reader based writing process conundrum are of the opinion that the effective balance of the two perspectives is a necessary and valuable skill and technique to be utilised during the creative writing process with the writer focus being utilised initially during the development of early drafts of the text and the reader focus being used during the final revision and editing phases. This balance between the two perspectives and knowing when to make the transition is the key to textual value and quality:

> To celebrate writer-based prose is to risk the charge of *romanticism* ... But my position also contains the austere *classic* view that we must nevertheless revise with conscious awareness of audience in order to figure out which pieces of writer-based prose are good as they are — and how to discard or revise the rest (Elbow, 1994: 263).

In teaching student writers to implement and employ the perspectives of the writer and the reader during their writing process, students need to learn to negotiate "the transition between 'writer-based' and 'reader-based' prose" and to "imagine and conform to a reader's goals" (Bartholomae, 1985: 139).

XI. AN EXPLORATION OF CREATIVITY

A. Introduction

The examination and analysis of the discourse on the teaching of creative writing in higher education institutions contained in the chapters, *The Origins and Development of the Teaching of Creative Writing* and *Creative Writing in the Academy*, revealed a trend of the institutional appropriation and reshaping of the concept of creativity in order to ensure that the teaching of creative writing conforms to the requirements the institution sets for all its academic fields of study.

Creativity is unacademic, is mysterious, problematical, elusive, romantically-nuanced, subjective and sometimes apparently irrational. This complicates creative writing pedagogy and its role as a subject within the academy alongside more established disciplines.

As has been demonstrated the concept of 'creativity' continues to be problematic for higher education institutions and the meanings of the language are redefined to fit the rules, parameters, objectives and broad ideology of the teachers, the faculties and their institutions.

It is important to repeat the following examples of the reformulation of creative writing in order to demonstrate how the concept of creativity has been relegated in the discourse surrounding the pedagogy of creative writing and how its presence as a descriptor in the phrase, 'creative writing,' has been ignored by academic creative writing teaching authorities and institutions.

- Sue North redefines creativity as general, ordinary, a part of the every day and aligned to efficiency and effectiveness (2006);
- George Kalamaras warns that one must not assume that "creative writing is 'creative'" (1999: 82);
- Michael Green admits that when teaching students creative writing it is not "a direct attempt to produce creative writers …" (2005);
- Katharine Haake forbids the utterance of the word 'creative' in her creative writing classrooms (2000: 240);

- Matt Morrison appears not to consider 'creativity' to be a key concept of creative writing, as he omits the concept of creativity from his book entitled *Key Concepts in Creative Writing* (2010);
- Nigel Krauth admits quite simply that "[w]riting creatively in the academic context is different from normal creative writing" (2008: 10); and
- On page 4 of the National Association of Writers in Education's (NAWE) *Creative Writing Subject Benchmark Statement* in its list of 10 Defining Principles for an undergraduate creative writing programme the word, 'creative,' appears twice and in neither instance is it an adjective or descriptor for the type of writing, which should be expected from students.

The authorities apply traditional academic validity criteria such as 'knowledge' development to creative writing as a field of study in an academic institution. For example, Dianne Donnelly defines "[c]reativity as a knowledge-based concept" with there being a "relationship between creativity and knowledge theories" (2012b: 119). Similarly, Marcelle Freiman seeks to use "psychology … in deconstructing unhelpful myths of creativity" and to tether it to an existing knowledge platform (2003b). Even the British creative writing umbrella organisation, NAWE, demotes the creative aspects of the teaching of creative writing and promotes the supplementary text, which explains the fictional text, as the academically crucial 'knowledge' component. NAWE defines the subject of Creative Writing as "the study of writing (including poetry, fiction, drama and creative non-fiction) and its contexts through creative production and reflection on process (NAWE, 2)

Jen Webb describes creativity as an "attribute of thinking and acting that is based on perception, conceptual thinking and self-reflexivity" and she argues that its products must "offer a contribution to knowledge, to society or to culture" (2012: 41). Her typically academic-based notion of creativity is rejected by and contradicts Plato's view of creativity. He considers creativity to be "the antithesis of the search for knowledge, 'entirely opposed to that reasoned discourse that seeks understanding … creativity … undermines intellectual culture, and ultimately the whole society" (qtd in Donnelly, 2012b: 118).

Plato's notion of creativity causes institutional discomfort, because it is "potentially dangerous in its expansiveness and unpredictability" (Perry, 2010: 117); it is considered to be a form of play, when the "academic theory gives a pre-eminence to more rational, theoretical, researched and evidence-based endeavour" (Neale, 2012); and "[t]he inherent

riskiness of creativity does not necessarily sit well with the corporate-style ways many international universities operate in these highly litigious, micro-managed times" (Perry, 2010: 117).

Some authorities have admitted more recently that "pedagogical challenges remain when artistic, economic, administrative and political agendas compete," but that even though some think "human creativity is … dead … it has just morphed into a myth that serves multiple agendas …" (Hecq, 2012: 25). Creativity has been described as "trivialised, commodified and commercialised" (Harris, 2012: 120) leading to its "partial strangulation … in the new corporate university" (Edmonds, 2012: 113).

This non-creative approach to the teaching and learning of creative writing has meant that, while "cognitive scientists … have been defining creativity and its processes … cognitive science has been largely ignored by creative writing teachers" (Swander, Leahy and Cantrell 2007: 17) and "creativity research does not readily speak to academics nor does it form part of their daily discourse." Paul Kleiman argues that "[t]his poses particular concerns in the creative arts because creativity is so central to its core purposes:"

> … understanding … creativity and creative processes are arguably central to one's decisions about developing curricula and particular teaching approaches, facilitating student learning, providing feedback and making judgements about works (qtd in Morgan, 2012).

The reluctance to embrace creativity theory, as researched and developed by other academic disciplines, appears to be pervasive amongst English faculty-based authorities. More recently, however, there have been increased references to creativity theory specialists, but not much adoption of creativity theory into creative writing pedagogy. As evidenced by the analysis of the 27 creative writing handbooks, creativity remains an un-debated and un-researched component of creative writing pedagogy.

In this chapter a detailed evaluation of the concept of creativity will be undertaken in order to establish key findings, which can be used in the future design and development of creative writing modules, courses and programmes. It is not the intention to develop fixed rules and processes of creativity to be 'taught' in the creative writing classroom, but to

develop a set of principles to identify 'creativity positive' processes, methods, characteristics and environmental factors and to avoid 'creativity negative' ones.

B. Background

Almost 20 years ago in 1994 writing teaching theorists, Linda Sarbo and Joseph Moxley, in their essay, "Creative Research and Classroom Practice," which appeared in *Colors of a Different Horse: Rethinking Creative Writing Theory and Pedagogy*, suggested that there may be value in looking for creativity-based insights into the teaching of creative writing.

They suggested that their "primary concern in the classroom is with fostering creativity" and that, therefore, academically based creative writing teachers would be justified in undertaking a "journey into theory" with creativity researchers in an effort to "inform [their] teaching practices" (Sarbo and Moxley, 1994: 134).

Sarbo and Moxley explored the history of creativity research and theory commencing with "Creativity as an Unconscious Process" referring to the work of Freud, Henri Poincare, Karl Popper and Rollo May's encapsulation of their theories in *The Courage to Create* (1994: 134). Under the heading, "Creativity as a Cognitive Process (1994: 134), they examine the findings of JP Guilford and in assessing "Creativity as a Personality Trait" (1994: 137), they relate the work done by and the findings of John Di Tiberio and George Jensen in examining "how personality factors account for variables in writing processes and texts" (1994: 137).

To investigate "The Interactive Model of Creativity" (1994: 139) and how social influences affect creativity and creative behaviour, Sarbo and Moxley analysed the results of the research studies of Teresa Amabile.

After their evaluation of creativity research over the last 70 years, Sarbo and Moxley acknowledged that, despite "contradictory findings, and ambiguous results [the] studies provide the skeleton ... of a creative writing pedagogy" (1994: 143) and they came to the following conclusions:

> Familiarity with creative research increases our sensitivity to the negative effects of external evaluation; fortifies our tolerance for each student's unique

> personality style, work habits and writing process; and prepares us to supplement the preferences appropriately … Buried in the rich organicity of the writing process is an elegantly simple seed: the most effective teaching tool is the process itself ... Our first responsibility as teachers is to nurture our students productivity (1994: 143).

Despite the findings and recommendations made by Sarbo and Moxley, an evaluation of the subsequent literature on creative writing pedagogy reveals that there has only been some tentative steps taken along the lines suggested by them. While it appears that creative writing teaching authorities have broadened their reading and interrogations into creativity, as a component of creative writing pedagogy, by examining the findings of creativity specialists and publishing the results of some of their findings, these forays appear to be sporadic with little indication of any serious intent to formally assimilate the key components of creativity theory into creative writing pedagogy and the resulting curricula and syllabi.

During the last 10 years, of the various specialists in creativity theory, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has been most quoted and referred to by creative writing teaching authorities. [See Swander, Leahy and Cantrell (2007: 15), Brent Royster (2005: 28), Dianne Donnelly (2012b: 19), Chris Morgan (2012) and Mike Harris (2011:177-179)]

The research findings of Teresa Amabile received attention from Chris Morgan (2012), Stephanie Vanderslice (2004: 18), Marcelle Freiman (2003b) and Nigel McLouchlin and Patrick Bizzaro (2012: 166) with the latter authorities advocating Amabile's work as "[o]ne of the most invaluable resources … when thinking about program design [because] [t]his provided insights into the way creative processes operate at a cognitive and social level, and what may promote truly creative outcomes or inhibit them" (2012: 166).

In his article, "Shakespeare was More Creative When He was Dead: Is Creativity Theory a Better Fit on Creative Writing?", in a 2011 issue of *New Writing: International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, Mike Harris provides a rare overview of the work of a broad range of creativity theorists, including Scott Berry Kaufman and James C. Kaufman, Charles Lumsden, Robert J. Sternberg and Rob Pope, with a particular focus and concentration on the work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.

Most of the creative writing teaching authorities, however, appear to focus on only one, or possibly two, creativity specialists in order to substantiate their conclusions or arguments. This can lead to erroneous or overly broad generalisations. Michelene Wandor uses Rob Pope's contention that "there is no 'creation from nothing'" (2012: 198) to support her efforts to demystify and de-romanticise the practice of creative writing, while Anna Leahy extrapolates Nancy Andreasen's (professor of psychology, former professor of Renaissance literature) broad claim that "while artistic creation requires individual effort, 'it is more difficult for the creative brain to prosper in isolation'" to conclude that "according to research into what fosters creativity" the workshop is not an environment, which produces homogeneous texts, but one which promotes "variety, individuality, and originality" (2012: 76).

It is important that any exploration of creativity theory must include a range of creativity specialists and their contributions to creativity theory for the findings to be methodologically and empirically plausible. Such findings can be used to establish theoretical creativity principles for a focused creative writing pedagogy.

C. The Pertinent Texts and Authorities

In their article, "Surprising the Writer: Discovering Details Through Research and Reading," in *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (1999: 259-274) Lars Ryhammar and Catarina Brolin provide a very useful précis of the history of creativity research. They outline how up until the middle of the 1980s creativity research emphasised "personality aspects ... cognitive aspects [and] research involving various attempts to stimulate it" (1999). During the 1990s creativity research took on a "social-psychological approach" coupled with a focus on "systems thinking" (1999). They identify creativity research as having four points of departure, namely, "(i) the person who creates; (ii) the creative process; (iii) influential factors in the environment; (iv) the final product" (1999).

These four points of departure represent the framework within which this exploration of creativity takes place and within which the textual authorities were selected. The breadth of the authorities and the different types of works consulted as part of this evaluation of

creativity have been reflected and explained in greater detail in the *Literature Review*.

D. Background to the Study of Creativity

As a general background to the exploration of creativity, it is important to establish the various objectives underlying the research of creativity, as a concept, as well as to be aware of the trends and specific focus areas historically identified by creativity specialist authorities.

1. Objectives

The topic of creativity has always attracted a negative school of thought, which calls for an avoidance of its examination, because "to explain creativity is to explain it away," (IC Jarvie, 1981: 109) science "drives out wonder [and] the scientific understanding of creativity [is] more ... a threat than a promise" (Boden, 1990: 262). [See Margaret Boden (1990: 263), Larry Briskman (1981: 132 and Alice Flaherty (2004: 50)]

The contrary argument is that the study of creativity has emotional and social benefits for individuals and society, because "the results of creativity enrich the culture ... and indirectly improve the quality of our lives [and] we may learn from this knowledge how to make our own lives directly more interesting and productive" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 10).

There have also been, and will continue to be, economic and political reasons for the study of creativity. For example, in his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida identifies and examines the attributes and characteristics, which are prevalent in creatively concentrated geographic areas, in order to highlight those areas as being of greater value to commercial ventures and enterprises, because of "the rise of the creative economy" (2002: xxv).

During the 1950s J.P. Guilford, a leader of the psychological creativity movement at that time, had an unambiguously political objective for his creativity research initiatives: "the most urgent reason [for studying creativity] is that we are in a mortal struggle for the survival of our way of life in the world." (qtd in Briskman, 1981: 134) American society

was living under the threat of a Russian onslaught, as its primary competitor, and creativity was seen as a means to gain a competitive edge and as such scientists had to control, manipulate, engineer and predict creativity (Briskman, 1981: 134).

There are also more simplistic, yet just as important, reasons for studying creativity. Some form of clarity surrounding the concept of creativity may allow us to "distinguish creative ideas from uncreative ones" (Boden, 1990: 29) and to identify creative products from the "dross" currently in "the flood [of] ideas, works of art, and inventions that are neither new, nor original" and to ultimately promote the "output of quality" (Jarvie, 1981: 110).

2. Creativity Study Trends

During the first 80 years of the 20th century, creativity research focused predominantly on the personality and cognitive aspects of creativity by way of studies attempting to stimulate creativity in individuals. It was only during the 1990s that social psychological approaches were adopted, which studied the capacity of humans to originate new ideas and products in a more social and environmental context than before (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999). The study of creativity has expanded into a four tier process, which can focus on one or a combination of the following factors: "the person who creates ... the creative process ... influential factors in the environment ... the final product …" (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999).

The focus of psychologists, who have dominated the study of creativity for the last 80 years, has been on "personality studies of creative individuals" (Amabile, 1983: 4) in an effort to answer questions like "What makes people creative ... How can creativity be enhanced ... What can we learn from creative adults that will help us raise more creative children ... What happens in the mind while a person is creating …" (Piirto, 2004: 9). [See also JP Guilford (qtd in Jarvie, 1981: 110) and Margaret Boden (1990: 4)]

To answer these questions the psychologists had to "tame the paradox and eliminate the mystery" (Boden 1990: 4) by reducing creativity to a mental capacity, which would allow the capture of the "thought-processes and mental structures in which ... creativity is grounded" (Boden 1990: 4).

The psychologically focused examination of creativity was gradually supplemented by a broader view of the concept, which questioned the singularly psychological emphasis: Is the study of creativity a "Logical or a Psychological Issue?" (Feyerabend, 1978: 121). [See also Margaret Boden (1990: 29), Paul Dawson (2001) and IC Jarvie (1981: 110)]

This broadening of the examination of creativity beyond the purely psychological resulted in authorities from a number of different disciplines entering the debate (Flaherty, 2004: 51). These creativity researchers included "social and environmental conditions" (Amabile, 1983: 5) and notions of the creative quality of creative products (Boden 1990: 29).

Against this background the various aspects of the study of creativity will now be examined.

E. An Examination of the Aspects of Creativity

1. Definitions – Create, Creative, Creation, Creativity

(a) Dictionary Definitions

The most authoritative and objective definitions are those contained in recognised dictionaries and it is from those definitions that the trends surrounding the evolution of creativity as a popularised subject matter, or field of study, can be recognised and tracked.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990: 272) defines the verb 'create' as "to bring into existence," the adjective 'creative' as "inventive and imaginative" and the noun 'creation' as "a product of human intelligence, especially of imaginative thought or artistic ability." The variant of the verb create, the noun 'creativity' is listed in this dictionary, but does not warrant its own specific definition.

The New Oxford American Dictionary's definitions are similar to those of the *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, but it extends the definition of the adjective 'creative' to include originality and provides a specific definition for the noun 'creativity:' "the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of a creative work."

The 1988 edition of *Webster's Dictionary* defines 'creativity' as the "creative ability; artistic or intellectual inventiveness" (qtd in Piirto, 2002: 8).

All the definitions link 'creative' and 'creation' and 'creativity' to the imagination and artistry and, with the inclusion of the characteristics of originality, the notions of comparison, evaluation and value is introduced into the concept of creative.

From the roots of the Latin word '*creare*,' which literally means "to grow" (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 6), and the definitions contained in the most well known dictionaries, the meaning of creativity has been embellished and extended by both 'fringe' dictionaries and more specialised dictionaries. [See *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (qtd in Piirto, 2002: 88) and *The Dictionary of Developmental and Educational Psychology* (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 6)]

Creativity has been described as a "capacity," and "ability" (Piirto, 2002: 8), the "use of the imagination or original ideas" and a "process" (Hausman, 1981: 75). Clearly 'creativity' as a noun is a problematical, abstract and fluid concept, which is both malleable and complex. Defining the word 'creative,' as an adjective, is more productive and specific, because it is attached to a noun, which grounds the focus of the meaning evaluation. [See also Arthur Koestler (1981: 1)]

Attaching creativity to an act, a practice, a product or a response alleviates the need to solidify the abstractness of creativity by debating, justifying and attributing the concreteness of 'capacity,' an 'ability' or a 'process' to it. This description of 'creative' offered by social psychologist Teresa Amabile serves as an example of the value of focusing on 'creative' as an adjective, as opposed to the noun 'creativity:'

> A product or response is creative to the extent that appropriate observers independently agree it is creative. Appropriate observers are those familiar with the domain in which the product was created or the response articulated (1983: 31).

Amabile calls this a "consensual definition ... and explicitly operational definition" (1983: 31), which is workable and of practical value as a means to determine whether a "product or

response" (1983: 31) is creative. In contrast some definitions of 'creativity' are variable and inexact and are therefore inherently less pedagogically valuable:

> Creativity is in the personality, the practices, and the product within a domain in interaction with genetic influences and with optimal environmental influences of home, school, community and culture, gender, and chance. Creativity is a basic human instinct to make new (Piirto, 2004: 452).

> Creativity is having gained respectable mastery and recognition by peers in the field to make something momentarily new (Piirto, 2004: 36). [See also Dean Simonton (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 452) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 452)]

Some authorities prefer to focus on the noun 'creativity,' as a more debatable concept, instead of focusing on "the act, idea or product" and the judging of the act, idea or product against the adjectival qualifier of 'creative.' These authorities focus on identifying what creativity is, while ignoring whether the subject of that creativity can be classified as creative.

(b) Definitions Based on Various Criteria

Different definitions of creativity focus on different criteria. These criteria include the following:

(i) Judgement Criteria

In these definitions the responsibility for judging such creativity is allocated to "experts." [See Lars Ryhammar and Catarina Brolin (1999)]

(ii) Domain and Social Criteria

These definitions of creativity, in addition to requiring the approval of experts in a specific field or domain, also require that the creativity must lead to some form of change within the domain in which it resides and was created. This implies that creativity is not a singular, personal property, but that it can only be manifested and acknowledged in a social medium

or environment. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 351), Jarvie (1981: 110) and Alice Flaherty (2004: 51)]

(iii) Product Criteria

These definitions use the word 'creative' as an adjective to describe a product or outcome as a creative act. The creator is given the badge of creativity based on her creation. The fact that the creator clearly has all the psychologically identified personality attributes of a creative individual is actually irrelevant. [See IC Jarvie (1981: 121) and Teresa Amabile (1983: 31)]

(iv) Novelty and Value Criteria

These definitions require that something must be new and unprecedented in order to be called creative. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 193), Jane Piirto (2004: 6), C.R. Hausman (1981: 75), Priscila Uppal (2007: 50), Larry Briskman (1981: 121), Alice Flaherty (2004: 51) and Teresa Amabile (1983: 32)]

(v) Academic Criteria

Academically based definitions of creativity tend to remove the 'value' component of creativity and allow the texts to be evaluated purely on their craft correctness or incorrectness. [See Robert De Maria (1991: 4) and George Kalamaras (1999: 82)]

2. Conceptual Framework

In order to include the concept of creativity in a creative writing teaching programme, it is important to consider those developmental components, which could form the basis of a 'conceptual framework' for the study of creativity.

(a) Logic and Mystery

Creativity specialist authorities are either proponents of the logic or mystery theories of creativity. The defenders of the magic of creativity label it 'insoluble' and 'incoherent (Jarvie, 1981: 113) as an "inexplicable 'gift' (Jarvie, 1981: 112), "a mysterious miracle" (Briskman, 1981: 130) and a "kind of mystery" (Briskman, 1981: 129). The protectors of the mystery theory fear that, if creativity were to be explained, it may be explained away (Jarvie, 1981: 109).

In contrast the proponents of the logic theory base their view on a "mechanistic approach [that] tends to see all natural processes ... as part occurring according to law …" (Briskman, 1981: 145). As the result of a natural process, all creative products or acts have "a common property, something that all exemplify, something that can thus be studied and explained …" (Jarvie, 1981: 112).

While it seems that the two creativity factions face each other from opposite poles, those taking up the logical, analytical position have also accepted the role of chance or serendipity in creative acts (Jarvie, 1981: 109). [See C.R. Hausman (1981: 84) and Larry Briskman (1981: 132 & 146)]

(b) Creativity and the Individual

Historically creativity has been "treated as a psychological rather than a logical issue" (Jarvie, 1981: 109). The bias towards the psychological exploration of the concept of creativity is also evident from the large number of research studies undertaken with respondents, "whose creativity had been widely recognised" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 13). Using interview processes, or an evaluation of biographic and autobiographical records of these 'creative individuals,' psychologists identify the personality traits and characteristics of the respondents and then generate the profiles of the personalities and characteristics of individuals, who are creative.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the introduction to the findings of his research study explains the variations in the meanings of the phrase 'a creative individual.' Firstly, he refers to

"persons who express unusual thoughts," but do not "contribute something of permanent significance ... as *brilliant* rather than creative" (1996: 25). Secondly, he refers to "people who experience the world in novel and original ways ... as personally creative" (1996: 25) and thirdly, only those individuals, who "have changed our culture" can be called "creative ... without qualifications" (1996: 26).

The single-minded focus on the individual is evident in Csikszentmihalyi's conclusion that "creativity cannot be understood by only looking at the people who appear to make it happen" (1996: 6) and that there must be an "assessment [by] competent outsiders." He makes no reference to the products of these creative individuals, only to the fact that their "creativity had been widely recognised" (1996: 13) in the form of prizes, awards, publication and fellowships. [See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 240)]

(c) Creativity and Product

Opposing the creativity as personality view, certain authorities point out that by approaching creativity from a scientific perspective "psychologists are obliged to assume that creativity has the status of *fact*," when in reality, attributing certain "creative psychological processes or traits [to] the *creative* personality is not itself a fact but an evaluation" (Briskman, 1981: 137). Larry Briskman explains this principle simply and clearly:

> ... what we evaluate as 'creative' ... are a person's products ... but only as a result of an evaluation [and] it follows that we cannot identify, independently of such products, creative persons or creative psychological processes (1981: 137-8).

The logic behind the call for a "priority in the product" in the development of a valuable conceptual creativity framework is straight forward and uncomplicated:

> ... not only are we unable to identify a psychological process as creative in the absence of an identification (or evaluation) of its resultant product as itself creative, but we are unable to identify any purely psychological process at all as the creative process ... because the process is a creative one *only if* it issues in a product deemed to be a creative one (1981: 140).

By extension "the creativity of the product will set the *job specification* for any process

which we will deem to be creative" (Briskman, 1981: 141). By answering the question ,"What aspects of artistic and scientific products lead us to evaluate them as creative ones?" we may be able to embark, in the teaching of creative writing, on the development of the methodology to answer the question, "*What kind of process could possibly result in such products?"* (Briskman, 1981: 141) [my italics]

(d) Creativity Criteria

The two primary criteria of creativity listed and described by the majority of creativity authorities remains the *newness* of the creation and its *value*. [See C.R. Hausman (1981: 77)] The newness of the creation has been qualified as having to be "intelligible newness" (Hausman, 1981: 80); "unprecedented" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 193); "unique [and] different" (Hausman, 1981: 78) and individual in "contrast ... with its outer context of the past" (Hausman, 1981: 81).

Certain authorities set the criteria of newness in creativity against "a background of prior products" (Briskman, 1981: 143) with the creative product extending the existing background, or conflicting with and modifying that background (Briskman, 1981: 143). [See also Larry Briskman (1981: 150) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1817)]

In general, creativity, which is based on difference for the sake of being different, is rejected by authorities as "eccentricities [that] lack the criterion of value" (Hausman, 1981: 87) with a product having to be "inherently and often instrumentally valuable" (Hausman, 1981: 85) to be classified as creative.

3. Creativity and the Individual

(a) Introduction

It would appear from the analysis of the literature pertaining to creativity theory that the relationship between creativity and the individual can be viewed from 3 different perspectives, namely Creative Capacity, Creative Motivation and the Characteristics of Creative Individuals. Of these 3 perspectives only Individual Creative Motivation will be of

specific benefit to the development of the creative writing programmes, which are the subject of this thesis. In what follows the other components of individual creativity will simply be referred to with sources and references included for substantiation.

(b) Creative Capacity

Most teaching specialist authorities adopt the principle that talent and genius are rare attributes and indicate a creativity that is unique, absolute and exclusive and cannot be taught. [See Jane Piirto (2004: 36), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 27) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1817)]

Other proponents adopt the principle of the universality of creative capacity and contend that "creativity ... is based in ordinary abilities we all share" (Boden 1990: 28). [See Paul Dawson (2001), Richard Florida (2002: 32), Teresa Amabile (1983: 66), Jane Piirto (2004: 25) and James Kaufman and Claudia Gentile (2002: 122)]

Still other authorities question the extent of the individual's contribution to creativity and hold the view that, because creativity is the property of systems rather than of individuals, it is highly improbable that a person can ever be creative in a vacuum and removed from greater society. The initial spark of creativity is extrinsically influenced and generated by the individual in interaction with her environment, society, culture and surroundings. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 31, 45, 46 & 71)]

(c) Creative Motivation

One of the most pedagogically valuable aspects of creativity uncovered during the research for this thesis is the significance of the creative motivation of individuals, as a quintessential component of all creative tasks, products and outcomes. The presence of creative motivation underlies all creative activities and practices and should therefore play a fundamental role in the design and implementation of creative writing teaching and learning programmes. The motivation to create is a *sine qua non* of creation. It engenders such vital characteristics as passion, determination, drive, focus and perseverance, which in turn ensure the transformation of an intangible creative concept into some form of productive reality.

(i) Background

Based on his studies of famous poets and writers such as Sylvia Plath, August Strindberg, Emily Dickinson, Eugene O'Neill and William Faulkner and on experiments conducted with control groups of 'normal people,' psychiatrist, Albert Rothenberg, came to the conclusion that "only one characteristic of personality and orientation to life and work is absolutely, *across-the-board*, present in all creative people: motivation" (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 27).

Writer and writing teacher, Gordon Lish, also emphasises the importance of motivation in all creative practices: "I see the notion of talent as quite irrelevant. I see instead old-fashioned notions of perseverance, application, industry, assiduity, *will, will, will, desire, desire, desire"* (qtd in Piirto, 2002: 65). [See also Daniel Nettle (2002: 153), Alice Flaherty (2004: 52) and Jane Piirto (2004: 97)]

Social psychologist, Teresa Amabile, a leading authority on motivation and creativity, confirms that motivation is one of the most important factors in creativity and that it has been so "neglected that you might call it creativity's missing link" (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 97-8). Amabile's research studies and findings are based on "'ordinary' individuals" (1983: 102) and "undergraduate and graduate students" (1983: 154) and includes the creation of "observable products," which are "judged on creativity" (1983: 102) and include creative writing products. This makes her study invaluable to the current exploration, which is focused on creative writing teaching in higher education institutions.

Unlike many of the creativity research studies, which focus on individuals, "who are undeniably outstanding, eminent scientists, artists, musicians" and whose conclusions "apply to creative achievement at the highest levels," Amabile's studies include "ordinary adults" and her conclusions "are applicable to lower levels of creativity" (1983: 76). In her studies into motivation Teresa Amabile uses a creativity task that is

> … an intrinsically interesting one ... [it] is an open-ended (heuristic) one ... does not depend heavily on special skills ... and is one in which subjects actually make an observable product or a response that can be recorded and later judged on creativity [and] subjects are ... not told that the experiment concerns

creativity (1983: 77).

Amabile measures the quality of the respondents' creative outputs and the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors on that quality. Creative quality is not assumed to be present, but is a primary variable in determining the influences of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Her reasons for focusing on ordinary individuals as the base for her studies is that those individuals, who have achieved at a higher level in their areas of expertise may, because of their extreme intrinsic focus on their creative activities in their field, be resistant to any adverse effects of extrinsic constraints (1983: 77).

Amabile describes creative performance as being reliant on three components: "domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills, and task motivation" (1983: 189). While domain- and creativity-relevant skills are multi-faceted, time-intensive and costly to teach, acquire and master, "task motivation ... can be manipulated more easily for most individuals engaging in most tasks" (1983: 189).

The framework and foundation of Amabile's work are the findings of Herbert A. Simon, who contends that "the most important function of motivation is the control of attention" (1983: 94) and that motivation influences which objective stream will be followed in pursuit of a creative goal. "The more intense the motivation to achieve a goal, the less attention will be paid to aspects of the environment that are seemingly irrelevant to achieving that goal" (1983: 94). Amabile's findings emphasise the importance of intrinsic motivation to the creative process and creative quality and the "detrimental effects of extrinsic constraints on creativity" (1983: 94). [See also IC Jarvie (1981: 115), Robert J. Sternberg and Todd I. Lubart (1993: 230) and Alice Flaherty (2004: 55)]

This hypothesis has a significant bearing on the teaching of creative writing, the pedagogical objectives of such teaching and the make-up of higher education facilities, as an environment conducive to and optimising student creative activities, practices and outcomes.

(ii) Intrinsic Motivation

Amabile lists, in rank order, the intrinsic reasons given by 20 undergraduate students for writing:

- You get a lot of pleasure out of reading something good that you have written.
- You enjoy the opportunity for self-expression.
- You achieve new insights through your writing.
- You derive satisfaction from expressing yourself clearly and eloquently.
- You feel relaxed when writing.
- You like to play with words.
- You enjoy becoming involved with ideas, characters, events, and images in your writing (1983: 155).

Intrinsic motivation is a highly personal, inwardly originated and focused state. Activities are undertaken and completed based purely on an individual's "own interest in and enjoyment of that activity" (1983: 15). The creator is "stimulated by features of the task" and becomes deeply involved, perhaps even in a playful manner (1983: 100). Intrinsically motivated individuals have been described as being entirely themselves (Piirto, 2002: 145), focusing single-mindedly on the "pursuit" of creativity and not on the attainment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 122). [See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 257) and Richard Florida (2002: 334)]

Being intrinsically motivated seems to also suggest a self-centred withdrawal from external influences and factors, which Samuel Taylor Coleridge describes as "the original sin of [his] character ... a careless indifference to public opinion, and to the attacks of those who influence it (1817). The creative activity, when intrinsically motivated becomes an end in itself, or autotelic" (Piirto, 2004: 45).

Intrinsic motivation includes high levels of personal passion in and for the subject of the creative process. [See Rollo May (1975: 135) and Jane Piirto (2002: 335)] This passion has also been referred to as a "burning curiosity" and a "lively interest" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 87) in a subject or activity.

The concept of intrinsic motivation, as far as it influences creative activities, requires extraordinarily high levels of self belief by the creator in her abilities and chances of successfully creating the subject, which has captured her intrinsic interest. This self belief has also been referred to as "chutzpah" (Nettle, 2002: 154), an arrogance that someone can believe that she can do something so difficult, "in a way that has never been done before, which will be of ... much interest to [her] fellow creatures" when she knows that she is "almost certainly wrong" (Nettle, 2002: 154). [See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 69) and Margaret Boden (1990: 255)]

The reward the individual receives in the form of personal enjoyment and satisfaction when intrinsically motivated and intrinsically creating appears to offset the risk of creative non-performance. Through her research studies Teresa Amabile discovered that "intrinsically motivated work is more satisfying than extrinsically motivated work," because all attention is focused on the task and not on the task constraints, which would be present were the task extrinsically motivated (1983: 113). Intrinsically motivated practices are described as feeling more like leisure than work (1983: 113), as filled with enjoyment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 48) and as pleasurable, exciting, rewarding and satisfying. [See also Jane Piirto (2004: 99), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 220) and IC Jarvie (1981: 115)]

Amabile postulates the further hypothesis that "not only should factors that decrease the individual's enjoyment of the task undermine creativity, but factors that increase the individual's enjoyment should enhance creativity" (1983: 121).

Another important aspect of intrinsically motivated creative activities is the high levels of autonomy and freedom the creator experiences by maintaining an internalised, exclusionary focus on her subject. Amabile quotes Koestler's contention that the "highest forms of creativity are generated under conditions of freedom from control," which allow creators to regress to "unconscious, playful levels of thought ... essential for creative production" and to be "primarily concerned with self-evaluation [with] the evaluation of others ... only a secondary concern" (1983: 75). [See also Teresa Amabile (1983: 121 & 133), Jane Piirto (2002: 87) and Edward L. Deci and Richard Flaste (1995: 44-56)]

This aspect of the importance of freedom and an absence of outside control reflects and

emphasises the significance of creative freedom to student writers contained in the findings of the student research studies undertaken by Gregory Light, Steve May and Pieter Oberholzer.

(iii) Extrinsic Motivation

Amabile describes the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as simply being "the difference between divided and undivided attention" (1983: 94). Unlike the positive outcomes attributed to intrinsic motivation and its 'undivided' attention on creative activities, the 'divided' attention inherent in extrinsic motivation has a diversionary, fragmentary and negative affect on the creative product. This is so not only from psychologically proven perspectives, but also from the experiences of authors and poets, who have experienced and have attempted to avoid the effects of extrinsic motivation.

For example, Anne Sexton encourages her friend, WD Snodgrass, the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, to overcome the debilitating affects of his concerns with extrinsic factors, "their prize and their fame" and to regain his "original courage" and to "write some ... real ... write ... some blood" (1983: 9).

Gertrude Stein describes the outcomes of shifting from an intrinsic to an extrinsic focus. She claims that when American authors "become writers ... they cease being creative men and soon find that they are novelists or critics or poets or biographers" (1983: 12). [See also Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1817)]

The studies of both Csikszentmihalyi and Amabile identify the dominance and power of the influence of extrinsic motivation on the creativity of the majority of individuals. Seventy percent of Csikszentmihalyi's eminently creative respondents made reference to "extrinsic reasons" such as "the great contributions they have made, the recognition and prizes they received, their renown among colleagues" (1996: 227) as the source of their pride as creators. The balance of the respondents offered intrinsic reasons for being proud of their achievements. These reasons related to "cultural advances [and] personal rewards of a difficult job well done" (1996: 227).

Amabile's studies emphasise that "even in the absence of specific extrinsic constraints, if extrinsic goals are simply made salient to subjects, their creativity may be undermined" (1983: 156). She concludes that extrinsic factors such as awards and accolades "undermine" individual creativity, "because some of the individual's attention is diverted from the task itself" (1983: 120).

The undergraduates in Amabile's study responded as follows to the question of what constitutes extrinsically motivated factors:

- You realise that ... the market for freelance writing is constantly expanding.
- You want your writing teachers to be favourably impressed with your writing talent.
- You have heard cases where one best-selling novel or collection of poems has made the author financially secure.
- You enjoy public recognition of your work.
- You know that many of the best jobs available require good writing skills.
- You know that writing ability is one of the major criteria for acceptance into graduate school.
- Your teachers and parents have encouraged you to go into writing (1983: 155).

The following are some of the extrinsic factors identified by Amabile as detrimentally affecting student creative performances: "... a concern with evaluation expectation and actual evaluation: a desire for external recognition, a focus on competition and external rewards [and] a reaction against time pressures (1983: 14).

While the achievement of extrinsically aimed goals are perceived to be and promoted by society as key signifiers of success, these extrinsic achievements can be detrimental to serious writers as creators and artists. In a *Paris Review* interview in 1988 EL Doctorow confirmed that the only good thing that could happen to a writer is "the act of writing itself," with all other influences, particularly the extrinsic ones, being "hazardous" to authors (qtd in Piirto, 2002: 124-5).

Ann Sexton's advice to WD Snodgrass was based on her personal experience of the negative effects of "evaluation, competition, and rewards" (Amabile, 1983: 8) and her own

battle with “publication and critical acclaim as a kind of addictive drug” (Amabile, 1983: 9). [See also Sylvia Plath (qtd in Amabile, 1983: 13) and Teresa Amabile (1983: 10-13)]

A fundamental aspect of extrinsic constraints on creativity is conformance to social and domain pressures, which make the “creative solution ... a means to an ulterior end [and not] an end in itself” (Amabile, 1983: 75). The creator has to give up the control of the creative process, which ensures her creative freedom, in favour of succumbing to external pressures. [See also Jane Piirto (2002: 124-5)]

Creativity and creative writing in particular has become more of a profession than a calling with extrinsic rewards overshadowing most intrinsic motives. As Gertrude Stein pointed out (Amabile, 1983: 12), it is more about being a writer than being a creator. The writing has shifted from being personal to being externally focused and impersonal and this has become the status quo. As an example, in his research study Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi accepts and verifies Richard Stern (novelist and professor of literature) as an eminent creative individual without reference to any of his created works, but simply by listing the extrinsically based achievements and accolades he has garnered. Csikszentmihalyi lists Stern’s ‘creative’ achievements as being his graduation from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and the inclusion of a short story of his in “the prestigious *Best O’Henry Stories*” and suggests that one of the reasons for Stern’s success was that he “formed friendships with ... influential writers ... Saul Bellow and Philip Roth [who] open up opportunities and information that can be essential to one’s advancement” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 260). Csikszentmihalyi uses words such as “advancement” (1996: 260) as if writing is considered to be a profession such as that of accountancy.

When writing becomes a profession for the writer, it seems that intrinsic motivation is displaced by the extrinsic motivation of career, remuneration, publication, adulation perhaps with a commensurate decline in creative integrity and quality. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 423-4)]

There are a number of specific findings about creative motivation in Amabile’s research studies, which may be of particular value to the design and development of creative writing and teaching initiatives. These findings include the positive role of choice on intrinsic

motivation and creativity and the negative influences of reward, evaluation and the presence of others on creative performance. In respect of choice and creativity, Amabile came to the following conclusions:

- Choice about whether to engage in a task at all may have disparate effects on creativity; and
- Choice concerning how to engage in an activity ... should only enhance intrinsic motivation and creativity (1983: 134-5).

Amabile's findings confirm that "reward will most often be detrimental" (1983: 196) to creativity and that when creators have an expectation of evaluation they produce "less creative work" than those, who are "unconcerned about evaluation" (1983: 110). She classifies the expectation of external evaluation as one of the cluster of extrinsic constraints, which includes rewards, deadlines and surveillance (1983: 117).

The effect of the presence of others on individual creativity is a more complex concept, which is influenced by the reasons for the others being present. Where those present are merely working alongside others there would be a less negative effect on creativity (1983: 144); while if the "others are present as an audience" (1983: 145), then individual creativity would be undermined. Amabile found that generally "subjects perform more poorly on creativity tests when they work as a group, and that some subjects may also perform more poorly on individual creativity tests if they must work in the presence of others" (1983: 143).

The surroundings also have an effect on creativity. A relaxed and less restrictive environment is more conducive to creative performance than more rigidly controlled classroom settings: "intrinsic task motivations are encouraged by the relative lack of extrinsic constraints in open classrooms [because] relatively informal classroom environments will facilitate creativity" (1983: 163).

In conclusion, while it may appear that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are mutually exclusive and that no creator can manage and juggle the opposing forces and still optimise creativity levels, there are situations, which allow these two polarised creative components to co-exist. Amabile suggests that psychologically an individual may be capable of reducing

the effect of an extrinsic goal, while focusing on the intrinsics of the creative process, or that some individuals may reach such a heightened state of focus on intrinsic motivation that any extrinsic constraints become less imposing during the creative process: "people working at the highest levels of the field might be relatively immune to the negative effects of extrinsic constraints because of their intense intrinsic interest in the domain" (1983: 176).

The ability to reduce the effect of extrinsic factors may explain the practice of ignoring audience during initial drafts of the creative writing process, as advocated by Peter Elbow. Elbow suggests that the first draft should be written for the writer, with the second revised while facing the audience.

Finally, Amabile makes the distinction between heuristically and algorithmically based creative processes:

> An extrinsic motivation will decrease the probability that the creativity heuristics of exploration, set-breaking and risk-taking will be applied. There will be a heavy reliance upon response algorithms that already exist within the store of domain-relevant skills (1983: 95).

One of the questions to be considered in the development of an alternative pedagogy is whether contemporary academic creative writing pedagogy is intrinsically or extrinsically focused and heuristically or algorithmically based?

d. Characteristics of Creative Individuals

(i) Background

Based upon the results of many studies conducted over a protracted period of time, the various attributes of creative individuals have been compiled and published with resultant groupings of characteristics and "clusters of personality traits ... found fairly consistently among individuals exhibiting high levels of creativity" (Amabile, 1983: 67). [See also Larry Briskman (1981: 134 & 135), Teresa Amabile (1983: 4, 5 & 6) and Jane Piirto (2004: 140, 147, 148, 189-90)] These attributes include the following:

(ii) Creative Individuals are Different

Individuals displaying high levels of creativity are very different to 'normal' human beings. They are attracted to newness and originality, they have and provide unusual perspectives, display natural curiosity, have vivid imaginations, question the status quo and constantly seek to break the rules. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, (1996: 60, 63, 74, 145, 177 & 403), Jane Piirto (2004: 47, 127, 193 & 194), Richard Florida (2002: 31 & 206), Richard Hofstadter (1964: 423) and Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart (1993: 229-30)]

(iii) Creative Individuals are Independent

The freedom and personal control provided by feelings of independence are key to the focus and attention required for the attainment of a highly motivated state, which is the foundation for creative processes and practices. [See Jane Piirto (2002: 146), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 10 & 71) Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart (1993: 230) and Peter Elbow (1995: 81)]

(iv) Creative Individuals are Motivated

As has already been identified, a highly motivated state is an attribute common to all creative individuals and it is the core around which all their creative activities, processes, outcomes and products are formed, developed and completed. [See Jane Piirto (2002: 41 & 336), Alice Flaherty (2004: 52), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 58), Daniel Nettle (2002: 151-2) and Jane Piirto (2004: 144)]

This necessary singleminded focus, based on passionate determination, should be augmented by naïveté. [See Carl Jung (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 46), Johann Wolfgang Goethe (qtd in (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 60), François Mauriac (qtd in Cowley, 1957: 38), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 60 & 246), Jane Piirto (2002: 56) and Jane Piirto (2004: 422)]

In addition to the emotional elements of passion and naïveté, motivation also includes the elements of perseverance, determination, self-discipline and productivity. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 53, 58, 61, 69 & 87), Robert Sternberg and Todd Lubart (1993: 230), Jane Piirto (2004: 47, 59, 191 & 420) and Jane Piirto (2002: 38)]

(v) Additional Characteristics

Mentioned to a lesser extent by creativity authorities are the creative individual's intuitive and perceptive abilities (Piirto, 2004: 427), tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety (Sternberg, and Lubart, 1993: 230), keen adaptability (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: 51) and willingness to grow (Sternberg, and Lubart, 1993: 230).

(vi) *Creative Individuals are Complex*

Many creative individuals have complex personalities. The majority of creative people are introverted (Piirto, 2004: 199) and more likely to be "intuitive, feeling and perceptive" than normal individuals. [See results of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator (MBPTI) (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 199), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 16, 19, 20, 57, 68 & 73) David Lodge (1996: 203), Teresa Amabile (1983: 195), Jane Piirto (2002: 41, 123, 191 & 213) and Daniel Nettle (2002: 147-151)]

4. Social Effects on Creativity

In this section the various social influences, including socio-cultural, environmental and domain influences, on creativity will be discussed.

(a) <u>Socio-Cultural Influences</u>

(i) Background

In recent times the traditional personality focused creativity research approach has been supplemented by the work of social psychologists, who investigate and examine how the "social environment forms" the creative person, how creative individuals respond to the world and how social factors influence the creativity in people (Piirto 2002: 20).

Csikszentmihalyi provides a reminder that "creativity does not happen inside people's heads, but in the interaction between a person's thoughts and a sociocultural context" (1996:

26). Creativity is a contextual phenomenon or concept. The creator and her creative actions and products do not exist within a socio-cultural vacuum, but in the same way as the creator's creativity may be influenced by her socio-cultural surroundings, the creative products may be similarly influenced and certainly, whether those products are judged as being creative, new and valuable, would require "reference to some standards" in the form of some "social evaluation" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 23). Creativity would appear, therefore, to be a "systemic rather than an individual phenomenon" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 23). [See also IC Jarvie (1981: 122)]

(ii) Socio-Cultural Influences on Creative Behaviour

Teresa Amabile emphasises the significance of the role of social surroundings and cultural environments as a valuable means to influence the creativity levels of individuals, as opposed to the labour intensive, long term nature of the development of creative cognitive skills. She argues that "social variables represent one of the most promising avenues for influencing creative behaviour" (1983: viii) and contends that the "social psychology of creativity [can] identify particular social and environmental conditions that can positively and negatively influence the creativity of most individuals" (1983: 5).

Based on her evaluation of the work of Dean Simonton, which has been recognised as "the largest systematic program of research in the social psychology of creativity," Amabile makes the following findings about sociocultural influences on creativity:

- Political fragmentation in the form of cultural diversity might be generally conducive to creativity, while political instability during the individual's development period can be detrimental to creative productivity (1983: 185);
- A high number of competitors in a creator's field may lead to lower levels of individual productivity in some domains (1983: 185);
- Early exposure to cultural diversity ... appears to have a reliable, positive influence on creativity (1983: 204);
- Educational environments that encourage autonomy and self-directed learning may foster creativity (1983: 204-5); and
- Exposure to a creative model in a particular domain can increase the likelihood that a young person will do outstandingly creative work in that domain (1983: 205). [See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1983: 330)]

(iii) Socio-Cultural Evaluation of Creativity

An assumption that an outcome is creative cannot be based purely on the contention of the creator, but must receive some form of acknowledgement in the socio-cultural environment in which the outcome is produced. The socio-cultural environment gives the creative product its context and value as either being creative, or not. This principle is supported and substantiated by authorities such as Margaret Boden (1990: 34-5) and Alice Flaherty (2004: 51), while Jane Piirto and Michael Krausz extend the connection between creativity evaluation and society to include a temporal element. Creative products may be deemed to have more value during a later period than at the time of their original creation (Piirto, 2002: 9). Krausz suggests that the acceptance of a product as creative, as a work of art, "may shift from period to period" and he endorses Nelson Goodman's contention that the question "What is Art?" should be replaced with the question "When is Art?" (1981: 189).

(iv) Socio-Cultural Resistance to Creativity

Socio-cultural forces can also restrict creators and their activities and products. Society's relationship with creativity and creators can be a complex and dichotomous one, as Richard Hofstadter points out in his book, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*:

> ... the position of creative talent everywhere in the bourgeois world has been such as to make us aware of the persistent tension between the creative individual and the demands of society. Moreover, the more self-conscious the artistic and intellectual communities of the ... world have become about their own position, the more acutely aware they are that society cannot have the works of men of genius, or even of distinguished talent, on its own terms but must accept them as they come (1964: 423).

Csikszentmihalyi describes culture as an intersection of domains, which has as its primary objective the protection and ongoing survival of society and therefore "cultures must eliminate most of the new ideas their members produce [for] no culture could assimilate all of the novelty people produce without dissolving into chaos" (1996: 41).

Creative individuals are sometimes seen as a danger, as a threat to what is (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 1), to the status quo (Flaherty, 2004: 50), which is generally made up of specialists, who are heavily invested in the way things are and tend to resist novelty, change and innovation.

In contrast to its role as evaluator of creativity socio-cultural influences can also restrict creativity by purely protecting that which currently exists. As Paul Feyerabend contends in his book, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*, cultural protection of the status quo can reach a stage where "it contributes to the preservation of the old and familiar not because of any inherent advantage in it ... but because it is old and familiar" (1978: 36).

The absence of development in the pedagogy of creative writing may be as a result of the protection of the status quo and the old and familiar by the institutions and teaching specialists.

As a result of the complexity and extent of socio-cultural forces on creators and their creative products, in order to be creatively successful creators need to learn to be socio-culturally aware and to be "properly socialized ... learn its rules and expectations, yet at the same time remain to a certain extent aloof from it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 424).

(b) Environmental Influences on Creativity

(i) Background

There is agreement that the environment a creative individual finds herself, or puts herself, in is vitally important to the ultimate outcome of her creative product. Every individual is in some way affected by her environment and even the "most abstract mind is affected by the surroundings" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 127). In creating a positive teaching and learning environment it is important to remember the dictum, first postulated by Teresa Amabile and later supported by Csikszentmihalyi, that "it is easier to enhance creativity by changing conditions in the environment than by trying to make people think more creatively" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 1).

(ii) Creatively Positive Environments

Dean Simonton finds creativity flourishing in places and times marked by four characteristics: "domain activity, intellectual receptiveness, ethnic diversity, [and] political openness" (qtd in Florida, 2002: 35). Individual creativity is heightened and optimised in an environment that "fosters, accepts, and actively rewards creative ideation" (Sternberg and Lubart, 1993: 230). Creative individuals are supported and encouraged in conditions, which are designed to stimulate (Amabile 1983: 195) and nurture (Maugh, 1974: 1273) their creativity. [See also Piirto, 2004: 22)]

One of the most frequently identified positive environmental attributes for creativity to thrive is diversity and the creator's openness to and tolerance of such diversity (Aldridge, 1992: xvi-xvii). [See also Richard Florida (2002: 11 & 15) and Teresa Amabile (1983: 176)]

Exposure to the variations and differences in culture and the ability to mingle and interact within that diverse environment are all related to the concepts of newness, exposure to a newness of ideas and the newness of experience (Amabile, 1983: 176). Connected to this notion of newness is the consistent theme of freedom, which appears to be intertwined with almost every aspect of creativity. Arthur Miller's experience emphasises the novelty in diversity and difference:

> Above all I felt that I was tolerated. I didn't ask to be understood or accepted. To be tolerated was enough ... Europe was a new world to me ... just to be in some other, different world, an alien" (qtd in Brooks, 1963: 150).

(iii) Creativity and Education Environments

The constrained pedagogy of creative writing can be explained by creative writing's 'atopicism,' what Gregory Light refers to as a "pedagogic clash" (1992: 33). The development of creativity pedagogy requires an environment conducive to creativity and the production of creative products, perhaps as works of art; while education institutions focus primarily on "knowledge acquisition [and] the facilitation of learning" (Diakidoy and Kanari, 1999). The one requires freedom, tolerance, latitude and support, while the other

operates most effectively and efficiently under strict controls, specific measurement criteria and with minimal latitude and support. Students are taught and their success is based on displaying the effectiveness of that teaching through various assessment and evaluation instruments and devices. Academically based creative writing programmes therefore tend to be structured and implemented to conform to and reflect the knowledge based teaching and learning processes of the larger education organisation. Creativity teaching and learning methods and processes remain focused on tangible and measurable elements of writing craft, coupled to explanatory essays, and the exclusion of the elements of creativity, which are deemed to be unteachable and immeasurable. Authorities such as Csikszentmihalyi and Amabile appear to support and substantiate the perceived results of this "pedagogic clash" (Light, 1992: 33).

Focusing on creative activities at school level, Csikszentmihalyi emphasises how "exceptional students remember extracurricular activities more favourably than school subjects" (1996: 175) and Amabile stresses the importance of "open classrooms" in the establishment of teaching surroundings that are "conducive to creativity" (1983: 184). In explaining the differences between "intrinsic [and] extrinsic motivational orientations" (1983: 152), Amabile provides a clear blueprint of what changes need to be undertaken to establish creativity sensitive teaching surroundings:

> (1) learning motivated by curiosity versus learning in order to please the teacher, (2) incentive to work for one's own satisfaction versus working to please the teacher and get good grades, (3) preference for challenging work versus preference for easy work, (4) desire to work independently versus dependence on the teacher for help, and (5) internal versus external criteria for determining success or failure (1983: 152).

Dean Simonton's findings indicated that "many creative people" such as Stephen Crane, Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald "quit college so that their creativity won't be stifled" (Piirto, 2004: 214). In contrast Jane Piirto, basing her conclusion on her study of a respondent base selected from the American Contemporary Writers and Poets Register, found that creative writers no longer left the Academy as a means to protect their creativity (2004: 214).

Generally research studies have identified "education to degree level [as] a predictor of creative achievement" (Crozier, 1999) and formal education as a positive contributor to eminence, but at higher levels of formal education, there may be lower levels of eminence. [See also Piirto (2004: 123 & 237)] Amabile warns of the "dangers of education" to the quality of creativity.

> Although formal education is essential for high levels of creativity in most domains, an excessively extended formal education might be detrimental. This phenomenon could occur if continued formal exposure to organized knowledge in a domain leads to an overreliance on established algorithms, or if it leads to a slavish imitation of models (1983: 197).

It may be that this is the stage that has been reached by creative writing pedagogy in higher education institutions where the "overreliance on established algorithms" and the "slavish imitation of models (1983: 197) have become and remain the norm.

Academic institutions have become the sources of the prestige graduates attach to themselves (Piirto, 2002: 123 & 237.) and their springboard from and connection to individuals with the power and propensity to advance their interests in their creative field of study. Creativity is a less relevant element with the institution and the student's profession becoming the primary areas of focus. [See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 183-5)]

(iv) How Others Influence the Creative Environment

For the purposes of this section the 'others' referred to will include student peers, teachers and those mentors on which students may model themselves.

As regards the presence of student peers in the teaching and learning environment, the research findings are relatively straightforward and provide useful guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of an environment conducive to student creativity. It is generally accepted that, because creative tasks are "heuristic tasks [that] are complex, difficult, or unfamiliar" (Amabile, 1983: 142) the presence of others will have an effect on individual creativity. Where "creative performance has become virtually algorithmic" (Amabile, 1983: 143), however, individual creativity should not be adversely affected.

Amongst those individuals undertaking creative tasks that are still heuristic to them, the presence of others will have a negative affect on creativity (Amabile, 1983: 142) and, if those others are deemed to be evaluating individual creativity, those others will have even greater negative effects on that creativity (Amabile, 1983: 143-4). Amabile's findings illustrate that "subjects perform more poorly on creativity tests when they work as a group, and that some subjects may also perform poorly on individual creativity tests if they must work in the presence of others" (1983: 143).

Peer pressure in classrooms has similarly been found to undermine creativity (Amabile, 1983: 160) leading to group conformity and the exclusion of divergences, experimentation and alternative perspectives (Amabile, 1983: 160, 196-7). A means of minimising the negatives of peer presence, evaluation and pressure on the creative performance of the members of the group needs to be devised. [See Jane Piirto (2004: 423)]

The teachers in the creative writing teaching and learning environment have the most significant influence on the students and their creative activities. [See Jane Piirto (2004: 86) and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 174)]

In 1973 Chambers, based on the findings of a research study conducted with several hundred psychologists and chemists, ranked the most important creativity "facilitating factors ... and inhibiting factors" associated with teachers, as experienced by respondents during their tertiary education years:

> Facilitating factors ... were: (1) teaches students as individuals; (2) encouraged students to be independent; (3) served as a model; (4) spent a considerable amount of time with students outside of class; (5) indicated that excellence was expected and could be achieved; (6) enthusiastic; (7) accepted students as equals; (8) directly rewarded student's creative behaviour or work; (9) interesting, dynamic lecturer; and (10) excellent on one-to-one basis.
>
> Inhibiting factors ... were (1) discouraged students (ideas, creativity, etc.); (2) was insecure (hypercritical, sarcastic); (3) lacked enthusiasm; (4) emphasized rote learning; (5) was dogmatic and rigid; (6) did not keep up with the field; generally incompetent; (7) had narrow interest; and (8) not available outside the classroom (qtd in Amabile, 1983: 164). [See also Amabile (1983: 197)]

Teachers at both school and tertiary levels of education contribute positively to a creative teaching environment by providing both perceptual and cognitive stimulation (Amabile, 1983: 197), offering pupils and students positive and constructive evaluations, advice and feedback (Amabile, 1983: 197) and being aware of the possibility of the nonconformist and unpredictable behaviour of creative individuals and recognising and adapting to those difficult behaviours (Amabile, 1983: 197), instead of merely avoiding, ignoring and rejecting pupils and students displaying those sorts of behaviour. Teachers, who make a positive contribution to their pupil and student creativity, are usually also nurturing when they need to be (Piirto, 2004: 213).

Creative writing teaching and learning has become more focused on creative writing as a vocation and a profession with the ultimate objective of most student writers being to become "anthologized, published, and respected [and] major literary award winners" (Piirto, 2002: 125). Writing teachers have contributed to this, particularly since college and university professors have become judges, selectors, guardians of style and quality and, ultimately, the gatekeepers of the domain of creative writing. Access to publication, awards and teaching positions and tenure is often dependent on the student and teacher relationships and the strength and significance of teacher "lines of influence" (Piirto, 2002: 124) in the institution.

The final aspect of the influence of others on individual creativity is the important practice of modelling or mentorship with the teacher acting as a role model. The modelling teaching format has been the foundation of creative writing pedagogy, since the introduction of the teaching of creative writing at tertiary institutions in America in the late 1930s.

The teaching and learning of creative writing is often based on the master/apprentice model with the apprentice copying the master's creative processes, methods and practices and perhaps to a certain extent mimicking elements of the master's style. Through this apprenticeship type learning students are also exposed to certain elements of the writing domain (Csikszentmihalyi, (1996: 174). [See also Cattell & Butcher (qtd in Amabile, 1983: 146)]

According to Amabile, based on her findings on the practice of modelling and her evaluation of the studies undertaken by other creativity authorities, there are "some puzzling complexities in the relationship between earlier role-model availability and later creative achievement" (1983: 152), which reduce the research findings to the status of tentative indicators, until confirmed by specifically focused and designed future research studies:

- Watching creative models can lead people to become more creative (1983: 149);
- Role models appear to positively influence creative precociousness, which in turn, can positively influence later productivity (1983: 151);
- The more creative models available during the individual's developmental period, the more likely he is to produce notable work at an early age (1983: 175);
- Prolonged adherence to role models may reduce creative productivity (1983: 185);
- Perhaps because an individual may adopt a too-faithful imitation of models, the direct effect of model availability on individual creative productivity (if not mediated by precociousness) is actually negative (1983: 175); and
- It may be important at some point to go beyond the examples set by one's masters [and it] 'may prove negative for those creators who fail to break away from their mentors' (1983: 149).

(c) <u>The Influence of Domain on Creativity</u>

(i) Background

One of the most important of the social influences on creativity, alongside the socio-cultural and environmental aspects, is the influence of the domain in which the creativity takes place. Jane Piirto maintains that the talent to be creative is an innate one, which can only be realised once it is recognised and brought into existence by a specific domain (Piirto, 2004: 141). Her definition of a domain appears to be restricted to those areas of knowledge and endeavour, which are "well-defined academically" and which "people can go to school to study" (Piirto, 2004: 141). So for Piirto it would appear that creativity of any significance can only take place in academic institutions, which is where all the creativity allocating domains would appear to be situated. Her list of domains includes, "mathematics, science, business, entrepreneurship, economics and sciences" alongside "visual arts, music, theater,

writing and literature and dance," alongside "athletics, spiritual and theological Philosophy, Psychology, [her capitals] the interpersonal and education (Piirto, 2004: 141).

Csikszentmihalyi's description of the relationship between creativity and domain is more general and all-encompassing and provides a valuable foundation from which to launch individual, detailed evaluations of area specific domains and a framework within which to locate those findings.

As discussed earlier, Csikszentmihalyi maintains that creativity does not begin and end with the individual (1996: 31), but that creativity is in fact a social phenomenon, that creativity is a system and it results from the interaction of the three elements of that system: "... culture that contains symbolic rules, a person who brings novelty into the symbolic domain and a field of experts who recognize and validate the innovation" (1996: 6).

Domains are situated in the culture of society, which houses the "symbolic rules" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 6). The fields include "individuals who act as gatekeepers to the domain" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 28) and decide what should and should not be accepted into the domain and the final element of the creative system is the individual person, who having used the "symbols of a given domain ... has a new idea or sees a new pattern" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 28), which is accepted by the field as worthy of entrance into the domain. [See also Margaret Boden (1990: 254)]

Csikszentmihalyi warns that the domain can be an obstacle and hindrance within the symbolic system, particularly when "the inspiration for a creative solution comes from a conflict suggested by the 'state of the art'" (1996: 87). Creative works, besides gaining acceptance into a domain as a result of working within and abiding by the symbolic rules of a domain, may also earn the badge of creativity by contradicting and casting aside those rules and effectively changing and altering the domain. Larry Briskman supports Csikszentmihalyi's contention that the "creative ... artist is as much the inheritor of a tradition as he is the transcender of one" (1981: 150).

(ii) Domain Receptiveness

Various domains will offer creative individuals varying levels of receptiveness for their creative offerings. Dean Simonton found that creativity flourished "in places and times marked by four characteristics: 'domain activity, intellectual receptiveness, ethnic diversity, [and] political openness'" (qtd in Florida, 2002: 35). Csikszentmihalyi provides glimpses of more realistic notions of the relationship between the creative individual's endeavours to have her work recognised and the acceptance by the domain of such work as being creative.

In order to be receptive to creativity, domains must have "surplus attention available" (1996: 8); and must be "well suited ... to the recognition and diffusion of novel ideas" (1996: 31). These attributes highlight the positive receptiveness, which would assist the creative efforts of individuals to be recognised. As mentioned earlier, domains, generally, and the fields that police them, specifically, appear to have a tendency to hinder, rather than to help creativity. One of the primary hindrances to creativity is the extent of the accessibility to a particular domain (1996: 38).

Without personal access to a domain, a creative individual and her creativity would not exist and for this reason issues of accessibility to domains are often attached to notions of chance or luck (1996: 53), because creative 'success' is determined by the creative individual's ability to communicate effectively with the field as a gatekeeper (1996: 54), "having good connections" (1996: 55) and being "known and appreciated by the relevant people" (1996: 54).

Access to most fields is highly restricted (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 55) based on the time availability of the specialists guarding the entrance to the domain and the volume of creative work to be assessed and evaluated for entrance. Hence the broad trend towards the adoption of "quantifiable measurement" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 40) by many fields as a time effective means of evaluating levels of creativity. For example, the creative writing domain has increasingly framed its entrance parameters around the numeric achievements of writers in terms of the number of books or stories published and the number of awards garnered or competitions won. Counting the numeric achievements as a measure of creativity is less laborious than assessing the creative work of the individual and comparing it to the prior

products that make up the creativity levels of the domain.

Csikszentmihalyi distinguishes between those fields that are reactive, that "do not solicit or stimulate novelty," and those fields that are "proactive" (1996: 43) and do. He describes the dangers of domains that operate at these extreme ends of creative evaluation and acceptance:

> Some fields are conservative and allow only a few new items to enter the domain at any given time. They reject most novelty and select only what they consider best. Others are more liberal in allowing new ideas into their domains, and as a result these change more rapidly. At the extremes, both strategies can be dangerous: it is possible to wreck a domain either by starving it of novelty or by admitting too much unassimilated novelty into it" (1996: 44).

There are also cases of where the field, which takes over a domain, is not competent in that domain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 44) and a field becomes "unable to represent well a particular domain" (1996: 45). This specific scenario may be used to describe the assimilation of creative writing into academic institutions, as a relatively new field and discipline. What was once an artistic literary product situated within a more artistically receptive domain, has become the subject of a more educationally and professionally focused domain with the textual quality being judged on measurable results against academic and professional criteria and not the traditional artistic parameters.

Csikszentmihalyi quotes Barry Commoner, who contends that "most people in the university work for the admiration of their peers" (1996: 424) and argues that this

> ... is a problem that is typical of the history of fields in general. At first, they are constituted to solve a genuine problem ... but as time passes, each institution unconsciously changes its priorities to that of aggrandizing and preserving itself. This is the kind of 'mimetic exploitation' ... which we have to avoid lest the culture become stagnant (1996: 424). [See also Alice Flaherty (2004: 51)]

A warning is sounded about the effects of "overspecialization where bright young people are trained to become exclusive experts in one field and shun breadth like the plague" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 89). This puts one in mind of the creative writing teaching

cycle, particularly at American academic institutions, where academically trained writers teach student writers, who go on to teach student writers to become writers, who teach other students in what becomes an academically internalised teaching cycle.

If a "field becomes too self-referential and cut off from reality," perhaps as creative writing has done, "it runs the risk of becoming irrelevant" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 89) and it is at this stage that perhaps the most significant creative progress can be made. What generally happens when there is a growing "dissatisfaction with the rigidity of domains" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 89) is that creative individuals start looking with a different perspective at the attractiveness, suitability and accessibility of other domains for their creative offerings. For example, would creative writing, as a verbal art form, not be more beneficially located in the domain of the fine arts, rather than in the domain of English Language, Literature and Cultural Studies, which has been its predominant academic location for the last century?

(iii) The Domain Creativity Selection Process

It is useful to consider a domain orientated definition of creativity as a basis for the evaluation of the selection process adopted by the creativity domain: "Creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 28). Such change or transformation of or within a domain cannot be affected without the consent of the field guardians responsible for that domain. These guardians are "expert peers connoisseurs and critics" (Piirto, 2004: 30), who are tasked with the recognition of a person's creative work. It would appear to be that "quality is defined by the domain itself" (Piirto, 2004: 30) through the creative selection process of the gatekeepers in the field.

If it is agreed that in order to be adjudged to be an exceptional creative product that product must have resulted in a change to an existing domain, or in the transformation of a domain into a new one, it could be said that the creative writing domain's gatekeepers have been largely ineffectual and have failed in the identification and maintenance of creative textual quality. They have become the gatekeepers of creative products, as commodities, and not creative products, as literary art forms. In effect the domain of creative writing has set

standards of lower levels of quality with its peers, connoisseurs and critics allowing a "plethora of production" with "an underlying implication that much of the creative output nowadays is substandard" (Piirto, 2004: 30).

While IC Jarvie talks of the responsibility of the fields to "exercise much of their critical faculties on the question of what is good enough to release" (1981: 125) and Csikszentmihalyi argues that it is the job of experts in each domain to pass judgement on performance in that domain (1996: 42), it is evident that certain domains allow a proliferation of novelties to be released, which will never become part of the culture nor, for that matter, change or transform the domain from which they emanate, suggesting that some fields as gatekeepers of domains are less stringent in applying creative quality criteria during their gatekeeping selection processes. It would appear that the creative writing domain is not particularly discriminating in its selection of creative products to be released. As Csikszentmihalyi questions, "of about one hundred thousand new books ... published every year in the United States ... how many ... will be remembered 10 years from now?" (1996: 41).

This change in the quality of selection parameters in the domain of creative writing may be a repercussion of the change of gatekeepers from the traditional literary critics, as independent judges of the literary quality of a literary art form, to the academically based creative writers, as writing teachers and academics, whose primary objectives are publication and prestige in the form of writing awards and prizes.

The gatekeepers of the creative writing domain have turned their focus away from the creative product to individual writing talent based purely on the judgements of the writer's teachers and peers substantiated by the acquisition of writing awards, publication and writing competition prizes, while excluding the responses of the reading public. This shift is apparent in the language and discourse of Jane Piirto in her summation of the current state of the domain of creative writing. Her words also serve as a reminder of the warning that "as time passes, each institution, unconsciously, changes its priorities to that of aggrandizing and preserving itself" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 424).

> What constitutes writing talent is most often a matter of peer judgement — the field itself judges who has the talent. In my study, one finding was that almost

> all of the writers had won either a National Endowment for the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship or a state arts council award. Prizes such as the Pulitzer, National Book Award, and the National Book Critics Circle Award are all juried by peers — experts in creative writing. As in any domain, those who are talented are judged by critics/connoisseurs of the domain. The winners may not be those authors who are on the bestseller lists, but they are thrust into prominence by the gatekeepers of the field — fellow creative writers and critics (Piirto, 2004: 201).

(iv) Creative Success in a Domain

The definition of creativity, which Csikszentmihalyi calls the "Big C" (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 8), is that the creative product has the power to change a domain in the culture of society.

The extent of that domain change would appear to require a huge amount of effort and dedication, because the creative product may include changing established traditions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 8), disrupting or even eradicating the status quo, or perhaps even redefining a deeply entrenched, historical way of doing things. Creativity authorities describe successful creative efforts as being able to "expand the boundaries of a domain" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 351), "establish a new domain" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 28) and "enhance a domain" (Piirto, 2004: 19).

Larry Briskman describes the significance of creativity as "break[ing] out of our framework" and he emphasises that these breakouts are rare and highly significant events and we see them as highly creative because they are so difficult to achieve (1981: 151). [See also Paul Feyerabend (1978: 36)]

(v) Field and Domain Knowledge

Besides bringing into existence domain changing products and all the passion, dedication, time and effort required for their creation, creative individuals also have to undergo a form of creative socialisation in order to be in a better position to convince and persuade the field, as the gatekeeper to the domain, that their creative products are worthy of acceptance into that domain: "a creative person must convince the field that he or she has made a valuable innovation" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 42). In order to be in a position to optimise their

persuasiveness, creative individuals must have a thorough knowledge of the specific field (Sternberg and Lubart, 1993: 229), which guards and restricts access to the domain. At the same time creative individuals must, however, also maintain a certain elasticity, so while learning its "rules and expectations" they should remain "to a certain extent aloof from it ... with one foot in the field and one outside it" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 424).

By gathering information and knowledge about the creator's selected field, she makes herself "aware of those very standards," which her creative product "will have to meet if it is to be an acceptable one" (Briskman, 1981: 147). As Larry Briskman points out, the acquisition of field and domain knowledge by the creator allows her to "control ... [her] job specification ... the standards required of a solution" (1981: 147). The gathering of field knowledge would include "critically interacting with prior products [and] with tradition" (1981: 148).

Depending on the nature of the domain, the creator may, however, be aiming for more than just the field's acceptance of her creative product into that domain. Perhaps the domain requires radical alteration and in such cases the creator would have to "become involved in [the] domain deeply enough to reach its boundaries and then push them further" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 53).

At the most fundamental level "a person cannot be creative in a domain to which he or she is not exposed" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 29) and "you cannot transform a domain unless you first thoroughly understand how it works" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 90). As a primary starting point, creative individuals must have basic domain skills, "those that are necessary for functioning in the specific area of creativity" (Piirto, 2004: 98) [See also Amabile (1983: 70)] and domain expertise at progressively more concentrated levels from novice to apprentice to the level of an expert, which may enable her to "master the domain" and thereby "transform the ... domain and ... extend its boundaries" (Piirto, 2004: 15). [See also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 102)]

According to Csikszentmihalyi, the results of his research study identify creative success as being based on creative individuals' "long-term commitment to a domain of interest" (1996: 192) with a degree of focus and dedication, which results in the "internalizing [of] the

field's criteria of judgement to the extent that they can give feedback to themselves, without having to wait to hear from experts" (1996: 116). The drive to generate a level of creativity, which has the power, validity and relevancy to change or transform a domain is not based on pure passion or desire, but must carry a certain degree of discontentment or "dissatisfaction" with the state of the domain, "rejecting it ... for a better way" (1996: 90), which becomes a creative solution developed by the creative individual.

The domain of creative writing, with its ancillary domain of the teaching and learning of creative writing, based on the evaluations and findings of the authorities on creativity, displays an array of complexities, dichotomies and contradictions within its practical workings, when compared to the theories that should serve as its foundation. It's almost as if the theories are too extreme in their requirements and parameters and the theoretical objectives unachievable so that the objectives have to be lowered to enable more writers to gain entrance into and acceptance by the domain, as recognised and acknowledged creative contributors. By diluting the entry standards, however, the creative products do not meet the original theoretical standards required to be considered and acclaimed as truly creative with the result that the products have become sub-standard and the criteria for truly creative products are avoided. The focus on the creative product is accordingly of necessity diverted to the writer and the awards and prizes she accumulates, as substitute evidence of her creativity. It is this lowering of standards, which has enabled the vast growth in the publication of texts and the groundswell of 'successful' authors even though the creative quality of their texts may not meet with the theoretical requirements set for creative quality.

5. The Creative Process

(a) Introduction

Despite Carl Jung's contention that the creative process will "baffle all attempts at rational formulation [and] will forever elude the human understanding" (qtd in Piirto, 2004: 27), authorities persist in attempting to define the creative process based on the experiences of the artists themselves. Some authorities warn that the recollections of creators should at best be treated as undependable and untrustworthy, because "autobiographical accounts of what happens during the creative process are quite unreliable and shouldn't be taken

seriously" (Piirto, 2004: 83).

Some specialists define the core of the creative process as being when the creator "surrenders the self to some internal necessity" (Piirto, 2004: 44), or reaches a "state of heightened emotion" (Piirto, 2004: 85). Other authorities seek to reduce the process to a more logical and rational phenomenon. Csikszentmihalyi claims that "the creative process begins with the goal of solving a problem" (1996: 114) and Boden confidently argues that the puzzle of "how creativity happens" can be solved by "taming the paradox and eliminating the mystery" and reducing creativity to a "mental capacity," which can then be "understood in psychological terms, as other mental capacities are" (1990: 19).

Teresa Amabile highlights "the most fascinating and frustrating aspects" of the creative process: "it defies effort ... creative behaviour cannot be achieved simply by trying" (1983: 119). In contrast to this notion of creativity defying the individual's efforts to create, according to the results of certain studies there is a possibility that continuing consistent creative efforts "over long periods of time ... could contribute to measurable improvements in creative abilities" (1983: 190).

Most authorities have agreed that the creative process consists of four stages: "Inspiration ... Incubation ... Illumination ... and Verification" (Wallas, 1925: 80). [See also Jane Piirto (2004: 41) and Margaret Boden (1990: 19)] Csikszentmihalyi's rendition of the phases of the creative process include preparation and incubation, but he replaces illumination with "insight" and verification with "evaluation" and extends the process to include an extra phase, "elaboration" (1996: 80).

(b) Stages of the Creative Process

(i) Inspiration

The first phase of the creative process is when the creator is inspired, sometimes referred to as "The Visitation of the Muse" (Piirto, 2002: 91). Jane Piirto admits that what amounts to the primary motivation for and drive to create remains mysterious, magical, unpredictable and intangible and quotes artist Stephen Berg's description of inspiration:

> The creative act is one of the most mysterious of all human activities. There is ... an aspect of creating that can only be accounted for by a notion such as inspiration. Writers and artists know better than anyone that the phenomenon of inspiration is essentially impossible to explain, and that no amount of critical theorizing or introspection will account for the mysterious sources and transformation of their imagination (2002: 91).

Certain authorities reject the mysterious and magical associations of inspiration and replace them with more scientifically orientated notions of puzzles, tensions, problems and symbolic systems, which need to be addressed, removed and solved in order to provide the stimulus to start the creative process (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 95).

(ii) Incubation

Incubation is defined as an unconscious stage of the process taking place "below the threshold of consciousness" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 79) when the creator has ceased to "consciously work" (Amabile, 1983: 67) on the creative subject. Inherent in this concept of incubation are notions of freedom from "conscious thought ... mental relaxation" (Wallas, 1925: 87) and an idle time "when the mind is not consciously preoccupied …" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 100).

Incubation is also considered to be a stage shrouded in mystery and uncertainty when "the process of creativity usually goes underground" and occupies "the 'dark' spaces" that defy ordinary analysis (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 98) with creative thoughts evolving in the tension filled gaps "below the threshold of consciousness" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 103).

(iii) Illumination

The illumination stage of the creative process is a more complex one seemingly consisting of a conglomeration of characteristics and components. Illumination has been described as the "Aha! Moment" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 50), or "The 'Aha!' Experience" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 103) when the creative idea is formulated and recognised by the creator. The illumination stage consists of an intricate amalgamation of

the elements of intuition, insight and imagination.

Creative intuition affords "creative people ... a sense ... of ... what the end result [of their creative work] will be" (Piirto, 2004: 62). [See also Arthur Koestler (1981: 16) and Margaret Boden (1990: 240)] Insight has been described as the moment when the creative task has been "crystallized" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 104) in the creator's mind [See also Piirto (2004: 63)] and it is the imagination, which "out of the chaos of elements or shattered fragments ... puts together some form" (Boden, 1990: 117), which becomes the creative solution nurtured during incubation and released and recognised by intuition and insight. [See G. Wallas (1925: 88) Jane Piirto (2002: 105), Michael Polanyi (1981: 103) and Rollo May (1975: 133)]

(iv) Verification

The fourth component of the creative process is verification, also referred to as evaluation, and this is described as the vital stage when the creator must decide whether her creative product is valuable enough to complete considering the socio-cultural aspects of the field and taking into account the relevant domain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 80). The creative product "must not only incorporate a novel problem-solution ... it must also be an acceptable problem-solution ... it must ... meet certain standards or certain criteria of acceptability" (Briskman, 1981: 143).

(c) <u>Creativity as a Polarised Process</u>

(i) Introduction

When evaluating the nature and structure of the creative process beyond the 'mechanical' stages, the authorities emphasise the polarised and dichotomous nature of the process.

It was psychologist Dean Simonton, who identified in his "Darwinian theory of creativity ... a ... view of the relations among creativity, motivation, and productivity" (Flaherty, 2004: 52). It is the opposite notions of creative spontaneity and creative productivity, which represent the distinctive and antithetical poles of the nature of the creative process. [See

Robert Boice (1985: 473 & 477)] Besides the traditionally romantic view of the spontaneity of artistic processes encompassing an attitude of "Anything goes!" the creative process also requires a balancing productive component, which involves "conscious planning and problem-solving ... too" (Boden, 1990: 132).

While there is general consensus that both components play a vital role in the creative process, it would appear that the authorities, being largely academic in their composition, tend to favour the more measurable and pragmatic components of the creative process, while grudgingly admitting that irrationality and spontaneity also play a part in generating quality creative outcomes. It is a puzzle, which faces all creativity authorities. Daniel Nettle explains the contrast between the "madness of genius" and the disciplined productivity required in the creative process:

> Psychological studies of the creative mind have shown again and again that, however much we might romanticize it, it is typified by qualities that are disappointingly opposite of psychotic: self-discipline, tenacity, organization, calmness, and strong self-image. This is the conundrum of creative achievement; is it about fiery leaps of inspiration, or a banal, Calvinistic rationing of perspiration? Or both? (Nettle, 2002: 141). [See also Arthur Koestler (1981: 15)]

Rollo May concludes that "creativity arises out of the tension between spontaneity and limitations, the latter … forcing the spontaneity into the various forms which are essential to the work of art or poem" (1975: 115). Both competing components are valuable and play a vital role in the creative process with the dilution or eradication of either having a detrimental effect on the creative outcome.

(ii) Creative Freedom

The freedom to exercise personal control over the creative practice is one of the primary requirements for the successful completion of creative tasks and the intrinsic motivation required to enable creators to achieve high levels of creativity. Famous creators such as Einstein, Woody Allen and DH Lawrence indicate the sanctity of this personal control, as the primary source of their creative motivation and enthusiasm.

Einstein's interest in science was dramatically affected by the "deterring effect" of the high levels of "coercion" he was subjected to during his years at a militaristic school in Germany (Amabile, 1983: 7). Woody Allen finds his creative work as a standup comedian and writer far more enjoyable than his work as a filmmaker based purely on the levels of control others have over his work when he is making films (Amabile, 1983: 7). D. H. Lawrence rejects external constraints outright in favour of total personal control, as identified in notions of intrinsic motivation when the creative act is the sole area of creative focus: "I always say my motto is 'Art for my sake.' If I want to write, I write — and if I don't want to, I won't" (qtd in Amabile, 1983: 8).

Teresa Amabile quotes Albert Einstein's observations of the negative and debilitating effects traditional educational philosophies, principles and methods may have on pupil and student creativity.

> It is nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of enquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom: without this it goes to wreck and ruin without fail. It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion and sense of duty (1983: 3).

Inherent in this need for creative freedom are the other previously identified by-products of playfulness (Amabile, 1983: 67), experimentation, enjoyment and an awareness (Jarvie, 1981: 115) akin to the naïveté, which has been identified as a key component of individual creative practices. There are numerous studies, which have made a direct link between the significance of play and playfulness and the creative process (Jarvie, 1981: 115) with the value of a playful attitude being attributed to the creator's disconnection from the creative task and the irrelevance of the activities of play, which may lead to fresh perspectives and fresh solutions. [See also Teresa Amabile (1983: 181, 185 & 195)]

The structural and organisational coercion, which exists as a natural part of most education institutions, clashes with the need for unfettered control on the part of the creative individual. From an organisational perspective, unchecked and undirected creativity always

results in "a strong departure from conformity … work [that] is often downright *subversive* [and] disrupts existing patterns … creativity is an act of rebellion" (Florida, 2002: 31-2).

(iii) Creative Discipline

In contrast to the need for creative freedom, there is the need of a disciplined approach to creative tasks and practices. Creative freedom without some concrete form of creative production or outcomes will always render the creative process abstract and without any actual form. Creative individuals should also, besides embracing creative freedom, practise styles of work, which are "conducive to creative production" (Amabile, 1983: 74). This style of work encompasses

> (a) an ability to concentrate effort and attention for long periods of time; (b) an ability to use 'productive forgetting;' (c) a persistence in the face of difficulty; and (d) a high energy level, a willingness to work hard, and an overall high level of productivity (Amabile, 1983: 74). [See also Richard Florida (2002: 54), J. J. Pear (1977: 516), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 87) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1817)]

While there is general consensus amongst creativity authorities that the creative process requires both talent and hard work for the production of creatively successful outcomes, [See Jane Piirto (2004: 124) and Richard Florida (2002: 33)] different authorities place more emphasis on one element than the other.

See for example, Robert Boice's pro-productivity stance in his article, "The Neglected Third Factor in Writing: Productivity," in *College Composition and Communication*:

> The main conclusion I draw from these results is this: external contingencies that forced writing regardless of mood seem to facilitate, not impede, the appearance of creative ideas for writing. Habitual writing is evidently superior to spontaneous writing, not only in producing finished copy but introducing new and useful ideas for writing. A secondary conclusion is that productivity precedes creativity — and not vice versa as romantics have supposed (1985: 477).

Boice argues that his study proves that "producing writing is a learnable skill" (1985: 477) and that it counters "traditional beliefs that creativity must be spontaneous and internally motivated …" (1985: 478).

Teresa Amabile identifies the debilitating effects on creativity of extrinsic influences such as punishment and reward, while Boice contends that these extrinsic factors actually improve writing quality and productivity. He, however, does not utilise any form of writing quality mechanism to measure and apportion notions of quality to the respondents' writing products.

Boice's contradiction of the relevant findings of researchers such as Amabile and Csikszentmihalyi can be attributed to his findings being based more specifically on non-fiction, academically located and directed writing activities. By its very nature, and based on the very different objectives of creative writing, creative writing cannot and should not be part of a general grouping of activities under the heading, 'writing.' For creativity to flourish it requires an acceptance of both elements of the creative process, the freedom and the discipline, without a bias one way or another.

Highlighting the dangers of creativity without the discipline of productivity, authorities point out how creative individuals are often prone to inactivity in the form of procrastination and entropy, which are described as a "barrier to creativity" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 117). As the creative individual is exposed to and influenced by freedom and discipline, she may "generally [be] torn between two opposite sets of instructions programmed into the brain: the least effort imperative on one side, and the claims of creativity on the other" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 110). [See also G. Wallas (1925: 88) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (2004)]

Entropy has been described as a negative motivational force, which is "more primitive and more powerful than the urge to create" that "kicks in … when there are no external demands" and, unless the creative individual understands what is happening, it can take over her body and mind (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 109).

(iv) Creative Expansion and Limitation

Instead of adopting the notion of a balance between the two poles of the creative process, freedom and discipline, Rollo May argues that expansion and limitation should be viewed as two vital components, without which creativity and the creative process would not exist or be productive. He contends that "limiting and expanding" must go together, because in "confronting limits … the human personality actually turns out to be expansive" (1975: 115). May highlights the significance of this conflict between the need to expand and the limitations put on such expansion by quoting Heraclitus: "Conflict is both king of all and father of all" and explaining that "conflict presupposes limits, and the struggle with limits is actually the source of creative productions" (1975: 115). May's theory reminds one of Csikszentmihalyi's contentions that a product or activity can only be judged to be truly creative when it changes or transforms a domain. One can envisage the conflict and limitations that need to be overcome in order to make such dramatic changes and transformations happen.

The only risk of disruption to, or the reversal of, the creative process would appear to be the existence of extreme rigidity and obstinacy in either the expansive efforts of the creative individual, or the limiting restrictions of the specific domain. If creators "throw form or limits out entirely, they become self-destructive and noncreative (May, 1975: 120) and if a domain insists on a rigid "dedication to facts and hard-headed objectivity" and disparages and rejects creativity as valueless and unscientific (May, 1975: 124) the domain will stagnate and decline.

May's hypothesis is an important one and it is worth quoting it here as a final emphasis:

> … limits are not only unavoidable in human life, they are also valuable … creativity itself requires limits, for the creative act arises out of the struggle of human beings with and against that which limits them … to begin with, there is the inescapable physical limitation of death (May, 1975: 13).

(v) The Creative Process as Synthesis

Having identified that the creative process consists of four clearly defined stages, namely inspiration, incubation, illumination and verification and that in its very nature it is a polarised process with constant conflict between freedom and productivity and expansion and limitation, it is important to also consider and evaluate the very specific nature of the creative process as one of synthesis.

Synthesis involves a number of methods and techniques, including an analysis of existing "data, perceptions and materials" in order to come up with "combinations that are *new and* useful" . (Florida, 2002: 31) Arthur Koestler provides a valuable description of creativity as a process of synthesis:

> The creative act does not create something out of nothing, like the God of the Old Testament; it combines, reshuffles and relates already existing but hitherto separate ideas, facts, frames of perception, associative contexts (1981: 2).

Creative synthesis also often incorporates the assimilation of contraries, clashes of opposites or antitheses in a collision between incompatibles (Koestler: 1981: 15). [See also Jane Piirto, 2004: 144)] Pointing to a less violent process, Piirto quotes Perkins as simply describing the creative process as a "process of selection" (2004: 144), while Teresa Amabile argues that it is of greater practical value to examine and evaluate the heuristics involved in the creative process, than to merely make broad statements about the creative process as a synthesis:

> "Deliberate attempts should be made to identify, learn, and use effective creativity heuristics. Since these, for the most part, are not domain-specific, they can be regarded as general rules of thumb that guide problem-solving, invention, and artistic creation" (1983: 200).

Amabile describes some of these creativity heuristics as being (a) the rearrangement, re-categorising and reclassifying of the elements of the problem; (b) reconsideration of "intermediate possibilities" and generating additional concepts; (c) utilising "concentrated, massed work sessions;" (d) attempting the counter-intuitive; and (e) making the strange

familiar and the familiar strange and using analogies (1983: 200-1). [See also Teresa Amabile (1983: 191) and Margaret Boden (1990: 12 & 179-181) on the importance of analogy in the creative process]

(vi) Creativity as a Critical Process

One of the least mentioned aspects of the creative process is the creator's necessary ability to critically judge the quality of her work within the field and domain from which it emanates. Not only must the creator, in order to be assured of the accuracy required of her critical deliberations, have a knowledge of the parameters of excellence in her field, but she must also understand and appreciate the workings of the domain.

For example, in the field of creative writing writers have to be dedicated, regular, if not prolific, readers in order to grasp and maintain their own personal criteria for what quality writing is (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 47). Yet the concept of quality and the application of those quality standards in her own writing is insufficient as it represents only half of the critical aspects of the creative writing process. The creator, who aims to make any form of creative contribution, should also reproduce the creative system within which she works within her mind by "learning the rules and the content of the domain, as well as the criteria of selection [and] the preferences of the field" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 47).

It is only by assimilating the vast amounts of creative product knowledge and the requirements of the specific fields and domains that creators will be able to critically select "what is good enough to release" (Jarvie, 1981: 125) and have the ability, during the creative process, "to get rid of the trash ... to throw out the junk immediately (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 47).

(vii) Additional Aspects of the Creative Process

Finally, there are certain aspects of the creative process, which do not seem to have any formal categorised relevance, but are experienced by the creators themselves.

By and large the authorities are in agreement that the creative process is best and most

successfully practised in solitude. The creative process is a solitary one; many creators employ specific rituals and customs during their creativity production processes; the creative process is predominantly an untidy, messy and sometimes chaotic process and it is highly unpredictable in nature.

These aspects of creativity are largely gleaned from an analysis of a wide range of biographical material of successful creative individuals. For most creative individuals solitude is an absolute creative necessity and not a luxury at all. Virginia Woolf spoke of her frustration at being continually interrupted. For her solitude was "soothing [and] a treasure" (Piirto, 2004: 68).

Solitude does not necessarily have to equate to physical isolation in a specific location, but appears to be more a frame of mind, a spiritual singleness even if the creator is out and about in public (Piirto, 2004: 47). The nature and extent of the solitude varies between creative individuals. Some writers like Thomas Carlyle and Somerset Maugham require insulation and isolation in what Roald Dahl calls 'a kind of womb' (qtd in Piirto, 2002: 89), while other writers such as William Golding, while a teacher, wrote in his classroom, George Bernard Shaw wrote on trains and poet Frank O'Hara wrote poems in bars and at gatherings (Piirto, 2002: 90). William Butler Yeats spoke of giving his creative process his "whole attentions" (Piirto, 2002: 111).

Often a distinction is drawn between the real world and the creating world, which is protected from the distractions and disruptions of a real life existence. Because "any intrusion from the solid world of everyday reality can make that [creating] world disappear in an instant" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 120), creative individuals are often forced to develop their own idiosyncratic defence mechanisms in the form of habits, rituals and processes, with which to shield themselves against interruptions during their creative deliberations. Csikszentmihalyi explains the significance of solitude and the need for its protection:

> Many of the peculiarities attributed to creative persons are really just ways to protect the focus of concentration so that they may lose themselves in the creative process. Distractions interrupt the flow, and it may take hours to recover the peace of mind one needs to get on with the work. The more ambitious the

task, the longer it takes to lose oneself in it, and the easier it is to get distracted (1996: 120). [See also Jane Piirto (2004: 69)]

In contrast to this primary need for solitude during the creative process is the bias towards writing as a group activity in the philosophies, principles and methods of teaching creative writing, particularly in the workshop environment, which predominates in higher education institutions. It would seem to suggest, especially when read with Teresa Amabile's research findings, that groups may be counter creative and that significant creative progress may not be possible within the workshop setting. The only valuable function of the workshop setting would then be discussion, evaluation and critical feedback of the creative products, which emanate from the solitary creative practice of students outside the writing classroom.

In terms of creativity rituals, these are as varied and strange as the broad array of creative individuals creating at any one time and it is not necessary to discuss these here. [See Jane Piirto (2004: 437) and Jane Piirto (2002: 88-9)]

The creative process has also been described as messy with creative individuals as "hesitant [and] diffident" (Jarvie, 1981: 124) and "fumbling and groping" (Koestler, 1981: 5), as they try and control a process, which can be chaotic and random (Boden, 1990: 222-3) and results in creative products and outcomes, which can be unpredictable (Briskman, 1981: 132). [See also Margaret Boden (1990: 227)] surprising and unforeseeable. (Boden, 1990: 218 & 228)

6. The Quality of Creativity

A key element of the creative process is the establishment and maintenance of notions of quality in student writers and the highlighting of the reasons for the establishment of writing criteria.

It is worth repeating the two simple questions posed by Gregory Light, which should form the foundation for the theories underlying creative writing pedagogy: "What are these creative writing programs doing if not improving the 'quality' of the student's writing" (1992: 32) and is creative writing "being adequately taught, assessed and are the professionals (graduates) producing 'quality' work with ... an audience beyond the doors of

academia" (1992: 33). Light makes an extremely rare reference to readers outside the academy as important 'stakeholders,' contributors and participants in the creative writing domain.

The debate surrounding the quality of creative writing, as an art form, is not a new phenomenon. In the 18th century a growing tendency to neglect quality caused Alexander Pope to produce an epic satirical poem called the *Dunciad* to draw attention to the trend away from literary quality. In his preface to Book I Pope explains the significance of the relationship between the writer and her readers and suggests that each party has specific obligations in such a relationship, which contrasts with the avoidance and neglect of reader importance and perspectives in the contemporary teaching of creative writing:

> I am inclined to think that both the writers of books, and the readers of them, are generally not a little unreasonable in their expectations. The first seem to fancy that the world must approve whatever they produce, and the latter to imagine that authors are obliged to please them at any rate. Methinks, as on the one hand, no single man is born with a right of controlling the opinions of all the rest; so, on the other, the world has no title to demand that the whole care and time of any particular person should be sacrificed to its entertainment. Therefore, I cannot but believe that writers and readers are under equal obligations for as much fame, or pleasure, as each affords the other (Alexander Pope, Vol. I).

Pope contends that "it is the most reasonable thing in the world to distinguish good writers, by discouraging the bad" (Alexander Pope, Vol. II), but "the notion of creativity has undergone a wholesale devaluation [and] without standards and values, creativity ceases to exist" (Alexander Pope, Vol. II).

The avoidance of the concept of creativity and the absence of any discussion surrounding creative quality standards has serious repercussions for creative writing, as an artistic practice. Branding all writers as creative and all their texts as quality creative texts, not only debases all literary texts, it leads to the replacement of creative texts with texts which are clearly uncreative also causing confusion and dissatisfaction amongst readers, who have their own personal criteria for what is quality and what is poor quality writing.

In the last lines of the *Dunciad* Alexander Pope warns of the destructive nature of the

replacement of creativity with uncreativity: “Light dies before the uncreating word” and “universal darkness buries all” (Alexander Pope, Vol. II).

XII. CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

A. Introduction

The Workshop Research component of this thesis seeks to balance the conclusions drawn from the literature discourse based theory, which has already been examined, with the practical experiences and outcomes emanating from actual creative writing workshop programmes and activities involving undergraduate student writers within a university setting.

As identified in the chapter, *Student Writer Conceptions of Creative Writing*, there is a lack of research into the students' expectations of the teaching and learning of creative writing with the four research projects analysed in that chapter representing the only available studies on the subject at the time of writing. These studies are quantitative and qualitative in nature and objective in their evaluation and subsequent findings.

In contrast this 'research' component into the eventual outcomes of a multi-workshop programme, conducted over a period of 4 years, cannot be said to be clearly measurable, or as objective as might be desired of a project, which forms part of the basis for an academic thesis. The innumerable and sometimes indefinable variables, which form the basis of the instruction of the practice of creative writing in an academically based environment, do not allow for exact quantification, certainty and objectivity in the ultimate findings, but can only provide indications of student responses based on their reactions to the workshop environment, the individual and collective personalities of their fellow workshop participants, the position and style of the workshop teacher/facilitator, the methods, processes, procedures, teaching materials, content and focus of the workshop structures, philosophies and objectives. The workshop is an experiential learning environment, which particularly for undergraduate students, has an extended time parameter and long term objectives, which may serve merely to provide initial indications of the abilities of the students and could serve as a means to affirm or dissuade students themselves, as serious future writers.

Despite the inexact nature of this type of group based, workshop focused research, if it is undertaken in an objective a manner as possible and within disciplined procedures and structures and against clearly defined parameters, it can be a rare and valuable source of data to consider and evaluate alongside and in conjunction with the literature based theoretical findings in the development of a practical and effective creative writing programme for undergraduates and a creative writing teaching course for postgraduate students.

B. The Workshop Research Parameters

The parameters for the creative writing workshop research are based on the outcomes of my Masters Research Report, *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing* (Oberholzer, 2005), the findings of which are supported by the results of Gregory Light's research study, which formed the basis of his PhD Thesis, *The Literature of the Unpublished: Student Conceptions of Creative Writing in Higher Education* (1992).

As will be seen from what follows, the findings of this current study support and expand upon the results of the Masters Research Report and affirm that the historical development of the teaching of creative writing at higher education institutions has tended to be a 'top-down' authoritarian process, which has ignored the specific teaching and learning needs of the undergraduate creative writing student.

1. Needs and Expectations of Students as Prospective Writers

The parameters of this completed workshop research study consist of two primary components. The first is the needs and expectations of students as prospective writers, as identified in *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing*, namely

- To learn different writing processes
- To work with different understandings of audience
- To learn different genre requirements and experiment with them
- To gain writing discipline
- To learn how to give, receive and work with critical feedback
- To build a community of writers

2. Essential Principles and Guidelines

The second component is the principles and guidelines, which are considered to be essential to an effective, student focused and creativity based undergraduate creative writing pedagogy in which Creative Writing is developed and supported as "one of the few opportunities in education for self-discovery and creation" (Smith, 1981: 7).

Creative Writing courses should have as their objective "comprehensive learning and understanding — not simply the production of polished, 'publishable' texts, meeting particular literary criteria" (Light, 1992: 297) and therefore the development of creative writing pedagogy should "address the question of conception across the whole gamut of course design, teaching and assessment issues" (Light, 1992: 297).

Creative Writing should be detached from its traditional role "as an instrument in the study of literature," and its teachings should have as its "primary goal the development of writing as a practice in and of itself" (Light, 2002: 15).

Creative Writing teachers should possess a combination of skills, which include "writing skills, pedagogically oriented language skills and traditional English Literature skills" (Holland, 2002). Teachers should create an environment of trust, which allows students "to address [their] personal obsessions," dispels any feeling that they have to be "on guard about what they write" and removes any notion that there are "unallowable things in a dignified discourse" (Domina, 1994: 30). "Teachers must relinquish power in the classroom and abdicate the authority granted them by tradition and privilege" (Bizzaro, 1994: 235).

At undergraduate level, the ultimate objective of the teaching and learning of creative writing should be to encourage and develop inexperienced, natural writers into more mature, confident, disciplined and productive writers, who maintain their passion for and dedication to their writing pursuits and are equipped to either continue with their personal writing journey, or to participate comfortably and successfully in postgraduate creative writing modules or degree programmes.

The significance of the students' consistent need for writing freedom should form the epicentre of all writing teaching and learning. This freedom is the force behind their desire and their continued motivation to write and as such this freedom should be treated as 'sacrosanct.' This writing freedom should, however, be located within a structured teaching and learning environment, which provides a common, creative writing 'language' and teaches students the basics of creative writing.

These basics should include, as the cornerstone of writing instruction, writing processes, the concept of audience and the experimentation with and development of genre knowledge and experience. The process of providing peer generated critical feedback should be sensitively developed and established, as it plays a fundamental role in either motivating or de-motivating workshop participants and it provides a natural framework for the improvement and evolution of the students' writing routines and disciplines.

C. Theoretical Framework for the Research

1. Introduction

Two key components of creative writing teaching and learning at higher education institutions have been researched, analysed and interpreted in this thesis as the basis for the design and development of the creative writing programme and teaching course. These two components are

- the analysis of a broad range of creative writing related literature, including craft based writing teaching handbooks; process focused composition orientated books; writer processes and experiences; the views of writing, literary and creativity theorists and the experiences of creative writing teachers; and
- the practical evaluation of the written responses and reactions of undergraduate students to the teaching methods, processes and principles utilised during a voluntary creative writing teaching and workshop programme.

2. Grounded Theory Methodology

The research process incorporating these two diverse, yet complementary, components is clearly concerned with the teaching and learning of creative writing, as a student experience, and as a process for which the appropriate research strategy or "method of choice for redressing the [objective] is grounded theory" (Morse, 1998: 64).

Grounded theory is a *general methodology* for developing theories that are grounded in data, which are systematically gathered and analysed. Theory evolves during actual research and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. A central feature of this analytic (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 159) approach is a general method of constant comparative analysis, hence the approach is referred to as the constant comparative method (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 158).

The workshop research methodology uses inductive analysis, which draws categories, themes and patterns from the data, allowing the researcher to categorise, group and cluster the data in order to interpret it. A major requirement of the grounded theory methodology is that "multiple perspectives must be systematically sought during the research enquiry" and that "multiple 'voices' are attended to" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 173) and interpreted conceptually by the researcher, who "instead of proving a theory, uses the research study to examine a setting over time and develops theory grounded in the data" (Janesick, 1998: 1998).

The analysis and interpretation of the workshop data, in conjunction with the literature and discourse analysis component, will provide the grounded theory on which the creative writing programme and creative writing teaching course will be based.

3. The Workshop Research Data

In an attempt to maintain optimal levels of objectivity in the collection and analysis of the workshop research data, this data consist primarily of students' written reactions, views, opinions and responses to workshop tasks, exercises and assignments. The data also include all writing drafts and final written versions of stories, poems and plays; journal entries; e-

mail communications; feedback, both given and received; explanatory notes and reflexive essays.

(a) The Data Collection, Evaluation and Analysis Process

A detailed explanation of the content, methods, processes, tasks, exercises, assignments and teaching materials used in each of the various workshop programmes will first be set out. The student responses to each of the component elements of each writing workshop programme then represents the data, which will be the subject of the evaluation and analysis process.

Given the extent and volume of the data in the form of written student responses, only limited examples will be identified and highlighted. Comparisons between different responses, in order to illustrate differences in writing styles, form and quality have been kept to a minimum. The quoting of specific student responses and texts will be used to substantiate and underline specific findings, but their inclusion will be minimal with additional examples recorded and made available as Appendices.

(b) The Researcher/Workshop Facilitator

As the role and function of the researcher and workshop facilitator is key to all aspects of the writing workshop's design and implementation, to the integrity of the research results and the resultant data, as well as to the interpretation and analysis of that data, it is important to establish the researcher and workshop facilitator's previous experience, qualifications and competencies as being appropriate.

The following criteria have been identified as being important for the researcher/facilitator to have for the effective teaching and learning of creative writing in the workshop setting (Holland, 2002).

- Writing skills and experience
- Traditional English Literature skills
- Pedagogically orientated language skills
- Ability to generate an environment of trust

- An abdication of authority and power

(i) Writing Skills and Experience

My own writing practice includes texts written in a range of genres and styles from the traditional to the experimental with the most extensive of all the texts, in terms of time and size, being a musical play, *of Mice or Men*, a story of the battle for the survival of analogue music written for Broadway Theatre, which is 270 pages in length, includes the lyrics and musical direction for 18 songs and four orchestral pieces and took 18 months to write. While not yet accepted by any musical production companies, the play was favourably reviewed and rated by Disney Theatre in New York. The creation of this play provided me with valuable creative writing process experience, as well as insights into what is involved in being a writer from a routine, discipline and psychological perspective. The experience of writing this musical play was invaluable in providing practical know-how and an understanding of what student writers face, as they attempt to establish their own writing practices.

Other writing products include those developed and completed during my Honours and Masters studies:

> *The Bull and Dragon: Dickens and Dylan – A Creative Dialogue*. This text can best be described as a creative non-fictional piece based on a manipulation of the actual quoted words of Charles Dickens and Bob Dylan and simulated into a conversation between the two characters discussing various aspects of creativity as they have experienced it.
> "Michael Says ..." – a short story
> *Grandma Death* – a one act play
> *The Record* – a short film screenplay
> "Secrets" – two illustrated children's stories
> "When You Became a Man" – a poem
> "Where Was I?" – a short story
> "Forgotten Son" – an experimental short story

Grandma Death and *The Record* were both selected as texts worthy of commendation in the 2006 Ernst van Heerden annual creative writing competition for students of the University

of the Witwatersrand. “When You Became a Man” was commended by the judges of the Deon Hofmeyr competition in 2004.

The Record was selected by MNet as a screenplay for production by a student director and it was adapted, produced and screened a number of times by the pay-channel network.

(ii) Traditional English Literature Skills and Pedagogically Orientated Language Skills

My traditional English Literature skills are derived from the BA Honours degree in English and my pedagogically oriented language skills are derived from the Master of Arts degree in English Education, with particular focus on the practice of the design, development and implementation of specific teaching materials and processes. Both degrees were studied at the University of the Witwatersrand. My practical teaching activities and experience include lecturing from foundation English level second-language English classes to first year English Literature through to ad hoc sessions to Honours and Masters level students on self developed themes such as *Teaching Creative Writing in Secondary School*; *What is Literature?* and *How Showing and Not Telling can Enliven Travel Writing*.

My most valuable teaching experience was running the first six sessions of the *Writing: Theory and Praxis* module, which is offered at Masters level and in which I had been a student two years earlier.

Having myself been on the receiving end of the teaching of creative writing in the Honours module, the Literature based *Experiments in Telling* module and the process-based Masters module, *Writing: Theory and Praxis*, I have experienced contrasting creative writing pedagogies, styles and objectives from a student’s perspective and have developed views on how creative writing should, and should not be taught, on how students should be treated and what constitutes or destroys a creative writing friendly and positive environment.

(iii) Ability to Generate Trust and Willingness to Abdicate Authority

As a fellow student, my role as researcher and workshop facilitator was non-threatening, and enabled me to establish a trusting environment with an absence of the authority and

power, which is normally a feature of the interaction between teachers and students. The workshops were a research forum within which students benefited in terms of their own personal writing objectives and practices.

This broad base of a combination of experiences, skills, knowledge and capabilities enabled me to establish a workshop structure and foundation, which incorporated my own creative writing teaching and learning experiences together with the theoretical discoveries I was making at the time, which was focused on the needs and objectives of the student writers and based on the parameters extracted from the findings in *Student Conceptions of Creative Writing*.

D. The Student Participants

1. Student Invitations

As an extension of the data collection process undertaken in the fourth quarter of 2004 as a part of my Masters Research Report, the quantitative research questionnaires (Appendices p. 4) were handed out for completion to first year English Literature students in 2005 and 2006. The questionnaires included a specific question enquiring whether the student would be interested in participating in a voluntary, extra-curricular writing workshop programme:

> *6. If selected, would you be interested in participating in a series of extracurricular creative writing workshops during 2005? (2006 and 2007)*

Students were given the option of answering this question by ticking one of the three boxes, *no*, *undecided* or *yes*.

All the students signifying positive interest were contacted by e-mail and meetings were arranged with groups of students. At these meetings the objectives of the workshops and proposed content were explained and students were given an opportunity to ask any questions, which they had. As the questionnaire process took place during the fourth quarter of each year, students were given plenty of time to consider their involvement. The meetings took place during the first quarter of the following year and the workshops commenced during the second quarter, once the students' academic timetables had been finalised and

they could commit to specific workshop dates and times. Initial contact regarding the practicalities of the workshops took the form of email communications with the students. (See Appendices p. 6)

The students, who still were interested, were invited to participate and the workshops were planned, timed and structured accordingly. The students were approached in their first year of study and only participated in the first phase of the workshop programme in their second year at the university. In phase 1 data was collected from three batches of students, namely 2005 (1 group), 2006 (2 groups) and 2007 (1 group). The majority of the students proceeded to participate in phase 2 of the workshop process in 2006, 2007 and 2008 with a few of the student participants being part of the programme for three, and in one case, for four years. The phase 1 2005 intake became the intake for phase 2 2006, the phase 1 2006 intake became the intake for phase 2 2007 and the 2007 phase 1 intake became the intake for phase 2 2008.

The majority of the workshop participants were not English Literature majors. A degree of chance also influenced the make up of the workshop groups with students from other faculties simply hearing about the workshop programme and asking to join without having been part of the initial process.

2. Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Every student participant was made aware of the contents and meaning of the Informed Consent form, (Appendices p. 7) which each student signed. The informed consent form also provided the assurance of confidentiality between the researcher/facilitator and the student, as far as such confidentiality was feasible and reasonable within the workshop format and structure.

Traditionally within a workshop environment where student writing is as a matter of course made available and exposed to the other participants for feedback and comment, there is little, if any, need for confidentiality, as each participant implicitly agrees that her writing will be made available for discussion by the broader group. In this study there are, however, additional research components, such as e-mail communications between the facilitator and

individual students, as well as journal entries, which are not intended to be exposed during the workshop process. These private communications have been treated and protected as confidential and care has been taken not to dilute or remove this confidentiality in the final thesis text.

In order to establish a creatively free environment, participants were asked to select their own pseudonyms for use in the thesis reporting of the research outcomes. These pseudonyms have been kept confidential by the researcher, but if any of the participants did read the complete thesis, they may, by association with the short stories that they have read and commented on, be able to connect students pseudonyms to texts and to private comments highlighted in the thesis.

It is for this reason that comments, explanations and descriptions that have been identified as being potentially sensitive to student participants will not have the relevant pseudonyms attached, but merely be anonymously reported and discussed.

The content and analysis of the student profiles is accordingly based purely on what each student provided in writing in response to workshop exercises, in journal entries, in response to requests for biographical and background student material and specific e-mail dialogues and communications. In the student profile section there is no speculation on the part of the researcher. The profile of each student, in both summary and detailed form, (Appendices pp. 8-17) is based on the words of the students themselves as they describe their situations, their histories and their feelings. If some of the student profiles appear to be superficial and ‘thin,’ it is because the student preferred not to divulge further personal details.

Where there are elements of a student’s profile and experiences, which are important to the validity and value of the research study, but are sensitive in nature, such elements will be identified as an anonymous, independent comment, which protects the students confidentiality, by being written so as to be attributable to any number of student participants and contained in a general section of the profile group findings.

3. Participating Student Profiles

The students attending the first phase workshops in 2005 and 2006 were asked to respond to the tasks and exercises contained on a multimedia CD given to them during the first quarter of the academic year. The workshops commenced during the second quarter. The CD programme entitled, *An Introduction to Creative Writing: A Conversation with Two Writers*, is contained in Appendices p. 22. The first four tasks on the CD involved answering questions relating to the student's desire to write and be involved in the workshop process. The responses to these four questions provided a large proportion of the content of their personal profiles. Biographical and demographic details were also supplied in response to a separate request for such detail.

The following 4 questions were asked on the CD:

- Describe how your childhood may have influenced your desire to become a writer.
- Who are your heroes or role models? Explain why you want to follow their example, or be like them.
- What books or writers have inspired you? Describe what you find inspirational about them.
- How do your surroundings influence your writing? List the places that influence your creativity and explain why those specific locations inspire you.

(a) <u>Student Profiles – Phase 1 2005</u>

(Appendices p. 8 contains the detailed profiles of the students, who participated in this group)

The information obtained from a brief analysis of the desires of and obstacles confronting these students shows the following:

These students all live on the margin of their environments, they are more introverted than extroverted, they have a need to write to balance the imbalance in their lives, they all have differing levels of self doubt, as to the quality and relevancy of their writing and they are all perfectionists to varying degrees.

It would appear to be more beneficial for these students to initially focus on their writing processes, as writers, in an effort to encourage their writing practices and to avoid concentrating on the aspects of writing craft, at least until they are comfortable with the fluency and regularity of their writing.

These students need an environment, which allows them the freedom and gives them the support to find their writing selves and to identify what they want to write about. For example, the students in this group have and continue to be dedicated journal writers and sometimes, because of their perfectionist standards, their creative, 'imaginative' writing is less authentic and less 'readable' than their observations of their external and personal, internal emotional worlds. These students need therefore to be able to explore and discover all of their writing voices and to reveal those voices in the workshop setting for comment and feedback from actual readers. Here, for example, is an anonymous piece from one of these profiled students, which the student may deem to be too personal, inappropriate or not of a quality level suitable for public exposure in the workshop setting, when it is clearly authentic, real, powerful and representative of the student's genuine writing voice.

> I hate the colour red. You know, I've never said that out loud before. Stephen – Uncle Stevie – would be along shortly. Shit, I am scared of the colour red. It's putrid red, dank with fags and Coke – Coke in the morning, for God's sake. The asthmatic breathing in my ear. Fuck, I hate the colour red.
>
> You cannot come through life unscarred. Your mind bears the marks of your experience, because, once imprinted, they are irremovable.

Based on their very similar personalities, this workshop group was diligent and disciplined, participated fully and responded to all the workshop tasks, exercises and assignments. Most of their work was technically correct and accurate, but constrained, with their journal and diary writing more accurately representing their writers' voices and exuding greater authenticity and attractiveness from a reader's perspective.

(b) Student Profiles – Phase 1 2006

(Appendices pp. 11 and 14 contain the detailed profiles of the students, who participated in these groups)

(i) Group 1

The first phase 1 group of 2006 was the most diverse of all the groups to participate in the four year workshop research programme. All the students were dissimilar in terms of age, field of study, personality and emotional complexity. I expected this group to provide a rich platform for creativity and to be the source of exciting and original texts, but it transpired that diversity and contrast in make-up are not sufficient to provide a creatively positive environment. The student group has to also possess a certain level of discipline, commitment and consistency, or the value of the diversity is dissipated through procrastination and entropy. While these students never reached any level of creative cohesion as a group, as individuals, some of them did show positive writing potential.

(ii) Group 2

As the most culturally diverse of the workshops groups, I anticipated that this and the different participant perspectives and energies would result in some exciting writing outcomes, but unfortunately, with the exception of two of the students, the necessary determination and discipline to write was, as was the case with Group 1 of 2006, absent with the result that any workshop and student writing momentum was frequently disrupted and, as a group, never reached any real positive flow.

(c) Student Profiles – Phase 1 2007

(Appendices p. 17 contains the detailed profiles of the students, who participated in this group)

This group of workshop students provided a more favourable mix of personalities, styles, perspectives and relationships, which resulted in the significant improvement, development

and growth of each student's writing, not only during the Phase 1, 11 workshop programme, but also during Phase 2 in 2008. There was a productive balance of creativity, experimentation, determination and discipline with the more eccentric writers being moderated by the more conservative and shy participants, while the writing initiatives of the more reticent and reluctant students were influenced to be riskier and more adventurous by those fellow participants, who basked in the absolute freedom of their writing practices.

Most of the students from the Phase 1 workshops of 2007 continued as participants in the Phase 2 workshops of 2008, with three additional students from the phase 2 workshops of 2007, joining the group.

The phase 2 workshops of 2008 provided the culmination of all the processes, methods and principles utilised and tested during the previous three years and illustrated and highlighted what can be achieved in a workshop setting, however unscientific and fortuitous, if the basic creativity focused, student supportive, and reader directed environment is in place.

E. Student Participation in the Workshop Programme

1. Workshop Programme Structure

Without going into the details of the structural specifics, which will be covered in the next section, Workshop Structure, Content and Teaching Materials, the following is a brief outline of the workshop programme structure.

The programme was designed to consist of two distinct phases. The first phase was an introductory 11 workshop module to ease the students into a writing routine and practice, developing their confidence and exposing them to the benefits and fears inherent in giving and receiving feedback in a controlled and disciplined workshop environment. The primary aim of this first phase of the programme was to encourage and nurture students so that they would want to participate in the second phase of the programme in the following year, when they would be in their third year of academic study. The Phase 2 workshops were broadly aimed at exposing the students to more focused experiences, to some of the craft aspects of writing and to result in the completion of a number of pieces for submission to local writing

competitions and selected literary magazines.

Due to the voluntary, extra-curricular nature of the programme, which was very necessary to obtain committed participation of the students and also to ensure their optimal creative freedom, only a maximum of 10 two-hour workshop sessions could be arranged per workshop group, as a result of examinations and university vacations. The groups did benefit from the 2 to 3 week gaps between sessions, as it gave everyone plenty of time to write and prepare for each workshop.

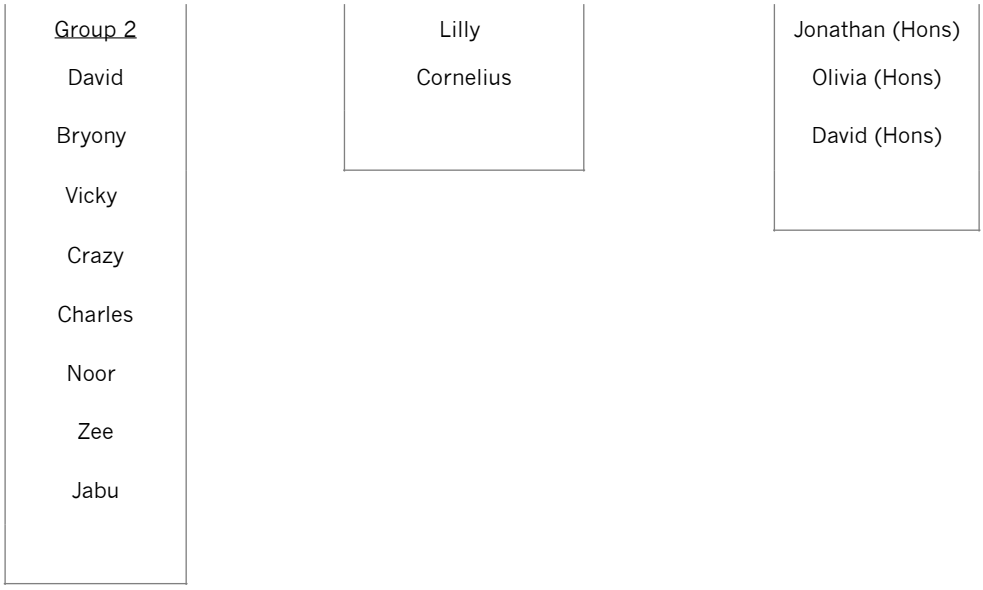
All the workshop sessions took place in the seminar room at the Wits Writing Centre, which is spacious, quiet and conveniently situated on the ground floor of one of the university's larger libraries.

2. Student Workshop Programme Participation

The following table represents a breakdown of the workshop participants by group by workshop year in Phase 1 and Phase 2:

Extra-Curricular Creative Writing Workshop Programme 2005 – 2008
Participants

2005 Phase 1 Students	2006 Phase 1 Students	2006 Phase 2 Students	2007 Phase 1 Students	2007 Phase 2 Students	2008 Phase 2 Students
	Group 1				
Benjamin	Jonathan	Kathryn	Antonio	Bryony	Antonio
Kathryn	Seballius	Taryn	Kahlan Amnell	Jonathan	Kahlan Amnell
Sylvia	Spacemother	David	Knives	Olivia	Knives
Taryn	Olivia		Jonny Rage	Vicky	Jonny Rage
Dorothy	Myle		Raymond	Noor	Chadwick
David	Bateman		Chadwick	Kathryn (Hons)	Sophie
	Tsepo Veleto		Sophie	Taryn (Hons)	Ms Nom de Plume
	Naomi		Bunny	David (Hons)	Lilly
	Adelaide		Lemon		Emily Lyre
			Ms Nom de Plume		Bryony (Hons)



[1] 11 students participated over two years

[2] 4 students completed the 2 year programme and continued to participate during the following year

[3] 1 student completed the 2 year programme and continued to participate during the following 2 years

The following are the broad quantitative results of the programme in terms of student participation:

- 35 students participated in the programme, to varying degrees;
- 16 students completed both the first and second phases of the programme with 4 of those students choosing to participate for an extra year and 1 student choosing to participate for a further 2 years; and
- 11 students completed the first phase of the programme only and 8 only completed part of the first phase.

The students, who completed Phase 1 and continued into Phase 2 were 50% (3 out of 6 students) in 2005/2006; 50% (5 out of 10 students) in 2006/2007 and 80% (8 out of 10 students) in 2007/2008.

In the 2007 Phase 2 workshops, the 5 third-year students were joined by the 3 students from Phase 2, 2006 and the 8 students in the Phase 2, 2008 workshops were joined by 3 of the students from the Phase 2 workshops of 2007.

3. Student Workshop Attendance (Appendices p. 20)

A total of 65, 2 hour workshops took place during the four year period, namely 11 workshops in phase 1, 2005; 6 workshops in phase 2, 2006; 19 workshops (Group 1 and 2) in phase 1, 2006; 7 workshops in phase 2, 2007; 11 workshops in phase 1, 2007 and 11 workshops in phase 2, 2008.

When all the participating students are included, even those, who attended only one workshop, the average student attendance level is 68.4% with a high of 83% in phase 1 2005 and a low of 55% in phase 1 2006. Attendance numbers remained consistently high throughout the course of the year and even towards the end of the programme and the academic year.

4. Definition of 'Participation' in a Creative Writing Teaching and Learning Environment

In a traditional educational setting in which the ultimate teaching and learning objective is the acquisition of knowledge and skills, participation in that process could be said to rest on two primary pillars, namely attendance (where the programme was successful) and the quality of the work timeously completed and submitted for assessment and marking.

However, given that the teaching and learning of writing creatively is, or should be, less knowledge and skills-based, certainly at undergraduate level, but more experiential and dialogic in nature, the definition of 'participation' in a creative writing workshop teaching and learning environment is more complicated, more fluid and less clear-cut.

If the ultimate objective of the workshop programme is an experience for the student writer, which continues beyond her 'participation' in the workshop programme, there cannot be a finite definition of participation. Having had the writing experience, the student writer can decide to convert that experience into a writing vision at any time of her life. The students' participation is based on an overriding, open-ended teaching and learning objective.

The definition of participation is also made more complex by the fact that the workshop

setting is based on a dynamic group environment with continual interactions between the individuals in the group on a broad range of topics and on the emotionally and highly sensitive process of reading, analysing and providing feedback on each participant's fictional texts. Very little research has been done on the dynamic interactions between the writing teacher and the workshop group and the interactions between the workshop participants and the tensions and relationships that develop between and amongst them.

Ultimately participation in a creative writing workshop should perhaps be based on an evaluation of the conduct of each student participant and her contribution to the workshop group, generally, and individual students, specifically. Being part of a workshop group places extra responsibilities on each participant over and above the need to attend and submit exercises and assignments. Each student has reading and feedback responsibilities and naturally injects her own personality into the mix of emotions and tensions collectively present in the group dynamics of the workshop.

By way of example, the three students, who attended the greater majority of 30 workshop sessions over a three year period and completed all of the exercises and assignments and fulfilled all their feedback commitments to their fellow students could be said to have participated fully in the workshop processes. Education in traditional terms has always been based on definitive, task orientated activities, which are capable of measurement, and these three students therefore would probably have received relatively high grades for their participation in the workshop process.

Should the following student, however, not have been awarded the highest grade of all? She attended nine out of the 11 workshops of the phase 1 programme, but did not proceed into the second phase. She completed roughly half of the allocated exercises and assignments, was erratic in her assessment of the texts of her fellow workshop attendees and could be adjudged to be less of a participant than the three students mentioned above, who participated actively for three years. The less participative student, however, wrote a short story, which won first prize in the annual short-story competition, which is open to all students attending the University.

Within the group dynamics of the writing workshop, all students participate to a lesser or greater degree, but their participation contributes in one form or another to the activities and products of each workshop member. Students are influenced by the texts of the other students, by the feedback and the reactions they get to their own work, by the various personalities in the group and the casual relationships that develop during the workshop sessions and outside of them. The competition winning student did not in fact succeed based purely on her own efforts and personal participation in the workshop process. The participation of and her interaction with all the other students influenced and had some effect on her final textual product.

While some students need and thrive on the human interaction and contact provided by the workshop environment, others do not need this face-to-face connection and are quite willing and able to participate in the workshop process through e-mails and text messaging. These students were able to participate effectively without necessarily attending all the workshop sessions. Technology has accordingly added another dimension to the notion of participation in the educative process, particularly in terms of creative writing teaching and learning.

F. The Workshop Environment

Workshop Dynamics

Traditionally the primary focus and emphasis has been the product of the workshop process, the correctly crafted text of each individual student, against which the students are measured for their success or failure. If, however, the workshop setting has as its ultimate objective, not only correctly crafted fictional texts, but also quality creative pieces, which are also aimed at being recognised as works of art, the dynamics inherent in the composition of the workshop are vitally important.

The workshop environment should accordingly be an authoritatively neutral environment in which cognisance is taken of the dynamic, interactive complexities of the workshop teaching, learning and feedback activities, as well as the dual dynamics of the group and each individual participant.

The shift in focus from the traditional single focus on the crafted quality of the student texts to the writing processes and creativity of the outcomes of the student writing practices, necessitates an acceptance of and a focus on all the aspects of the workshop environment, which may have an impact on student writing processes, propensity and creativity.

The primary, overriding influence on the workshop environment and its dynamics has always been the power and authority of the creative writing teacher as master writer, assessor, grader and sometimes 'controller' of student writer futures. The students' primary focus will quite naturally be on performing according to the exact standards set by the teacher. While the relationships with and feedback received from fellow participants can be helpful, it is ultimately the judgments and directions of the teacher that play the supreme role in the students' writing practices and textual products. There tends to be a homogeneity in the texts coming out of a teacher dominated workshop environment with students taking minimal textual risks and seldom daring to experiment. This teacher focus has been blamed for the relative sameness and the blandness of the fictional texts coming out of academically based writing workshops, particularly in the United States.

Based on the data gathered from the four year creative writing programme there are key components in establishing a workshop dynamic that is conducive to imaginative and creative teaching and learning outcomes:

- The creative writing teacher should be seen as a facilitator and collaborator, who is there to optimise the creative writing abilities of every single student participant. The objective is creativity in writing, not conformance to any predetermined or specified norms and styles;
- The workshops should provide a balance between instruction, participation and writing with the 'teaching' aspects being based on 'exposing' students to diverse styles, examples, choices, authors, stories, authorial processes and idiosyncrasies;
- The workshop environment should be one, which is at all times conducive to writing, learning about and experiencing writing with students treated like student writers and not writing students;
- The creative writing workshop setting should be as un-homogenous as possible consisting of culturally, socially and psychologically diverse students, who support and assist each other by being ordinary readers, commentators and collaborators;

- The environment should celebrate the students' creative freedom and their individuality and always emphasise that there is no right or wrong and that there are only possibilities and not restrictions;
- The workshop setting should provide a space for students to experience, to discuss and debate all aspects of creative writing, literature, and genres and this experiential and dialogic process should include student exposure to the broad domain of short fiction so as to allow them to gain a writing perspective in terms of their own textual style and the quality of their texts; and
- In order to balance the focus on creativity and writing freedom, the workshop should provide a disciplined foundation and structure, which focuses that freedom towards an active writing practice for all students based on the ultimate importance of the reader as the objective of textual creation, as both receiver and co-creator of the text, and the regular and productive process of writing, as no one can be a writer if there is no writing taking place.

G. The Structure and Content of the Workshops

1. Introduction

The detailed structures, contents, and teaching materials of the Phase 1 workshops 2005 and 2007 are contained in Appendices p. 22 and Appendices p. 92 .

The detailed outlines and teaching materials for the Phase 2 workshops 2007 and 2008 are contained in Appendices p. 102 and Appendices p. 105 .

These workshop outlines represent the format and content of the workshop programmes as they were developed, altered and adapted from year to year in the case of the Phase 1 Workshops between 2005 and 2007, and the final structure and content of the Phase 2 programme, as it was presented in 2008.

The following workshop outlines are designed to be read and considered in conjunction with the workshop outlines and teaching materials contained in the above mentioned Appendices. In what follows the focus will be on the primary 'teaching' and 'practical' writing requirements of each workshop with the writing exercises and assignments being highlighted, as these provide the foundation for the evaluation of the student writing

responses, which form the subject of the next section, "Student Responses to Workshop Tasks, Exercises and Assignments."

2. Phase 1 Workshops 2005

Workshop 1

Teaching

The primary 'teaching' objective of Workshop 1 is to establish a nurturing and **supportive writing environment** in which the researcher/facilitator is not seen as an authority figure, but an enabling and guiding influence within a formal writing structure and environment.

Writing

Students are introduced to the process of giving and receiving **critical feedback** on their writing, as this is probably the most concerning and sensitive component of the workshop process for students, most of whom have not yet released their texts into the realm of the 'public.'

As a 'benchmark' against which to 'measure' development and changes, students are asked to submit an example of what the student considers to be her **best piece of writing** to date.

Students are asked to set up a Writer's Journal and to complete the 9 tasks contained on the multimedia CD, *A Conversation with Two Writers*. Six of these tasks relate to the student writer's self-exploration, as an important component of keeping of a **Writer's Journal**. The remaining 3 exercises are writing focused tasks. The first two have Eddie Adams' photograph, "Saigon Execution," as their subject and are designed to elicit a **shift of perspective** from the students. The third writing task is an exercise in **observation and dialogue**.

Workshop 2

Teaching

Students are introduced to the fundamental concepts of **Reader and Audience** based on extracts from Peter Elbow's book, *Writing With Power* (Elbow, 1958: 177-216), and supplemented with Wolfgang Iser's explanations and descriptions of the Reader's Imagination and Responses to texts (Tompkins, 1980: 50-54).

Writing

Students discuss and debate their own requirements of the critical feedback process in conjunction with the **feedback process and parameters**, as explained and suggested by Peter Elbow (1958: 240) and agree and finalise the parameters for use during the rest of the workshop programme.

The workshop writing exercises consist of a **'personal lies or untruths poem'** and a **Showing, not**

Telling task, which is used to emphasise and illustrate aspects of the importance of readership, audience, reader imagination and reader response.

The writing of the "lie-poem" is meant to be an ice-breaking exercise, which allows workshop participants to introduce themselves to the others in the group in an informal and interesting way by writing an 'untrue' poem about themselves and when each poem is read anonymously, the students have to guess which workshop member wrote the poem, but it became clear that this exercise has far more value than simply being an introductory mechanism. When the students are asked to write a poem about themselves, they respond with moans and sighs and looks of dread and reluctance, until it is explained that every word must be untrue. Then the students smile and there is a mischievous, playful and creative glint in every eye. The sudden psychological change from negative to positive, from a chore to an adventure may describe and explain the universal fascination with fiction, when compared to the mundanity of the 'real' and the 'now.'

The Show not Tell exercise is preceded by a discussion of a theory handout, which contains a comparison of the 'telling' lyrics of the Westlife song, *Change the World*, and the 'showing' lyrics of Bob Dylan's song, *Hard Rain*. The exercise consists of rewriting the sentence "She could barely restrain her anger at this moment" and transforming it from a 'telling' sentence to one, which 'shows' the reader her emotions.

Workshop 3

Teaching

After reading and discussing an excerpt from an example of a Writer's Journal, the students are introduced to the main benefits for writers of keeping and maintaining the discipline of writing in a journal.

Students are introduced to the concept of **Participant and Spectator** writing, as expounded by composition theorists, Judith and Geoffrey Summerfield, in the book, *Texts and Contexts: A Contribution to the Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition* (1988) and developed into a writing exercise by Dr. Pamela Nichols for her postgraduate module, *Writing: Theory and Praxis*. This writing exercise illustrates how the different perspectives offered by the Participant and Spectator viewpoints can affect the perceived originality of the writing, the reader's imagination and the writer's own voice. Two textual examples are read and discussed.

Writing

The writing assignment is the creation of two paragraphs, one Participant and one Spectator, based on an everyday, mundane task that students do all the time.

Workshop 4

Teaching

A comprehensive written explanation of the components and characteristics of the **traditional short story** is handed out to the students to read and to use as a means to familiarise themselves with the genre. This handout has been developed from the work of Kathy Kennedy [Kentucky Educational Television] in conjunction with components of short story theory found on the websites *write101.com* and *shortstorygroup.com*.

The various aspects of the **writing process** are also introduced as a subject in the form of a handout containing the theories of Janet Emig (1983: 177-8), Julia Bell (2001: 49) and Peter Elbow (1958: 14), as they pertain to the messiness of the writing process, writing as a work in progress, "the dangerous method" of trying to write 'correctly' the first time, redrafting, editing and freewriting.

Writing

Three short stories, "Lamb to the Slaughter" (Dahl, 1995), "Scarlatti's Tilt" (Brautigan) and "Where Was I?" (Wainstein, 2004) are read by the students and discussed in terms of structure, form and style.

Students are asked to do a **freewriting exercise** (Elbow, 1958: 13-19) by writing non-stop for 10 minutes focusing on one, two, or all three of the objects passed around for them to touch and examine, or on subject matter of their own choice. These objects are a glass eye, a crystal ball and an antique bellows-camera.

Workshop 5

Teaching

The importance of **discipline**, determination and writing obsessiveness are identified, as perhaps the primary components of being a writer, because even the most talented writers are not writers, if they are not writing.

Excerpts pertaining to the "Current Popularity of Creativity," "Characteristics of Creativity" and "The Joy of Creativity" from William Gass's essay, "The Soul Inside the Sentence" (1985: 113-142), are read and discussed by the workshop group.

Peter Elbow's description and explanation of the process and benefits of **Loop Writing** (Elbow, 1958: 59-77) are read and discussed with the students.

Writing

Students are asked to do a Freewriting and Loop Writing exercise based on a subject of their own choice, or on the words contained in the first verse of Philip Larkin's poem, *This be the Verse*, and

selected words from the Bob Dylan songs, *All Along the Watchtower*, and *Hard Rain*, focusing on the three perspectives: a different audience, a different writer, in a different time.

Workshop 6

Teaching

The processes of and responses to the first five workshops are tabled by the students and debated and discussed in a collaborative review session.

Based on the quoted views of Charles Dickens and Bob Dylan on the importance of creative freedom in their writing practices, students are encouraged to be **less judgmental** of and to exercise **less control** over their writing initially making use of techniques such as freewriting, loop writing and Participant/Spectator writing processes to free up their words and leaving the control and concerns over writing quality and correctness for the revision stage of the writing process.

While reading Christopher Ricks' book *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (2005), I stumbled upon an aid to **character and storyline development**. The foundation for Ricks' book on the lyrics of Bob Dylan is based on the premise that:

> Dylan's is an art in which sins are laid bare (and resisted), virtues are valued (and manifested), and the graces brought home. The seven deadly sins, the four cardinal virtues ... and the three heavenly graces: these make up everybody's world ... [in] human dealings of every kind … (2005: 2).

Based on the dramatic content inherent in these ***Sins, Virtues and Graces*****,** as existing in all human beings and driving their actions, motivations, moods, objectives and relationships, I developed a writing exercise based on the Sins, Virtues and Graces.

My instincts appear to be supported by a book published in 2006, *The Moral Premise: Harnessing Virtue and Vice for Box Office Success* (2006), in which Stanley D. Williams identifies why and illustrates how vice and virtue are indispensable elements in the storylines of successful film screenplays.

Writing

Students are given a handout containing a development of the Sins (Greed, Gluttony, Sloth, Envy, Pride, Anger and Lust), Virtues (Justice, Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude) and Graces (Faith, Hope and Charity) through the ages, as a background to the writing exercise.

The written assignment is made up of three parts. After randomly selecting two cards, one containing a Sin and the other either a Virtue or Grace, the students are asked to compile a 'back-story,' or a history of a character describing the reasons for the character's propensity to commit the

Sin. Students are then asked to repeat this process for their 'Virtue' or 'Grace' character. Finally students are asked to write a short story containing these two characters using their personalities, motivations and interactions, as the hub of the conflict and tension of the storyline.

Workshop 7

Teaching

As a continuation of the theme of **characterisation and storyline** and as an introduction to the genre of the one act play and short film screenplay, students are shown an episode called "The Fix-Up" from the *Seinfeld* television series. The *Seinfeld* series is an example of character development and provides a creative benchmark for storytelling by illustrating how 'nothing' type, everyday human activities and issues can be made to be extraordinary in stories, which are no more than 22 minutes in length.

Writing

The balance of the workshop time is spent providing feedback on student short story drafts, including initial responses to the Sins, Virtues and Graces assignment.

Workshop 8

Teaching

In preparation for submissions to be made to the earmarked writing competition, students are given a handout entitled "**Doing Your Writing Justice**," which is compiled from a range of sources and contains presentation styles and formats for poems, short stories and one act plays and includes presentation elements such as cover pages and covering letters.

Writing

The remainder of the workshop focuses on student text readings and detailed feedback from all participants on all outstanding writing assignments.

Workshop 9

Teaching

The workshop focuses on the final submission of the students' selected short stories to the writing competition and they are given an example of a **one act play** and a handout on the traditional form, style and elements of that genre.

The students are also briefed on the requirements of the reflexive essay they are to complete for submission at the end of the workshop programme.

Workshop 10 and 11

Nearing the completion of the workshop programme, students are given an additional handout on a supporting theory of storyline development in the form of the concepts and formats drawn from *The Hero's Journey* and so successfully used by the American Film Industry. This handout is compiled using Joseph Campbell's book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), and *The Writers Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers* (Vogler, 1998).

The students are also given a handout on the writing of Children's Stories based on Aaron Shephard's book, *The Business of Writing for Children* (2000).

A final handout is designed to assist students in preparing their work for submission to publishers and includes elements such as researching potential publishers, writing accompanying proposals, copywriting their work before submission and facing and dealing with rejection.

The final workshop ends with a discussion of the structure and content of the continuation of the workshop programme into the following year.

3. Phase 1 Workshops 2007

Introduction

The structure and content of the Phase 1 workshops in 2005 were repeated in the Phase 1 workshops of 2006, but after evaluating students' responses to the first two years of the Phase 1 workshops, it was clear that the majority of the students were not positively disposed to the concept of keeping a **writer's journal** and that keeping a journal is a highly personal choice and an individualistic practice, which is far more prominent amongst female students than amongst males and a practice, which is normally developed from and based on the diary-writing routines of their school years.

The *Conversation with Two Writers* multimedia CD, which had as its primary objective motivating and establishing the writing journal practice amongst the students, was accordingly withdrawn as an instructional and exercise instrument.

It also became evident that the predominance of the students' **academic thinking** and writing did have an effect on their creative writing processes, efforts and mindsets causing

their writing to be restrictive and overly controlled. There was a need for a renewed emphasis in the workshops on

- the absence of any correctness or incorrectness in the practice of writing creatively;
- the celebration of the students' individuality and difference;
- the necessity for students, as far as it is humanly possible, to divest themselves of their academic mindsets — and literature students, their favourite authors — during the workshop sessions and while they are writing in response to workshop exercises and assignments; and
- student enjoyment of creative writing, as a free and unrestricted practice with boundless possibilities.

The previous two Phase 1 workshops also illustrated quite clearly that the primary obstacle for student writers, particularly inexperienced writers at undergraduate level, is procrastination and entropy and a resistance to writing focus and regularity, which is aggravated and heightened by their primary objective of being successful academically. Therefore there was also a re-emphasis placed on **writing routines and disciplines**, as being primary characteristics of successful writing and writers.

Finally it became clear that with the focus and reliance on the short story, as the primary 'apprentice text' in almost all creative writing programmes, the facilitator had to become more familiar with the short story genre by reading a broad range of short stories from different eras, different countries, by different authors and from varying sources including competition and award-winners. The list of 272 short stories that were read and from which the contents of the students' short story booklets were compiled and produced are contained in the Appendices p. 145. Through their exposure to a range of 58 short stories over the two year workshop programme, the students are given an opportunity to evaluate and determine their own perceptions of short story quality and, instead of writing in a creative vacuum, they are shown a **short story** space within and a line on which they can place their own writing and identify the writing, which most closely resembles where they would ideally want their own texts to be located.

The following description of the third phase 1 workshops will illustrate the process, exercises and assignments used to overcome the obstacles and shortcomings identified on

the completion of the first two Phase 1 programmes. Only the changes made to the second-year 2007 workshops will be described and explained.

Workshop 1

The first workshop served as a foundation to discuss with the students the primary features of developing a non-academic writing mindset; developing a disciplined and regular writing routine as a *sine qua non* of being a writer and writing successfully; developing a more prominent understanding of the short story, its variations, possibilities and restrictions as a literary genre and gaining an appreciation of how the students' own texts fit into and compare to other texts within the short story domain.

Students read and discuss the three extracts from William Gass's essay, "**The Soul Inside the Sentence** (1985: 113-142) – The Characteristics of Creativity, The Popularity of Creativity and The Joys of Creativity – and are asked against whom and what their texts will be competing for the reader's attention and memory.

In an effort to generate and maintain student writing regularity, discipline and creativity in a manner, which also emphasises and encompasses the concepts of reader response, reader imagination and descriptive writing, which shows and doesn't tell, I implemented for the students the routine, daily activity of writing a *Sentence with a Soul Inside*. The exercise is based on John Berdan of Yale University's "Daily Themes" without the critical analysis component.

William Gass' concept of the Soul Inside the Sentence is based on his premise that "the language of science should serve the reality principle; the language of art serves the soul" and that as such artful writing should carry a "passion ... that lies as deep inside us as our bones" (1985: 122). Gass describes writing with soul as being warm, substantial and lasting, while soulless sentences are frozen, metallic and fleeting:

> Language without rhythm, without physicality, without the undertow of that sea which once covered everything and from which the land first arose like a cautious toe — levelless language, in short, voiceless type, pissless prose — can never be artistically complete. Sentences which are written without a body have no soul. They will be felt, however conceptually well connected, however well designed by the higher bureaus of the mind, to go through our understanding like the sharp cold blade of a skate over ice (1985: 122).

It was agreed with the students that a *Sentence with Soul* is a sentence that is alive, animated and has the power to attract, capture and intrigue the reader and spark the imagination in such a way that the reader yearns for additional sentences to explain and develop the 'soul' of the first.

The development of the concept of the *Soul Inside the Sentence* into an ongoing, regular writing

practice occurred informally from this point and only later, when responding to the questions of one of the students, was I forced to re-evaluate my theory behind the *Sentences with Soul* practice and provide a written theoretical substantiation and guideline:

> I sense in your note a touch of frustration at not getting specific feedback on your sentences and the apparent lack of guidelines against which to apportion success or failure to each sentence. Hopefully, the following explanation will assist you.
>
> – The Sentences with Soul exercise is designed to assist workshop students to get into some kind of writing routine;
> – Writing at least one sentence a day hopefully assists writers to focus on the smallest 'meaning-making' component of any larger piece of writing;
> – In specifying that each sentence has a Soul inside, each student has the objective of not just writing, but creating sentences with emotion, sensuality, concepts, character, mystery, intrigue and a host of other characteristics, which will capture and maintain a reader's imagination and interest. The logical extrapolation of writing a sentence a day is to focus on every single sentence in a text so that writers will get closer to a writing quality, which is akin to the Ian McEwan and Vladimir Nabokov examples ... and further away from the soulless and lifeless drudgery (that's a great word isn't it?) of some of the contemporary American short stories we have recently read. In our information overloaded and multimedia saturated world if, as writers, we want to be read, we have to compete for the reader's mind and time and we will not be read, if we do not entice, capture and maintain the reader's imagination, that vitally important bit, which we somehow always seem to forget or ignore, that bit, which brings our efforts, our sweat and tears, our words and sentences to life. We write to engage the reader. Sentences with Soul Inside engage the reader;
> – The Sentences with Soul process is designed to also help you 'discover' or 'uncover' those topics, themes or stories that will 'nag' you to be written. Your stand alone sentences will remain little more than isolated components of writing, until you decide that they have qualities worth pursuing and developing into more comprehensive and complete texts.

As the smallest of meaning making units of the writing process and more attractive from a time and brevity perspective than larger units such as the paragraph, this routine assignment was embraced and adopted by the majority of the students in the Phase 1 workshops of 2007, as well as the students in the Phase 2 workshops of the same year. The popularity of the process continued into 2008 with a number of students, who had struggled to write creatively and imaginatively previously, adopting and embracing the Sentence with Soul, as their primary creative writing medium.

The reading of the *Sentences with Soul* selected from all of those received by the facilitator during the period prior to each workshop became a regular feature of the workshop routines. Some of these *Sentences with Soul* will be provided and the process discussed when examining the students' responses to the workshop exercises and assignments.

In an effort to achieve the objective of expanding the students' horizons and experiences, both as readers and as writers of the **short story** genre in terms of textual quality and the location of their own short story texts, each student is given a booklet of a compendium of 15 short stories and asked to read all the stories and rate each one on a scale of 1 to 10 and to identify, which story represents the type of fiction that each student deems closest to where they would like their texts to be.

From a practical teaching perspective the compilation of the booklet by the facilitator ensures that there is a greater probability that the stories will be read and evaluated, because the students have the texts on hand and do not have to spend their time finding a broad range of texts from a diversity of sources.

Due to the current societal over emphasis on fame and celebrity, as the badges of and replacements for the actual assessment of originality and quality, the short stories contained in the booklet are all 'naked texts' stripped of author names and of the awards, accolades and competition prizes automatically associated with those personalities. In this way the texts are anonymous and read and judged by the students on their textual merits alone with no supplementary influences.

The 15 short stories in the booklet consist of a mix of fiction from early short story writers such as O. Henry, short-short stories such as "Scarlatti's Tilt," some unpublished texts, a few South African short stories and short fiction from a selection of American Literary magazines.

"Lamb to the Slaughter," Roald Dahl (1995).
"The Duplicity of Hargraves," O. Henry (1911).
"The Scarlatti Tilt," Richard Brautigan.
"The Ultimate Safari," Nadine Gordimer (2004: 269-282).
"Death of a Son," Njabulo S. Ndebele (2004: 201-213).
"The Rejection," Woody Allen (2004: 2063-267).
"Where Was I?" Pauline Olivia Wainstein (2004: Unpublished)
"My Story," Aryeh Lev Stollman (1999: 14).
"My Bear," Roger Rosenblatt (2003).
"The Well," John Kinsella (2002).
"Spider Salad," "Promise" and "Goggles," Liesl Jobson (2005).
"Forgotten Son," Lisa Watkins-Nkosi (2004: Unpublished)
"Desolation," Gail Jones (2003).

This short story booklet was also given to the students in the phase 2 2007 workshops for reading and rating.

Workshop 3

In an effort to bolster and expand the **Show, not Tell** teaching notes and examples, students read and discuss two passages, one by Ian McEwan from his short story "Psychopolis" (1997: 107) and the other from Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (2000: 9).

Students are also given additional writing exercises based on developing and extending their Sentences with Soul into 500 word short stories.

Workshop 4

Students are asked to identify, which short stories in the booklet comply with the traditional short story guidelines contained in the **Short Story Handout**.

Workshop 11

Students rate and select the 'best' ***Sentences with Soul*** of the year based on a selection I have compiled. The top three students each receive a prize: a *Roget Thesaurus*, for the winner and Moleskine notebooks for the second and third placed students.

The final workshop of the year concludes with a discussion and agreement as to the objectives and processes to be developed and implemented during the following year. The focus areas agreed upon for the next year included:

- the development of the best student pieces from 2007 for submission to additional competitions and publications such as magazines and journals;
- the study of writing in additional genres such as children's stories, one act plays and screenplays;
- craft skills and techniques such as story openings, beginnings, endings and characterisation;
- extended and broadened short story readings and ratings; and
- copyright and publishing processes and procedures.

4. Phase 2 Workshops 2008

Workshop 1

The first workshop was held in November of 2007 and represented a finalisation of the discussions held during the final Phase 1 workshops of 2007. The broad objectives for the 2008 workshops included

- reading, analysis and an array of tasks and exercises to trigger and improve student writing; and
- the creation, development and revision of a short story or stories for submission to selected literary magazines and journals.

The process of reading and evaluating published short stories would continue with my identification and compilation of a further 'representative' range of texts of the short story genre, including experimental texts and an exploration of short stories of varying lengths and the restrictions and opportunities these may offer.

The daily ***Sentence with Soul*** writing practice would continue, as in the previous year, extending the sentences, in workshop exercises into paragraphs with Soul.

Workshop 2

Teaching

The workshop focused on the craft elements of writing with the facilitator identifying and providing craft examples from novels and short stories by various authors. The craft elements included:

- beginnings
- conflict
- settings
- characterisation
- the plot
- dialogue
- style

Students discuss their notions of the concept of creativity and how by means of exercises and assignments, they can extend their imaginations and write about things they knew nothing about, but could research and imagine.

An evaluation and **feedback** process is developed, which is to be more productive and beneficial to the student writer and includes feedback responses to the following **criteria** with a minimum of at least one sentence devoted to each:

- the beginning
- the storyline
- tension
- characterisation
- emotions
- ending
- enjoyment

All participants are now expected to provide written feedback to the texts of fellow workshop participants.

Writing

In an ongoing effort to sensitise students to the additionally available and highly effective technique of utilising the **sounds of words** in their writing, they are asked to undertake a lyrics exercise and to write two additional verses to the song, "As Tears Go By," by Marianne Faithful, after listening to the song and being given a handout of the original lyrics.

Students are given an anonymous short story booklet containing 21 short stories written by a range of traditional and contemporary **short story** authors, some novelists and a poet and asked to rate the stories out of 10 and to specify, which story(s) is closest to where they would like to be as writers. The following stories and authors were selected for this rating exercise:

"Rocking-Horse Winner" – DH Lawrence.
"The Open Window" – Saki (H. H. Munro).
"Man From the South" – Roald Dahl.
"Straight Fiction" – Martin Amis (1999: 194).
"A Russian Beauty" – Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 385).
"The Legacy" – Virginia Woolf (1987: 379).
"The Use of Force" – William Carlos Williams.
"Shooting an Elephant" – George Orwell.
"Better Be Ready 'Bout Half Past Eight" – Alison Baker (1993: 93). (First Prize O' Henry Awards 1994)
"The Storyteller" – Saki (H. H. Munro).
"The Girls in Their Summer Dresses" – Irwin Shaw.
"The Princess and the Puma" – O. Henry.
"The Passenger" – Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 183).
"The Janitor on Mars" – Martin Amis (1999: 154).
"Nurse Lugton's Curtain" – Virginia Woolf (1987: 217).
"The Dragon" – Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 125).
"City Life" – Mary Gordon (1996). (First Prize O' Henry Awards 1997)
"A Nurse's Story" – Peter Baida (1999). (First Prize O' Henry Awards 1999)
"The Black Cat"– Edgar Allan Poe.
"The Fifteen-Dollar Eagle" – Sylvia Plath (1977: 65).
"Big Mama's Funeral" – Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1968: 153).

The importance and significance of **opening paragraphs**, particularly in the short story genre, is highlighted by providing students with seven anonymous opening paragraphs to read, asking them to select one and to write a concluding paragraph to the story they have imagined based on their reading of that first paragraph. The paragraphs provided as a basis for the assignment are the opening paragraphs from the following novels:

English Passengers, Matthew Kneale (2000: 1).
Perfume: The Story of a Murderer, Patrick Suskind (1987: 3).
Welcome to Our Hillbrow, Phaswane Mpe (2001: 1).
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce (1976: 7).
Enduring Love, Ian McEwan. (1998: 1)

To the Lighthouse, Virginia Woolf (1975: 237).
London Fields, Martin Amis (1991: 1).
Midnight's Children, Salman Rushdie (1997: 9).

In an effort to expose students, as writers, to the processes and obstacles experienced by and the idiosyncrasies of **experienced and established writers** and make them feel more a part of a broader historical writing environment and fraternity, all the workshops of 2008 included quotations from various authors relating to the writing topics being discussed and exercises being undertaken by the students. For example, together with the emphasis on the opening paragraph and the exercise relating to it, the students receive a handout containing the experiences and views of Gabriel Garcia Marquez – "One of the most difficult things is the first paragraph. I have spent many months on a first paragraph …" (qtd in Plimpton, 1984: 331) and Philip Roth – "Beginning a book is unpleasant …" (qtd in Plimpton, 1986: 271)

Appendices p. 154 (Appendix 17) contains a list of topics and the authors, whose quotations have been collected and categorised as a basis for reading and discussion by the workshop students, in an effort to 'normalise' the notions of the writer, the writer's life and writing through the continual exposure of the students to the processes, experiences and idiosyncrasies of established and experienced authors and, in so doing, to create a workshop writing environment in which the students' participation in the processes feel more like a writing group and less like an extra-curricular activity within an academic setting. The routine of reading the author quotations became an important feature of the Phase 2 workshops of 2008.

The final assignment for Workshop 2 is an extension of the in-workshop **Lyrics Exercise** and entails the students taking a CD home, listening to 15 songs from a range of eras with varying styles and varying levels of complexity. Students are asked to select a song and write an additional two verses and also an opening paragraph and storyline synopsis of the story they imagine underlying the song.

The songs provided as the basis of this assignment were the following:

Songs	**Writers/Composers**
A Whiter Shade Of Pale	Gary Brooker/K. Reid
Don't Stand So Close To Me	Sting
Cry Me A River	Arthur Hamilton
Like A Rolling Stone	Bob Dylan
Vincent	Don McLean
Happiness Is A Warm Gun	Lennon/McCartney
Forever Young	Bob Dylan
New England	Billy Bragg
Stray Cat Blues	Mick Jagger/Keith Richards
Around The World	Victor Young, Harold Adamson/Vernon Duke
I'm So Tired	Lennon/McCartney
Man of the World	Peter Green

Time In A Bottle	Jim Croce
Just Like A Woman	Bob Dylan
Have I Told You Lately	Van Morrison

Workshop 3

Teaching

The workshop commences with the reading of the selected *Sentences with Soul* received since the last workshop, as well as quotations from Katherine Anne Porter, who admits that all she ever wanted from her writing was "glory," and EM Forster, who describes how it sometimes happens that, while he is writing, a character runs away with him and how his story's endings always give him problems.

Writing

The creative writing handbooks' stipulation that Conflict is a vital component of all storytelling poses problems for young writers, particularly in the short story genre where there is little time and space to establish meaningful and effective conflict situations. In an effort to simplify the conflict requirement, as a primary component of writing craft, I decided that the development of textual **tension** may be a more direct and immediate means to spark the students' imaginations and I developed an exercise, which simply required students to create a textual situation between three characters, which optimises the readers' tension. After a detailed evaluation and consideration, I concluded that the element of tension is a more basic and commonplace emotion than the broader and more abstract notion of conflict, because it is the tension, which is a product of and flows from the conflict that catches and holds the reader's attention.

Students are asked to consider and list 10 elements they believe can be used to convey tension to a reader, to discuss their list with the group and then to freewrite for 10 minutes developing tension between three characters. This **tension exercise** becomes an assignment for completion by the next workshop.

The final workshop assignment is a **research** orientated one, which consists of the sourcing and identifying of the submission requirements and guidelines for the most popular and successful **literary magazines and journals**. The students are split into groups and given a list of periodicals to research. This list contains all the periodicals, which have published one or more O. Henry Competition First-Prize Winners. The students are asked to pool their research findings and the resultant information forms the basis of the students' selection of publications for submission of their short story or stories at the end of the workshop programme.

The New Yorker	*Playboy*
The Atlantic Monthly	*Tomorrow*
Harper's Magazine	*The Transatlantic Review*

The Saturday Evening Post
Harper's Bazaar
Story
Esquire
The Kenyon Review
The Virginia Quarterly Review
Redbook
The Sewanee Review
Ploughshares
The Hudson Review
Southwest Review
Collier's Magazine
The Southern Review
The Antioch Review
The Massachusetts Review
Partisan Review
TriQuarterly
Cosmopolitan
Shenandoah
The Georgia Review
McCall's
The North American Review
Exquisite Corpse
Fiction
Mademoiselle
The Yale Review
Epoch
Scribner's Magazine
Pictorial Review
The Paris Review
Antaeus
The American Mercury
Century Magazine
The Gettysburg Review
The Missouri Review
Boston Review
Indiana Review
Iowa Review
Prairie Schooner
Antioch Review
Chicago Review
Harvard Review
Michigan Quarterly Review
New England Review
Absinthe Literary Review
African American Review
The Ontario Review

The balance of the workshop is used for a feedback session on all student responses to exercises and assignments.

Workshop 4

Teaching

The selected Sentences with Soul are read aloud by the group, as are quotations by Joyce Cary and William Faulkner. Joyce Cary explains that she does not write in a linear fashion, but writes all the big scenes of the story first and then fills in around those scenes with smaller scenes and linking

descriptions. William Faulkner describes writing as a process that consists of 1 per cent talent and 99 per cent discipline and work.

Writing

The students are given a screening of half of an episode ("The Revenge") from the TV series ***Seinfeld*** and given a copy of the first half of the script and asked to complete the second half of the script as they would imagine it. Student responses are read and discussed and the actual second portion screened, compared and discussed.

The student assignment emanating from this workshop is the first **collaborative assignment** allocated during the two year workshop programme. It is intended to test the effects of collaboration on student writing and the students' responses to writing with others. Students are split into groups of three and given DVDs containing the first half portions of 4 of the *Seinfeld* episodes and each student group is asked to select one and complete the script on the basis that the original screen writers went out on strike as a result of a pay dispute.

Once the feedback session on the 1000 word '**Tension**' piece has been completed, students are given two **short story reading packs**, one consisting of 13 short stories from some of the literary magazines and journals, which form part of the submission guidelines research project allocated earlier, and the other containing 10 short stories representative of American and African based short story competition winners. Students are asked to read and rate these stories as an extension to the first reading and rating exercise and to rate these current stories based on the students' originally identified standards in the first reading pack. Once again the names of the authors of the stories are omitted. The reading packs contained the following stories, authors and publications:

American On-Line, Magazine and Literary Publications

"Devshirmeh," Miroslav Penkov (2005: 479-492). (*The Southern Review*)
"The Second Sense," Nadine Gordimer (2007: 268-276). (*The Virginia Quarterly Review*)
"Driver's Education," Paula Whyman (2005: 241-254). (*The Hudson Review*)
"Revival," Ann Pancake (2000: 711-720). (*The Virginia Quarterly Review*)
"Aqua Boulevard," Maile Meloy (2001:20-28). (*The Paris Review*)
"Someone Else Besides You," Viet Thanh Nguyen. (*Narrative Magazine*)
"Cleanness," James Lasdun (2000: 85-92). (*Ploughshares*)
"Great Men and Great Deeds," Janet Peery (2005). (*The Kenyon Review*)
"Fourteen Feet of Water in My House," Allan Gurganus (2006: 74). (*Harper's Magazine*)
"Towards a Language of Desire**,"** Carolyn Megan (2006: 9). (*Massachusetts Review*)
"The Milk of Human Kindness," Saral Waldorf (2007: 47-67). (*The Hudson Review*)
"Folie a Deux," William Trevor (2006). (*The New Yorker*)
"The Well," John Kinsella (2002). (*The Kenyon Review*)

American On-Line Competition and African Writing Competition Winners

"Jungfrau," Mary Watson (2004: 9-22). 1st Prize 2006 Caine Prize for African Writing.
"Poison," Henrietta Rose-Innes (2007: 1-10). 1st Prize 2007 HSBC/SA PEN/Literary Awards.
"At the Sound of the Last Post," Petina Gappah (2007: 1-22). 2nd Prize 2007 HSBC/SA PEN/Literary Awards.
"The Museum," Lela Aboulela (1999: 70-90). 1st Prize 2000 Caine Prize for African Writing.
"Discovering Home," Binyavanga Wainaina (2003: 9-26). 1st Prize 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing.
"Conversations You Have at Twenty," Maud Newton. 2nd Place *Narrative Magazine*, Love Story Competition.
"Monday Morning," Segun Afolabi (2006: 9-18). 1st Prize 2005 Caine Prize for African Writing.
"Interview with a Moron," Elizabeth Stuckey-French. 1st Place *Narrative Magazine* Love Story Competition.
"Blackout," Janet Burroway. 3rd Place *Narrative Magazine*, Love Story Competition
"Seventh Street Alchemy," Brian Chikwava (2003: 17-30). 1st Prize 2004 Caine Prize for African Writing.

Workshop 5

Teaching

After the reading of the selected *Sentences with Soul*, students read aloud the quotations on writing by Thornton Wilder and George Simenon. Thornton Wilder describes the writing process, much as Joyce Cary does, as being based on the "spontaneous passage" with the "joint and cement" between those passages requiring the hard work. George Simenon explains why and how he becomes a recluse while he is working on his novels.

Students are given hard copies of the actual publications, which are the basis of their submission guideline research efforts.

Five examples of the **Settings** created by specific authors are given to the students and read aloud and the importance of setting considered and discussed. The following are the authors whose renditions of settings formed the basis of the discussion:

A Passage to India, E.M. Forster (1988: 138).
White Noise, Don De Lillo (1999: 167-8).
Madame Bovary, Gustave Flaubert (1950: 44-5).
Ways of Dying, Zakes Mda (1995: 42).
Bleak House, Charles Dickens (1996:13-14).

Student ratings and responses to the 13 short stories from the eight literary publications are captured

and additional information is elicited in terms of which stories were the most and least memorable, loved and hated and which developed tension that generated interest and resulted in being the most intriguing and enjoyable.

Writing

In an effort to ascertain the effect of forced collaboration on the students, as in the case of the completion of the *Seinfeld* episode assignment, students are asked to free write (confidentially) around their emotions and their experience of the **collaborative process** involved in completing the assignment.

In support of the theory of the setting students are asked to create a setting, which generates one of the following emotions in the reader — fear, joy, contentment, anger, astonishment, envy, hatred, confusion, relief, sadness, jubilation.

In preparation for the focus on **characterisation** at the following workshop, students are given an assignment to identify their favourite literary character and to consider and explain what about and why that character appeals to them.

Workshop 6

Teaching

After the *Sentences with Soul* are read and discussed and the quotations of Robert Penn Warren, Alberto Moravia, Nelson Algren and Angus Wilson are handed out and read aloud, the students distribute the submission guidelines they have collected and compiled for all the listed literary magazines and journals.

The **characterisation** process consists of each of the students reading their response to the assignment, explaining the reasons for their selected character's appeal and an open discussion follows during which all the participants attempt to identify the common components of the students' attraction to their chosen characters.

Examples of the characterisation methods of certain established authors are handed out and discussed. These examples included the following:

> Samuel Beckett's Mary in *Watt* (1998: 52-3).
> Charles Dickens' Mr Carker in *Dombey and Son* (1985: 372-3).
> James Joyce's Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* (2000: 65).
> Salman Rushdie's Sufiya Zinobia Hyder in *Shame* (1995: 122).
> Martin Amis' Nicola Six in *London Fields* (1999: 16-17).

Writing

The writing component of the workshop is a feedback session, during which student groups read their responses to the *Seinfeld* teleplay assignment and are given feedback by the other students. The

actual second parts of the first part exercise episodes are given to each student on DVD.

Workshop 7

Teaching

Once the *Sentences with Soul* have been read and discussed, as a background to and a foundation for the notions of the importance of the sound of words in writing, a quotation by the American comedian George Carlin is read and discussed with the students.

The added dimension of the effects of the **sounds of words** in texts, or euphony — the quality of being pleasing to the ear — on the reader's reading experience are highlighted by examples that are handed out and read. These pieces consisted of

> "My Tongue Softens on The Other Name," Gabeba Baderoon.
> "A Modern Man," George Carlin.
> *Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov (2000: 9).

Writing

Students are asked to freewrite around an exercise called "**Fantastic Bombastic**" named after the favourite phrase of a Nicaraguan concierge on a cruise ship, who took great delight in playing with English words simply to enjoy and savour their sounds. Students are asked to free write for five minutes rhyming their words, assonating and alliterating their words, focusing purely on the sounds and sound combinations of their words and phrases.

Workshops 8-11

The final 4 workshops of the Phase 2 series for 2008 focused predominantly on student feedback on the short stories they are competing for submission, not only to the university based writing competitions, but also to the selected literary magazines and journals.

As a final reading and discussion exercise, students are asked to consider and reflect on how two authors writing on the same primary subject matter, a baby, can create two stories so diametrically, stylistically and emotionally different. The two stories are "The Baby" (1989: 244) by Donald Barthelme and "The Shawl" (2000: 207) by Cynthia Ozick.

H. Student Writing Responses

1. Introduction

The previous section, Workshop Structure and Content, provided a view of the workshop programme over the four year period in respect of the structure and content of the specific workshops for both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 workshops of the programme. The exercises and assignments used during the workshops as part of the teaching and learning process and as examples, discussion subjects and triggers for the students' own writing responses are contained in the Appendices pp. 22-105.

As the analysis of the workshop structure, content and style has revealed, the programme has not followed the traditional workshop emphasis and focus on writing craft, but based on my own pedagogic experiences as a writing student and on the results of the analysis of the qualitative research studies, has focused on the writing process, the encouragement and nurturing of the student's propensity and ability to write creatively and with an emphasis on the reader and the reader's response to the writing.

While it is obvious that it is impossible to scientifically attribute credit to specific tasks, exercises and assignments, as being the source of and reason for successful student writing, it is possible to gauge the enthusiasm with which a specific activity is tackled and whether the outcome meets the broad objectives of the programme.

It is important to remember that, unlike the teaching of more scientifically focused academic tasks where students are expected to respond within the specific parameters of the task, or exercise guidelines, the workshop students were encouraged to stray from the facilitator's instructions whenever the task or exercises elicited alternate or diverse interests or passions in them.

Having regard to the fact that the notion of the student's absolute freedom to participate or not, to undertake tasks, exercises and assignments or not was at the very core of the programme, the students attended and participated at the level and to the intensity, which they chose, and, therefore, their participation and their texts were the result of their intrinsic

motivation, as opposed to the extrinsic motivation, which forms the basis of their academic studies.

It is possible to measure student enthusiasm in response to exercises and assignments by means of the amount or quantity of writing, which they offered in response to those tasks and exercises, given that the students are writing because they want to write and the amount and extent of their writing is the product of their enthusiasm and pure desire to write.

The analysis of the students' responses to the workshop exercises and assignments will therefore address both the enthusiasm or propensity of response as measured by word quantity, as well as a more general evaluation of substance measured by the aims of the exercise and a focus on whether the alternative perspectives of the texts proved attractive to readers. The texts were also assessed on their 'difference' to what would traditionally be expected of students of this age in their second and third years of academic study, a period during which the creative writing literature would have everyone believe the students are "as shallow as saucers" with their entire focus on auto-biographical and self-focused experiences and texts.

Feedback by the students regarding their specific responses to the tasks and exercises, the analysis of their texts, their general feedback and the feedback contained in their reflexive essays will also provide valuable supplementary data to the evaluation of the workshop exercises and assignments.

When deemed to be significant to the substance of the analysis, specific texts or excerpts from texts will be recorded in the body of the thesis itself, but most texts are contained in the Appendices p.171.

2. Original, Pre-Workshop Writing

The submission of pre-workshop texts was intended to serve as a basis for the student's own comparison in determining her writing development at the end of the workshop programme, but also to provide me with a view of each student's 'writing seriousness' and experience prior to the commencement of the workshop process.

Of the 35 students, who participated in the Phase 1 workshops in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and attended at least one workshop, 23 students submitted a piece, or in some cases a number of pieces of writing. Most of the students had experienced a writing process of some sort and some even had extensive writing experience with time having been invested in novel length works, even if largely uncompleted.

In a field, which appears to have become more popular amongst female students and writers, four male students submitted lengthy stories and excerpts from larger works of up to 60,000 words in length. Alongside *Chadwick*, *Knives*, *Jonny Rage* and *Jonathan*, *Bryony* is the only female student to have written in excess of 50,000 words.

The balance of the students submitted shorter pieces, most of which had been written while they were at school. *Spacemother's* piece, a children's story, "Goose on the Roof," was written specifically for the workshop programme, as she had never written a fictional piece before.

In terms of genre, the majority of the texts were written in a fictional prose style, but there were some poems submitted: 4 poems by *Sylvia*, a love-poem by *Myle*, an erotically charged free-verse poem by *Raymond*, a poem about Human Rights Day by *Crazy* and 16 poems, with a range of topics, by *Cornelius*.

Taryn, *Kathryn*, *Olivia* and *Sophie* submitted non-fictional, social, diaristic and memoir type pieces with *Sophie's* piece titled "The Joys of Experience" and *Olivia's* called "The Mysterious Way in Which Parents Become an Embarrassment to Their Children."

Nom de Plume was the only student to submit a script in the form of a one act play entitled "Shock Therapy."

As 'products' of the electronic game era and the era of the books and movies of *Harry Potter* and the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy, it is not surprising that *Benjamin's* story is based on the computer game, "Half-Life 2," and that the extensive texts written by *Knives*, *Bryony* and *Jonny Rage* all have fantasy styles and subject matter. For example, the title of *Knives'*

'book' is "Element Wizards," and the first two chapters of Jonny Rage's book are titled "Winds of Change" and "Dark Prophecies."

In contrast *David's* text is about "three guys and a renegade washing machine called Bob" and *Kahlan Amnell's* story, "The Other Woman," focuses on human relationships.

Recognising that it is difficult and perhaps unfair to judge these texts, most of which were written during the students' school years, no texts really stand out for me as being exceptional. What all these texts do show, however, is a level of enthusiasm, determination, passion and discipline, which can be considered to be the components of the bedrock of a writing 'will.'

The text, which most attracted my attention, emotion and my ear, is a poem by *Sylvia* called "River." (Appendices p. 171)

3. *A Conversation with Two Writers* CD

Designed and produced as a multimedia teaching aid, the *Conversation with Two Writers* CD, had as its primary objective the explanation of the benefits of keeping a Writer's Journal and the students' acceptance of the practice of maintaining some form of writing record, at least for the duration of the workshop programme. The secondary objective was to get students by way of three exercises to adopt alternative writing voices by shifting their focuses and perspectives from their everyday selves into another world, into an unfamiliar time, in unfamiliar circumstances.

I did not find The *Conversation with Two Writers* CD particularly successful and it accordingly did not form part of the workshop teaching materials in the Phase 1 workshops of 2007. In retrospect it was perhaps a premature decision to withdraw the CD from the workshop programme, purely because it did not successfully increase student enthusiasm for maintaining disciplined writing journal activities and routines. Perhaps the real value of the written exercises is not to be found in the quality of the writing products of the exercise, but in the imaginative mind shift and changes in perspective the process forced the students to undergo. It may have been the disruption students needed in order to experience and

discover their ability to assume alternate and additional writing voices.

(a) South Vietnamese Soldiers Dialogue

The first writing exercise is based on the following instructions:

> *Carefully study Eddie Adams' famous photograph, "Saigon Execution," and then write a five hundred word dialogue between three soldiers at the South-Vietnamese army barracks the evening after the execution took place. The main character in the dialogue is the South Vietnamese soldier standing on the extreme left of the photograph.*

Out of the 23 students, who participated in the second year 2005 and 2006 workshops, 13 responded to the specific exercise with the majority adhering to the limit of 500 words.

Most of the responses attempted with varying degrees of success to portray the tension, which would have been evident in the barracks after the day's events. The majority of the responses took the form of a script like dialogue with approximately half of the dialogue pieces being done in a purely mechanical manner with the various characters simply being denoted by a number or letter and not being given actual names. The other half of the responses showed that the students had actually gone to the trouble of researching and selecting Vietnamese type names for their characters. *Olivia's* dialogue is one of the more thoughtful and sensitively characterised pieces. (Appendices p. 171)

(b) Eddie Adams' Internal Dialogue

The second writing exercise is an extension of the "Saigon Execution" incident, as experienced from the more internalised perspective of the photographer:

> *Carefully study Eddie Adams' famous photograph, "Saigon Execution." Read the background information on the circumstances surrounding the execution and then write a five-hundred-word monologue of the thoughts going through the mind of Eddie Adams, the photographer, immediately prior to and after the execution.*

Of the 23 students that participated in the Phase 1 workshops of 2005 and 2006, 11 completed the second half of the "Saigon Execution" exercise. The students all in their different ways attempted to assume the perspective of the photographer, Eddie Adams, but most were not able to make the leap from describing what the photographer was thinking to actually imagining and recreating his thoughts immediately before and after the unexpected killing. Even though it is unfinished, *Spacemother's* response to the exercise comes closest to producing a rendition of an internal thought process, while at the same time showing the reader the photographer's personality and his attitudes towards the war, his lifestyle and his family. (Appendices p.172)

Bryony's journal entry pertaining to the dialogue component of the "Saigon Execution" exercise provides a real insight into the obstacles and quandaries, which confront some of the more perfectionist and literary minded students every time they are tasked with completing an exercise. While some students use their imaginations and write, others like *Bryony* are seemingly always confronted by questions that require answers before they are able to enter their imaginative selves and create the text. In developing pedagogy for the teaching and learning of creative and imaginative writing, cognisance should always be taken of this type of writing process restriction, which faces many students in the academic, investigative and finitely measured and rewarded world of the university and other higher education institutions. (Appendices p.173)

(c) Coffee Shop Dialogue Story

The third and final exercise based on the *Conversation with Two Writers* CD focuses on the importance of observation, as a vital component of the writer's arsenal of skills. Students are required to observe, capture dialogue realistically and to combine these elements in the creation of an imaginative fictional piece.

> *Pay a visit to your local coffee shop. Listen to the conversations of the people around you. Capture and record authentic fragments of dialogue. Pay attention to how people really talk, including the slang they use, their pauses or incomplete thoughts. Listen until you have enough dialogue to tell a story. Write a scene that tells a five hundred word story — about the people, about the place, about that moment in time — through the dialogue.*

Thirteen of the 23 students participating in the workshops during the Phase 1 2005 and 2006 workshops completed the exercise. Four of the students responded to the exercise by simply providing a social commentary perspective of their observations while visiting their local coffee shop. The reader is given glimpses of the surroundings and snatches of dialogue from the customers around the writers. Only *Taryn's* text incorporates what appears to be a realistic view of not only the coffee shop, but also descriptions of and socially based commentary on all the characters' activities and the physical characteristics of the area surrounding the coffee venue.

Five students merely re-wrote the dialogue they had captured while at a coffee shop and did not proceed to the story-writing aspect of the exercise requirements.

Adelaide responded to the exercise with a first person fictional piece, while *David* attempted a humorous rendition of his coffee shop experience with himself as narrator in a third person voice as the protagonist, a secret agent tasked with the destruction of the coffee shop establishment.

Both *Kathryn* and *Spacemother* provided creatively imaginative pieces with *Kathryn's* story appearing to be little more than a record of a boring restaurant visit, until an irritatingly obnoxious table of restaurant goers disappears. (Appendices p. 173) *Spacemother's* fictional rendition of the coming together of two maturing woman delightfully captures the subtle nuances of the names, terminology and affections between two close friends discussing their activities and concerns at a specific time in their lives. It is wonderful fiction that is more authentic and real than reality. (Appendices p. 174)

Eleven of the 23 participating students provided specific feedback of their experiences of the content and exercises of the "Conversation with Two Writers" CD, as well as their experiences with the multimedia format of the CD.

Most of the students had positive reactions to the "Conversation" components of the CD. *Sylvia* remarked that

> *... starting to write is an intimidating thing at best, a terrifying one at worst. I found the 'conversations' with Dickens and Dylan a much-appreciated way to*

> *ease into the process. The questions were a good kick in the backside — necessary, I think, to confirm my commitment to learning to write more effectively.*

Taryn found the CD to be "logical and thorough, covering relevant aspects of writing and the writing process." *Bryony* appreciated the "clear progression from a slow beginning to a more complex end" and being able to learn about other writers and being exposed to excerpts of their work.

For *Charles*, the questions posed to the two writers, Dickens and Dylan, and then to himself

> *... allowed [him] into the difficult parts of [his] past, being able to come to terms with certain issues and being candid in [his] writing. [He] loved the fact that both Charles Dickens and Bob Dylan had been influenced by their times and situation in their writing. This allowed [him] the chance to evaluate [his] past experiences and see how they could assist in [his] writing.*

While Charles Dickens was generally accepted as being a good example of a successful writer, whose advice and experiences would be of value to student writers, there were mixed responses to the inclusion of Bob Dylan, as a singer songwriter. *Spacemother* did not feel that Bob Dylan was a serious enough literary figure with the required credibility to be in conversation with Charles Dickens and that "a better example of popular writing could have been chosen." *Vicky* agreed that, while she likes his songs, Dylan "doesn't quite measure up."

In contrast *Noor* enjoyed Dylan's music and saw his lyrics as being "full of wisdom and powerful meanings and definitely much more interesting than a lot of the stuff they sing about today."

In terms of the writing exercises, the students made no mention of the observation and dialogue based writing assignment focusing instead on the complexity, difficulty and extreme nature of the two "Saigon Execution" exercises. *Sylvia* admits that the two tasks "absolutely threw" her and she felt as if she had been thrown into the "deep end" and "was out of [her] league" and "up the creek without a paddle."

Charles describes the exercises as "negative, but helpful" and "hectic" for him, and *Spacemother* appreciated the challenge of "broadening [her] perspectives and experiences by being forced to write as a Vietnamese soldier." *Noor* found the task to be "quite challenging" and "did not feel comfortable with the way [he] handled it."

With the exception of one student, most of the responses from the students were positive. There was, however, general agreement that the mechanics of the CD needed to be improved to allow for shortcuts between the various sections and questions. Its rigid, linear format was found to be cumbersome, tedious and time consuming to navigate. It requires a central menu, which provides direct access to the various sections and the audio and visual elements.

David, an original participant in the Phase 1 2005 workshops, chose not to undertake the CD exercises and tasks in that year, but participated in the Phase 1 2006 workshops. He answered the biographic questions, but did not undertake any of the writing exercises. He did, however, provide a valuable, if somewhat cynical, response to the request for feedback. His feedback symbolises and highlights the sometimes entrenched and protective attitudes students may have towards questions of a personal nature and suggestions of and adherence to specific writing instruments and routines such as keeping a writing journal.

The style of *David's* response was uncharacteristic and consisted of a repetition of the words and concepts contained on the CD with specific responses to those phrases. For example, in response to a sentence identifying the benefits of the Writer's Journal – *Your Writer's Journal will become your constant companion, enabling you to reflect on and assess your personal creative process as you grow and develop as a writer – David* commented

> *Oh, so I've got this journal that promises to be my constant companion. What now? Can it do dishes? Can it do my essays for me?*
>
> *Hmmm, assess my personal creative process now, will you? Together we can find a way around writer's block! (2 blocks that way, then take a left) Seriously, assessing the creative process and how it comes about could potentially uncover ways of triggering it, which could come in handy when you're 3 paragraphs short of an essay and it's due in five minutes.*

David's response reiterates the importance of maintaining a balanced, open approach in the workshops and of remaining sensitive to individual student personalities, thereby avoiding didactic pronouncements and affording the participants freedom of choice.

4. The Personal Lies or Untruths Poem

While it appears that the Personal Lies or Untruths Poem exercise was designed to perform the function of a fun introduction instrument during the preliminary phases of the establishment of a workshop group's dynamics, the exercise generated far more value as an example of the power of the universal urge to imagine, play and create and a reminder of the inherent reluctance of many individuals to disclose personal information. This preference for privacy, as revealed by this simple writing exercise, raises questions as to the value of, and the potential harm caused, by creative writing programmes, which insist on including compulsory auto-biographical — and in some cases trauma — based writing exercises as elements of the students writing portfolios, which are submitted for assessment and grading.

The vocal and visual difference in the students' demeanour between being asked to write a poem about themselves and then the further instruction that the poem must be totally untrue is extraordinary. The change is from negative to positive and from dread and reluctance to eagerness and playfulness. Once they are aware that they are required to write a fictional poem about themselves, a sinful, naughty poem, the students eagerly start writing. This shows the universal human fascination with story telling and imaginative creation.

For some of the students their Personal Lie Poem was the best, most authentic and natural text that they created during the entire two year workshop programme. *Myle*, *Vicky* and *Nom de Plume's* poems are good examples of the students' responses to the exercise. (Appendices p. 174)

The feedback on the exercise received from *Bryony* and *Vicky* sums up the reaction of most of the participating students. Both enjoyed the freedom the exercise gave them and being allowed to play with their writing and embracing the magic afforded them through the granting of new perspectives of themselves. (Appendices p. 175)

5. The Participant and Spectator Writing Exercise

Credit for the origination of the terms, 'Participant' and 'Spectator,' is due to James Britton and Denys Harding, but, according to reviewer Lil Brannon, Judith and Geoffrey Summerfield redefined the terms for their own purposes, as explained in their book, *Texts and Contexts: A Contribution to the Theory and Practice of Teaching Composition* (1988). Dr Pamela Nichols, Director of the Writing Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand, developed the concept of Participant and Spectator texts into a valuable writing exercise for her students. The two viewpoints represent useful contrasting perspectives. Lil Brannon provides a useful précis of the distinction between the two modes of writing:

> Participant ... means that the narrator/writer/speaking voice of the text is 'participating' in the unfolding action of the text. The Spectator is assigned to the narrator who reflects upon the experience. Poetic texts can be constructed from the role of the participant or the spectator. Transactional texts ... are by necessity constructed through the spectator role. Texts written in the role of the participant are those which are much like stream of consciousness: 'particular,' 'private,' 'uncontextualized,' and 'unevaluated' by the narrator. On the other hand, those written in the role of the spectator are more 'generalized,' 'public,' 'contextualized,' and evaluated by the speaking voice (1988: 53).

Of the 34 students, who participated in the Phase 1 workshops of 2005, 2006 and 2007, 19 completed the exercise and fortunately ignored my specific request to write about a mundane activity in their lives and proceeded to explore a diversity of activities, which included fishing, scuba-diving, karate training, being part of a stadium crowd, attending an artwork auction, going out on a date and being ill in bed.

Some students chose more tension filled and edgy topics to explore, which were more imaginative and in many instances seemingly beyond their own personal experiences. *Kahlan Amnell* describes a woman's response to having a miscarriage; *Dorothy's* narrator describes a girl's visit to her father's grave; while talking to her mirror, *Spacemother's* character debates whether to tell her friends that her husband beats her in order to explain her appearance after having plastic surgery; *Olivia* describes a butterfly emerging from its cocoon; and *Raymond's* narrator provides a detailed glimpse of the panic and energy of a young couple caught in a compromising situation by the unexpected return of her parents.

Only three students decided that their Participant piece was worth developing into a short story and, while most of the students seemed to grasp the difference between the Participant and Spectator forms of writing, relatively few utilised the extreme Participant mode, as a pure stream of consciousness, with most adopting a mixed Participant and Spectator style.

Chadwick, who uses a second person voice to seemingly describe the experience of being cremated, and *Lemon*, who captures the experiences of a grief-stricken girl, are two of the students who came closest to the aims of the exercise, but as has been pointed out before, the textual product should not be the only measure of the outcome of an exercise or assignment. The experience of undertaking and completing the exercise may also be a valuable outcome of the process. (Appendices p. 17)

6. The Showing, not Telling Exercise

As the first traditionally recognised component of the craft of writing to be presented to the students in the workshop programme, the concept of Showing and not Telling found the students unenthusiastic, disinterested and non-participative. With the exception of three students, none of the 34 students attending the phase 1 workshops and, who had been exposed to the theory behind and the exercise in Showing and not Telling, bothered to submit their responses to the in-workshop task.

Perhaps the reaction is as a result of the mechanical, almost technical nature of the maxim, the references to strong verbs, details and descriptive language and the sparing use of adjectives and adverbs. Students exhibited similar reactions to the other components of the craft of writing. It may be that during this early phase student writers prefer to 'feel' what they write and are negatively inclined towards concepts that are based on rules and formulas, which are in opposition to their notions of writing as being free and natural.

The solution may be to adapt the craft focused teaching components and exercises into emotional, less complex, less dogmatic and formulaic methods and processes, as was achieved with characterisation in the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* assignment. (Appendices p. 182)

It may also be that the exercises themselves are based on revising and redrafting a pre-existing idea or concept. Students are not required to create during the Show not Telling exercise, they are required to alter and improve the following sentences.

She could barely contain her anger at this comment.

She is beautiful.

7. The Freewriting Task (Elbow, 1958: 13-19)

The task of freewriting for 10 minutes based on a choice of some, all three or none of the objects given to the students to inspect and touch, was disconcerting to most of the students. They displayed different attitudes to the concept of writing non-stop and freely for what seemed to them an inordinately long time.

The three objects consisted of a glass eye in a small jewellery box, a crystal ball in a dark velvet cloth and an old portable bellows camera. These objects served the purpose of ensuring that the students' freewriting process would have a source or base from which to originate.

It again became apparent that exercises, that have as their object the development of the students' writing processes, as opposed to the development of writing craft, are more enthusiastically received and practised by the student writers.

Lilly and *Benjamin* responded to the task in a literal manner by writing about the actual objects and exploring their possibilities and characteristics with *Benjamin* proceeding to a subsequent level by weaving a fictional storyline around the objects. *Lilly* got stuck on the physical nature of the objects themselves.

In his freewriting response *David* chose to explore the concept of freewriting itself, before analysing each object individually and ending by revealing his underlying suspicion of the whole exercise with a "*disclaimer — any attempts to reveal the workings of my mind to the outside world will be punishable to the maximum extent permissible by law"* — but also

recognising the potentially positive attributes of the process: *"It's amazing how much crap it's possible to come up with in a single freewriting exercise. I'm going to have to do this more often."*

The more perfectionistic students had difficulty doing the freewriting exercise. *Kathryn* could not free write at all explaining that

> *Freewriting is so hard!! Is it supposed to be this crappy? Because my inner thoughts are then really boring. I think I'll try again tomorrow. I don't know if it is cheating though.*

Taryn admitted, once she had completed the exercise, that she "enjoyed free-writing and found it much easier to write knowing that the piece wasn't supposed to be well-written/ structured/etc. She and *Bryony* came to embrace the freewriting process in their journal writing routines, as a means to spark and assist in their writing processes.

A number of students used the objects as an initial trigger for the content of their freewriting texts, with some like *Dorothy* creating imaginary settings and characters. She developed a sensually provocative celestial world of gods and goddesses and magical beasts controlled by a

> *ringmaster, who conducts his circus acts for the entertainment of a sole man and cracks his whip and the flamingo elephants, carrying the goddess of Love, Beauty, Laughter and Marriage, parade forward as Temptation approaches.*

In contrast *Lemon's* freewriting activity takes her from the glass eye, as a trigger, into a non-fictional exploration of Greek sculpture and social notions of beauty through the ages.

Finally, some students like *Chadwick* have the ability to immerse themselves in the task, releasing their subconscious selves, which is what the freewriting process is designed to achieve and create a rough, but highly imaginative, piece of fiction with characters, setting, conflict and tension. (Appendices p. 177)

The freewriting process turned out to be a valuable instrument to trigger the students'

writing and it was embraced by a number of them as such. It also served as a useful instrument for eliciting honest feedback from students in garnering their responses to certain workshop exercises, such as the collaborative *Seinfeld* teleplay writing assignment.

8. The Loop Writing Exercise

The writing exercises based on Peter Elbow's loop writing process, (1958: 59-77) which I was first exposed to in 2004 in Dr. Pamela Nichol's *Writing: Theory and Praxis* module, appeared to have had little impact on the students' writing processes, or the texts of the students of the phase 1 workshops of 2005 and 2006. *Jonathan* and *Bryony* admitted to struggling with the concept. *Jonathan* understood its potential value, but found that it did not work for him, because he prefers to *"think things through much more carefully before putting them on the page."*

Bryony considered it to be a strange process. She could see the obvious benefits of looking at a story *"through different lenses,"* but *"she was not particularly happy with her particular piece of writing."*

Charles was more positive in his reaction to the Loop Writing process:

> *The exercise gave an innovative dimension to my writing, and I also realised new forms of writing character views without sounding mediocre. It was challenging to find different points of view for each character, but when you get the hang of it, it becomes easier and fun to do.*

In sharp contrast in the Phase 1 workshops of 2007 the Loop Writing exercise had a profound effect on the students and their writing. Most of the students, including the most introverted and subdued, were suddenly able to write authentically from multiple perspectives, in multiple voices with seeming maturity beyond their years and their own personal experiences. It was as if the students' imaginations had become multi-dimensional and they had realised and embraced the fact that they were capable of imagining and creating stories, characters and situations with innumerable writers' voices.

The exercise consisted of firstly freewriting around one, or none, or all of the three verbal

triggers and then loop writing the resultant freewriting topic from three different looping perspectives: a different audience, a different writer and a different time. The verbal triggers consisted of the first verse of Philip Larkin's poem, "This be the Verse" —

They fuck you up, your mom and dad.
They may not mean to, but they do.
They fill you with the faults they had
And add some extra, just for you.

And lines from Bob Dylan's lyrics in *All Along the Watchtower* —

Two riders were approaching and
The wind began to howl.

and *Hard Rain* —

Heard the sound of a clown who cried in the alley.

It was the female students, who took the most risks in the various voices they adopted and used. The success and impact of the exercise was widespread and not restricted to only one or two students. The freewriting basis of and dialogue excerpt from *Emily Lyre's* Loop Writing piece (Appendices p. 178) and an excerpt of dialogue from *Kahlan Amnell's* Loop Writing response (Appendices p. 179) are good examples of the effects of an experientially enabling environment.

Lemon's text includes a first-person, memoir based analysis of the complexities of families and their effects on the personalities of their offspring, a 'toast' to a mother from her son or daughter and the descriptions of two Evans families, one in the present day and the other in the 1800s in rural England. *Sophie* takes on a male voice as she blends reality with mystical fantasy. (Appendices p.179)

Also taking on predominantly male voices *Lilly* manages to create a delicately layered, self contained story from her three looped perspectives with a refreshingly Afrikaans nuanced flavour and a wonderfully warm and detailed accuracy and lifelikeness. (Appendices p. 181)

9. Characterisation and Storyline – *Sins, Virtues and Graces* Exercise

Derived and developed from Christopher Ricks' critical evaluation of the lyrics of the songs of Bob Dylan in his book, *Dylan's Visions of Sin* (2005), the *Sin, Virtues and Graces* exercise was undertaken by students in all three Phase 1 workshop groups with differing degrees of involvement. The structure and process of this assignment has already been explained in the section entitled "The Structure and Content of the Workshops."

All 6 students in the 2005 workshops completed the exercise, while only 2 of the 17 students in group 1 and group 2 of the 2006 workshops did the exercise. In 2007 7 of the 12 workshop students participated in the exercise. I have not been able to specifically identify the reasons for the disparity in the number of students choosing to participate in the exercise between the three workshop groups, beyond the fact that the 2005 and 2007 workshop groups were made up of generally more committed and enthusiastic individuals.

Similar to the results of the Loop Writing task, those students, who did participate did so enthusiastically and produced highly imaginative profiles, insights and texts. Their enthusiasm to create in response to the exercise is evidenced by the word counts of the profiles and stories they submitted.

With an average of 1000 words per student in the 2005 workshop group, *Kathryn* wrote 1367 words about characters displaying Anger and Fortitude as their primary characteristics, while *Taryn* explained the personality traits of a Proud and a Just character and created a story in which these two characters come together (2567 words).

In the 2007 workshop group *Antonio* wrote 3700 words on characters driven by Lust and Fortitude; *Chadwick* 3650 words on Hope and Anger, *Kahlan Amnell* 2614 words on Pride and Faith and *Lemon* 2158 words on Sloth and Faith.

The students' enthusiastic response to the exercise is also evidenced by the 'quality' of their textual responses and the insightful and considered thought processes, which preceded the creation and production of the character profiles and the stories themselves.

While the relatively mechanical characterisation process expounded by the writing handbooks, in my view, does not offer the student writer any inspirational concepts to use as a springboard from which to launch their characters' personalities, motivations and ultimately their stories, the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise seems to provide students with a good imaginative starting point, as is illustrated by the excerpts from the students' textual responses to the exercise.

Benjamin's story is set in a nightclub where Bob (Hope), a failed husband and family man, sits night after night hoping to 'score' with at least one of the ladies, who frequent the establishment. Bob's luck changes dramatically one evening when he meets Sinead (Lust), who is an unscrupulous and insatiable lover of sins of the flesh.

David develops characterisations of two brothers, Aril (Gluttony) and Damir (Charity), at the time of

> *the Breakup, America's descent into anarchy triggered by the oil crisis. Once the supply of affordable oil from the Middle East had dried up, the oil-rich states, led by Texas, had seceded from the Union in panic, refusing to share their oil with the other states.*

Using a boy's sister as the narrator, *Kathryn* describes the effect a son's Anger has on a family. *Taryn's* piece on the characterisation of Pride and Justice and *Lemon's* characterisation of Faith and Sloth both use a similar technique to that of *Kathryn*, by not simply describing the individuals and their personalities, but by illustrating the effects the characters have on those around them.

Both *Antonio* (Lust and Fortitude) and *Chadwick* (Hope and Anger) developed their characterisations into complete short stories. In his shocking and disturbing, yet effective extension of his characterisations into his fictional piece, *Chadwick* makes use of an unusual narrative technique in which the internal voice of the six year old girl, Hope, is an adult voice that describes her thoughts and experiences as Hope's heroine-addicted, prostitute mother prepares Hope for her first fee-paying encounter with Anger Billards.

None of the students simply provided rudimentary lists of the characteristics that would be exhibited by individuals, who were driven by the selected *Sins, Virtues or Graces*. The

students all wrote about the characters using either first person or third person voices. The students did not reveal and describe the characteristics from a mechanical, distant perspective, but 'showed' the reader through a 'close-up' and involved second 'character,' the narrator. *Jonny Rage's* characterisation of Fortitude is a first-person narration and *Kahlan Amnell's* piece is a third-person characterisation of Pride. (Appendices p. 185)

Perhaps the 'success' of the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise can also be attributed to the fact that it invites students to play, to imagine people who are good and people who are evil. It is not just the apparent simplicity of the good versus evil paradigm, which awakened the students' passions and imaginations. A number of them, like *Jonny Rage*, as he so successfully illustrated in his characterisation of Fortitude, very quickly grasped and understood the complexities and myriad of choices inherent in all of the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* and that *too much* of a Virtue or Grace, can be as disabling, negative and evil as any one of the Sins.

10. *The Soul Inside the Sentence* – A Writing Routine

Based on the concepts contained in William Gass' essay, "The Soul Inside the Sentence" (1985: 113), this exercise was introduced in the phase 1 workshops of 2007 and the phase 2 workshops of 2007 and continued through into the phase 2 workshops of 2008.

This exercise was designed specifically to generate some routine in the students' writing and at the same time to allow students to practice the creation of effective sentences, as the primary unit of all textual creations.

Gass' premise is that "the language of science should serve the reality principle; [while] the language of art serves the soul" and that artful writing should carry a "passion ... that lies as deep inside us as our bones" (1985: 122). In doing this exercise the intention was for the writing to affect readers in some way and to avoid writing, what William Gass describes as, "levelless language ... voiceless type, pissless prose [that] can never be artistically complete" (1985: 122).

It was initially suggested to the students that a *Sentence with Soul* is a sentence that is alive, animated and has the power to intrigue the reader in such a way that she yearns for additional sentences to explain and develop the 'soul' of the first. As the practice of the exercise gained momentum, it became clear, however, that each student had based the *Sentence with Soul* activity on her own interpretation of the exercise in accordance with her own writing style and preferences. These interpretations, styles and preferences changed, as the students were exposed to the selected sentences of the other students.

There was little in the way of debate on the underlying concept of the *Sentence with a Soul Inside*. Twenty of the 21 participating students embraced the process and, while very few students managed to write a *Sentence with Soul* every single day, most students did provide sentences regularly. In total 912 sentences were submitted to the facilitator during the two year period, with an average of 45 sentences per student with 101 sentences being the most submitted by a single student and 2 sentences the least number of sentences submitted.

The students' sentences were submitted only to the facilitator and remained anonymous throughout the two year period. Only those sentences selected by the facilitator were read at each workshop session, which may have added to the 'tension' by increasing the students' efforts to be selected for each reading session.

Some students used their *Sentences with Soul* as a substitution for their journal writing routines and for one student, in particular, the *Sentences with Soul* exercise and routine became her predominant focus and the primary source of all her fictional textual material.

The examples of the students' *Sentences with Soul* illustrate their diversity of approaches, subject matters and styles, but also underline the significance of the elements of playfulness and experimentation, which appears to have released the students' passionate, enthusiastic and creative approaches to their sentence writing activities.

The combination of freedom, diversity and playfulness, with a reader-orientated focus, which is inherent in the *Sentences with Soul* exercise and routine, results in the creation of highly imaginative, original, thought-provoking and entertaining sentences, which not only

encourage students to pursue a regular, artistically focused writing practice, but also provide students with small 'building-block' examples of their own, inherent creative abilities and capabilities.

The following are examples of some of the students' *Sentences with Soul*. A broad selection of *Sentences with Soul* submitted by the students is contained in the Appendices p. 190.

As one of the original phase 1 2005 workshop participants and as one of the 4 'perfectionist' writers in that group, *Taryn* embraced the *Sentence with Soul* writing routine and developed it into her main writing focus and her primary writing genre during the phase 2 workshops of 2007. This focus led to her creation of intellectually driven, complex sentences on a broad range of concepts. Her sentences are all well constructed and contain enticing under currents, sub-texts and characterisations. She was able to set her usually constrictive perfectionism aside and enjoyed the playful experimentation, which the *Sentence with Soul* exercise offered her. (Appendices p. 190)

Taryn

> *Whenever we met in the cafeteria, Malcolm smiled at me as though someone had held a gun to his head and said, "Smile, Malcolm."*
>
> *I headed for the cracked hallway mirror to fluff out my wig, straighten my Red Nose and wipe the last trace of coke from my philtrum. That's the space between your nose and mouth, I'd learnt that morning. Who would've thought we'd ever need a name for that, huh?*
>
> *My CD4 count is 199, which is not, along the broad spectrum of 'terribility,' particularly terrible. Now there is the matter of what else you need me to confess. Am I black? Am I gay? Am I a he, or a she, or a they? The difference caused by a single digit, the admin of disclosure — that, maybe, brings us closer to terrible.*
>
> *Summer started early that year, and so did the executions.*
>
> *Four pages into Of Grammatology, Jeffrey Blackbeard decided to name his penis Derrida.*

And then there was the matter of hyphenating words. He had always dreaded the first step onto those rickety bridges, suspended as they were between two poles he had himself struck into the ground, and swinging like skipping ropes in the midst of the tornado, which he himself had invoked.

As she stood in front of the mirror and pulled at the tag on the sleeve of her uniform, Beth decided that her father would be tall, and strong, and present.

I was waiting for me in the mirror when I woke up.

Olivia was also very enthusiastic about her adoption of the *Sentence with Soul* exercise, as an abbreviated means of creative expression. In contrast to the calculated approach of *Taryn*, *Olivia* used the process as a foundation for comedic experimentation in which she revelled in the opportunity to play with concepts, characters, ideas and social commentary. *Olivia* is the student, who most naturally developed sentences into extended pieces, particularly dialogue-based texts. (Appendices p. 190)

Olivia

"Suicide hotline ... please hold."

"But Mo-ooom ... Strangers have the best candy."

Some people have a shrink, I have a beautician. That woman should start a religion. She strips away angst and bad energy like she strips away rebellious eyebrow hairs; tidying up the edges and removing any in-grown hairs in the bikini line of my life.

It is better to live a life of a thousand messy, tearful somethings, scattered upon the floor than a life of neat nothings stacked alphabetically upon a shelf.

"Is this really me? Am I the tortured soul or am I just another teenage drama queen?"

She hated public speaking; she is the kind of person that would rather be in the coffin than saying the eulogy.

His name was Matteo and he tasted like a chilled Mojito.

Emily Lyre wrote and submitted relatively few sentences, but those that she did submit are all long and complex containing detailed imagery, descriptions of human experiences and inherent sounds in a highly impactful and imaginative manner. Her *Sentences with Soul* represent some of *Emily Lyre's* most effective writing. (Appendices p. 190)

Emily Lyre

Once, I stood in the middle of the road with tears in my eyes and clenched fists screaming at the top of my lungs at the over-the-road dogs. The louder I screamed 'Shut up shut up shutupshutupshutup shut the fuck up fuuuuuck', the louder they barked, four or five enormous dogs, black, white, yellow, barking hysterically at the lunatic in the road ...

In keeping with her general writing style, *Sophie's* sentences are soft and gentle, sometimes with quirky characterisations, always with hints of settings and moods and nuances and while seemingly understated, her sentences are always impactful and memorable. (Appendices p. 191)

Sophie

She was a quiet and solitary figure amongst the chattering crowd seated around the table. I reached over and touched her arm, and she smiled so widely at me, that I felt I'd saved the whole of humankind from fading to black.

Col. Vermeulen, reports a statement made to him, on the sandy banks of the Crocodile River, by a Khoisan hunter who had recently returned from an annual trip to Europe: "When I first read Macbeth, I felt like going out and shaking my spear."

Antonio creates sentences with characterisations, with underlying storylines and descriptions of settings. (Appendices p. 192)

Antonio

> *The only sunshine he experienced each day was on the bathroom toilet seat, away from his wife's daily breakdowns, his obese son's tears and his promiscuous daughter's rebellious antics.*
>
> *Stuck in early morning traffic, he sits cramped up in his tiny white bakkie and wonders at the magnificent fuck up his life has become.*
>
> *Instead of whining so much, maybe you should try to change your life?*
>
> *Empty footprints cast a shadow upon the puddles of water on the tarred road as the stench of reheated food wafts from the open windows of the matchbox apartments.*

Like *Olivia*, *Jonny Rage* thrives on the Sentences with Soul process as a playful and experimental activity. His sentences displayed a narcissistic, amusing and comedic bent. Using words economically, *Jonny Rage* still managed to achieve optimal impact and create wonderful undertones of potential storylines and characterisations. (Appendices p. 192)

Jonny Rage

> *"I'm curious about you, I wonder what makes you tick, what's inside of you?" She picked up the knife.*
>
> *I'd fall out of heaven for you.*
>
> *It itched between his shoulder blades, where his wings used to be.*
>
> *There's a voice, in my head. It tells me to do things. But mostly, it tells me how good I look.*
>
> *And with that simple sentence, mom ruined the entire party.*
>
> *Every now and then a window opens inside my mind, and someone looks in. Sometimes other … stuff … comes in too.*

David's sentences were clearly written with the aim of creating witty, clever and funny one liners (often with sexual connotations and undertones). Clearly *David* had fun and enjoyed experimenting with the process and created some of his best writing in response to the *Sentences with Soul* exercise. (Appendices p. 192)

David

> *"That's exactly what Said said," said Norma.*
>
> *The voice of the wind whispered past the blade of my sword on its flight towards Ochewa's neck.*
>
> *He designs small children for foreign advertising agencies.*
>
> *Shall I compare thee to a Winter's night?*
>
> *The moment we locked eyes I knew she would warm my bed tonight.*
>
> *A friend of the same gender, with a hidden agenda.*
>
> *"Are threesomes inherently tautological?" she whispered, her lips brushing my ear.*

Knives's sentences encompass a range of experiments, including imagery, characterisations and characters offering commentaries on their life experiences. (Appendices p. 191)

Knives

> *The children stood mesmerised as he bellowed with laughter, his belly shaking and rolling with each spasm of joy, ripples of mirth repeating themselves across the stretched shirt, merriment playing havoc with the shape of his body.*
>
> *They say I have a bright future ... either I'll work too hard and burn out or I'll forever live with the regret of not doing enough.*
>
> *"If you wanna make it kid, suffer. It's only when you suffer, when you cry yourself to sleep in the pile of your own stinkin' failure that you really find out*

who the fuck you are."

Nom de Plume's sentences focus primarily on social commentary. (Appendices p. 193)

Nom de Plume

I resolved to blondely go where none have gone before.

Admittedly, it's an odd kind of necrophilia, in love with a man's words, which seethe with love, sex and vigour, whilst his body has long since decayed.

It seemed harsh and unnatural to brand the artistry as a discipline.

Society prescribes sanity and hence I've become addicted to my idiosyncratic craziness.

Bunny focuses sentences on her own personal insights and experiences. (Appendices p. 193)

Bunny

I hastily swallowed back my words (gobbled actually) as the realisation hit that I sounded like my mother; a particularly scary thought considering my mother.

You know why we have mirrors: to get a second opinion.

Everyone is weird, abnormal even, I'm just particularly bad at hiding it.

Kathryn and *Lemon* concentrate on characterisations in their *Sentences with Soul. (Appendices p. 193)*

Kathryn

Children rustle ominously in the dark.

"Metaphors are pretty, but pretty useless," he mumbled into the face of the blonde model standing before him.

So she continues to live in the fairytales that her imagination constructs as barriers around her tissue-paper-thin skin. And every so often the fantasy bleeds into real life.

Lemon

Her smile was a holiday.

"Don't you find," Carla said lightly, "that mornings are always vastly improved by tossing a cat out of a fourth-floor window?"

Bryony's sentences focus on characterisations, but also provide comment on the process of writing itself in a meta-fictional manner. (Appendices p. 194)

Bryony

To write a sentence, one must find one's centre in the silence that is the underlying purpose of us all.

I am a travel writer — follow me home.

I was always the March Hare to his White Rabbit – I put jam in his watch.

She rested her forehead against the cool hilt of the sword, and the desire to hear the screams came upon her once again.

Chadwick's sentences provide various perspectives of an almost uniform fixation with violence and death and he develops his *Sentences with Soul* into extended paragraph renditions. (Appendices p. 195)

Chadwick

Hard as a rock, I stroked my knee-scab.

The bastard had a fist like a comet.

Don't ask me why I cried — ask me why I didn't.

Kahlan Amnell's writing, although less violent and graphic than *Chadwick*, also focuses on the macabre and the darkness of people's lives. (Appendices p. 195)

Kahlan Amnell

He dragged the knife across her fattened flesh and trembled as he felt the warm fluid drench his hands. Her scream gave him the courage to continue with his pleasure — his mother had never had a high pain threshold.

Death was a dripping thing, pounding on the panes of your house.

Katrina did not know what to do now that she had lost her shadow.

Daddy was never a strong man.

11. Student Short Story Reading and Rating

The creative writing handbooks revealed a didactic notion that, all writers have to read continually and extensively, as a means to learning and developing their writing craft by discovering, noting and emulating the process and techniques of established writers. Joyce Carol Oates is insistent that, if you "hope to become a writer, you must read" (2000: 20), while Eudora Welty simply suggests that "learning to write may be part of learning to read" (qtd in Bernays and Painter, (1990: 226).

By interrogating this 'read like a writer' dogma and extending it to include 'reading as a reader' and also the notion of 'writing as a reader,' it became apparent that student-writers may initially benefit more by focusing on the reader's perspective of the text, than focusing almost exclusively on the writer's craft based instruments and techniques, in the creation and production of the text.

As one of the primary genres in the teaching and learning of creative writing, it is vital that any undergraduate creative writing facilitator become knowledgeable in the short story

genre. The creative writing programme should provide the students with a broad range of short story examples, which are representative of the short story domain in terms of period, author, length, accolades achieved and location. This expands students' horizons, both as readers and writers of the short story genre, in terms of textual quality and the location of their own short stories within that domain.

Drawn from the reading of a diverse range of 272 short stories, 4 short story booklets containing 58 short stories were compiled and produced. The texts were anonymous and read and judged on their textual merits alone with no supplementary influences.

The students were asked not to identify the authors and to read all the stories giving each text a rating of between 1 and 10. This reading and rating exercise commenced in 2007 in both the phase 1 and phase 2 workshops. The phase 1 workshop booklet contained 13 short stories written by traditional and contemporary short story authors, as well as a few unpublished texts and some examples of short-short stories, or flash fiction texts, as they are also called.

The following tables contain the students' ratings of those texts and their indications, marked with an X, of which story most resembles their own writing objectives and expectations. At the foot of the table the authors of the short stories are listed.

(a) 2007 Phase 1 Student Short Story Ratings

2007 Phase 1 Student Short Story Ratings
(Traditional, Contemporary and Unpublished Short Stories and Flash Fiction)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
	"Lamb to the Slaughter"	"The Duplicity of Hargraves"	"The Scarlatti Tilt"	"The Ultimate Safari"	"The Rejection"	"Where Was I?"	"My Story"
Nom de Plume	6	5	4	7	3	6 ⊠	6
Sophie	6	8	7 ⊠	9 ⊠	6	7	7
Jonny Rage	6	8	8	8	9	7	7
Lemon	8	8	7	6	8 ⊠	7	8

Kahlan Amnell	9	7.5	9	8.5	10	7.5	7
Chadwick	8 ⊠	6.5	8	8	6.5	5	7
Knives	9	8	8	7 ⊠	7	7	6
Antonio	9	8	8	7.5	8.5 ⊠	7.5	6
Bubbles	9	10	9 ⊠	6	8	8	8
Raymond	7	8	10	8	6	2	10 ⊠
Cornelius	7	7	6	7	6	8	6.5
Average Rating	**7.7**	**7.4**	**7.4**	**7.4**	**7.2**	**7.0**	**6.85**

	8	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	"My Bear"	"The Well"	"Spider Salad Promise & Goggles"	"Forgotten Son"	"Death of a Son"	"Desolation"
Nom de Plume	5	5	5.7	9	7	4
Sophie	9	5	6.3	7	6	6
Jonny Rage	6	8	6.3	7 ⊠	6	8
Lemon	8	6	6	7	5	7
Kahlan Amnell	7.5	6.5	7	7.5	8.5 ⊠	5.5
Chadwick	7	7.5	7 ⊠	5	6.5	4
Knives	6	7	7	5	6	3
Antonio	6	7.5	7	6	8 ⊠	6.5
Bubbles	7	8	7	5	3	3
Raymond	5	2	7	7	6	4
Cornelius	6	6.5	6.5	7	6	8 ⊠
Average Rating	**6.75**	**6.7**	**6.58**	**6.55**	**6.2**	**5.5**

⊠ Student indication of writing style most admired and worthy of replication.

Traditional, Contemporary and Unpublished Short Stories and Flash Fiction

"Lamb to the Slaughter," Roald Dahl (1995).
"The Duplicity of Hargraves," O. Henry (1911).
"The Scarlatti Tilt," Richard Brautigan.
"The Ultimate Safari," Nadine Gordimer (2004: 269-282).
"The Rejection," Woody Allen (2004: 2063-267).
Where Was I? Pauline Olivia Wainstein (2004: Unpublished).
"My Story," Aryeh Lev Stollman, *Story* (1999: 14).

"My Bear," Roger Rosenblatt (2003).
"The Well," John Kinsella (2002).
"Spider Salad," "Promise" and "Goggles," Liesl Jobson.
"Forgotten Son," Lisa Watkins-Nkosi (2004: Unpublished).
"Death of a Son," Njabulo S. Ndebele (2004: 201-213).
"Desolation," Gail Jones, *The Kenyon Review* (2003). (Winner of the 2005 O. Henry Prize).

Despite their diversity as a workshop group, the results clearly highlight the students' common appreciation of what they, as readers, enjoy and expect from their reading of short stories. Roald Dahl's "Lamb to the Slaughter" contains the almost universally accepted characteristics of the short story, as does the more traditional short text from O. Henry, "The Duplicity of Hargraves."

The experimental, short-short fiction piece "The Scarlatti Tilt" was also well received and, perhaps because of its more intriguing underlying storyline, it was more highly rated than the other three flash fiction pieces, "Spider Salad," "Promise" and "Goggles."

It is interesting that the relatively highly ranked story, "Where Was I?," is an unpublished piece and that the lowest ranking story, "Desolation," is the 2005 First-Prize Winner of the O. Henry Prize.

Student indications of the ideal style and type of short story in terms of their own writing practices are spread across most of the short stories rated.

(b) <u>2007 Phase 2 Student Short Story Ratings</u>

2007 Phase 2 Student Short Story Ratings
(Traditional, Contemporary and Unpublished Short Stories and Flash Fiction)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
	"Lamb to the Slaughter"	"Seminar"	"The Ghost Light"	"The Duplicity of Hargraves"	"The Rejection"	"Death of a Son"	"Where Was I?"
Taryn	9 ⊠	6	6	7	8 ⊠	6.5	6.5

Kathryn	9	7		6	5	5	2
Bryony	7.5	7.5	6.5	7.5	5	7	6.5
Noor	10 ☒	9 ☒	5	5	9 ☒	6	7
Jonathan	7	7	8.5	-	☒	-	3
David	10 ☒	7.5	8	-	4	-	8 ☒
Olivia	8	8	6.5	7	-	6	8
Average Rating	**8.64**	**7.43**	**6.75**	**6.5**	**6.2**	**6.1**	**5.86**

	8	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
	"My Bear"	"Sans Farine"	"Desolation "	"The Ultimate Safari"	"My Story"	"The Well"	"Spider Salad" "Promise" & "Goggles"
Taryn	5	2	3	3	5	5	1
Kathryn	5	9 ☒	1	-	4	3	1
Bryony	8	5	4	6	6	3	4
Noor	7.5	4.5	6.5	4.5	5.5	6	5.2
Jonathan	5	3	9 ☒	-	3	4	5
David	6	6	5	-	7	3	-
Olivia	7	-	8	-	1	2	3
Vicky	5	5	2.5	-	5	-	4
Average Rating	**5.75**	**4.86**	**4.64**	**4.5**	**4.43**	**3.33**	**3**

☒ Student indication of writing style most admired and worthy of replication.

Traditional, Contemporary and Unpublished Short Stories and Flash Fiction

"Lamb to the Slaughter," Roald Dahl (1995).
"Seminar" – Jennifer Wortman (2005: 48).
"The Ghost Light," ArLynn Leiber Presser (2006: 213).
"The Duplicity of Hargraves," O. Henry (1911).
"The Rejection," Woody Allen, *Telling Tales* (2004: 2063-267).
"Death of a Son," Njabulo S. Ndebele (2004: 201-213).
"Where Was I?" Pauline Olivia Wainstein (2004: Unpublished).
"My Bear," Roger Rosenblatt (2003).

"Sans Farine," Jim Shepard (1978: 71).
"Desolation," Gail Jones, *The Kenyon* Review (2003). (Winner of the 2005 O. Henry Prize)
"The Ultimate Safari," Nadine Gordimer (2004: 269-282).
"My Story" Aryeh Lev Stollman (1999: 14).
"The Well," John Kinsella *The Kenyon Review* (2002).
"Spider Salad," "Promise" and "Goggles," Liesl Jobson.

After reading a similar, but not identical, list of short stories, the Phase 2 2007 workshop group also rated Roald Dahl's piece the most highly, followed by the two contemporary American short stories from the *Massachusetts Review* and the *Triquarterly*.

Nadine Gordimer's story, "The Ultimate Safari," was rated lower by this group and the three flash fiction pieces were ranked lowest of all.

Student indications of their expressions of their own writing were more concentrated than the Phase 1 group with "Lamb to the Slaughter" and Woody Allen's "The Rejection" receiving the most focus.

(c) 2008 Phase 2 Student Short Story Ratings

(i) Traditional and Contemporary Short Story Writers, Novelists and 2 Poets

The Phase 2 2008 workshop group received three short story booklets during the course of the year. The first contained 21 short stories written by a range of traditional and contemporary short story authors, novelists and two poets. The selection of the traditional short stories is based on the short story examples, excerpts and references, as identified in the chapter, *Creative Writing Handbooks*. Here are the students' ratings of those short stories and preferred short stories as examples of their own short story writing ambitions.

2008 Phase 2 Student Short Story Ratings
(Traditional and Contemporary Short Story Writers, Novelists and 2 Poets)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	"Rocking-Horse Winner"	"The Open Window"	"Man From the South"	"Straight Fiction"	"A Russian Beauty"	"The Legacy"	"The Use of Force"

Kahlan Amnell	9	7	7	8	6.5	☒ 8	7.5
Knives	8.5	9.5	9.5	6	6.5	7.5	6
Antonio	☒ 8	8	7.5	7.5	7.25	8.25	6.25
Sophie	8	8	8	7	7	8	8
Lilly	8	☒ 7.5	6	7.25	6	☒ 7	6.5
Bryony	7	☒ 7.5	7.5	-	☒ 8.5	5.75	7.5
Jonny Rage	-	7	6	6	☒ 9	6.5	☒ 8
Olivia	-	5.5	9	4.5		6	6.5
Jonathan	-	8	-	☒ 9.5	-	☒ 7	7
Chadwick		7		7.25		6	☒ 7.25
Average Rating	**8.08**	**7.72**	**7.36**	**7.31**	**7.25**	**7.11**	**7.11**

	8	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**
	"Shooting an Elephant"	"Better Be Ready 'Bout Half Past Eight"	"The Storyteller"	"The Girls in Their Summer Dresses"	"The Princess and the Puma"	"The Passenger"	"The Janitor on Mars"
Kahlan Amnell	8.5	7	8	☒ 8.5	7.5	7.5	8.5
Knives	☒ 8	6.5	6.5	7	7	7.5	7
Antonio	5.5	8	6.75	☒ 7.25	7.25	3.25	2
Sophie	8	6	8	7	8	8	7
Lilly	8	7	5.5	7	7.5	7.25	☒ 8.25
Bryony	8.25	6	6.75	5	6	6	☒ 10
Jonny Rage	6	-	7	7	7	-	8
Olivia	5.5	2	-	7.5	6.5	6	7
Jonathan	4	☒ 8.5	7.5	☒ 7	4.5	7	2
Chadwick	-	-	-	6.75	7.5	-	-
Average Rating	**7.03**	**7.0**	**7.0**	**6.94**	**6.92**	**6.64**	**6.59**

	15	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**
	"Nurse Lugton's Curtain"	"The Dragon"	"City Life"	"A Nurse's Story"	*The Black Cat*	"The Fifteen-Dollar Eagle	"Big Mama's Funeral"

Kahlan Amnell	6.5	6	7.5	6.5	7.5	6.5	6.5
Knives	5.5	8	6.5	2.5	7.5	8	4
Antonio	4.5	7	5	8.25	3	3.5	5.5
Sophie	9	8	6	7	7	7	9
Lilly	4.5	4	6	5.5	8	6	-
Bryony	8.5	7.25	4	3.5	2	7.5	4.75
Jonny Rage	7	5.5	5.5	7.5	5	7	5.5
Olivia	7	7	5	4.5	-	8	7.25
Jonathan	5.5	5	6.5	1.5	4	-	4
Chadwick	-	5.5	☒ 8	8	-	5.5	2
Average Rating	**6.38**	**6.25**	**6.11**	**5.58**	**5.5**	**5.13**	**4.66**

☒ Student indication of writing style most admired and worthy of replication.

Traditional and Contemporary Short Story Writers, Novelists and 2 Poets

"Rocking-Horse Winner," DH Lawrence.
"The Open Window," Saki (H. H. Munro).
"Man From the South," Roald Dahl.
"Straight Fiction," Martin Amis (1999: 194).
"A Russian Beauty," Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 385).
"The Legacy," Virginia Woolf (1987: 379).
"The Use of Force," William Carlos Williams.
"Shooting an Elephant," George Orwell.
"Better Be Ready 'Bout Half Past Eight," Alison Baker (1993: 93). (First Prize O. Henry Awards 1994).
"The Storyteller," Saki (H. H. Munro).
"The Girls in Their Summer Dresses," Irwin Shaw.
"The Princess and the Puma," O. Henry.
"The Passenger," Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 183).
"The Janitor on Mars," Martin Amis (1999: 154).
"Nurse Lugton's Curtain," Virginia Woolf (1987: 217).
"The Dragon," Vladimir Nabokov (1995: 125).
"City Life," Mary Gordon (1996). (First Prize O. Henry Awards 1997)
"A Nurse's Story," Peter Baida (1999). (First Prize O. Henry Awards 1999)
"The Black Cat," Edgar Allan Poe.
"The Fifteen-Dollar Eagle," Sylvia Plath (1977: 65).
"Big Mama's Funeral," Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1968: 153).

The stories of the novelists predominate in the top third of the rankings with Saki and Roald Dahl representing the traditional short story writers. Martin Amis is the only contemporary novelist and William Carlos Williams is the only poet in the top seven. The balance of the rankings include stories from all four authorial categories with the 1994 O. Henry First Prize Winner, “Better Be Ready ‘Bout Half Past Eight,” being the highest ranking contemporary American piece, with the other two American contemporary stories, which are also O. Henry First-Prize Winners, “City Life” and “A Nurse's Story,” ranked at 17 and 18.

Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Black Cat,” Sylvia Plath’s “The Fifteen-Dollar Eagle,” and Gabrielle Garcia Marquez’s “Big Mama’s Funeral” were ranked lowest of all the stories.

Student aspirations in terms of where they see their own short stories were concentrated on the top two thirds of the stories focusing on Saki, Nabokov, Woolf, William Carlos Williams, Irwin Shaw and Martin Amis.

The student ratings display fairly generally consistent levels with extremes of on average about 2.5 points with the exception of Martin Amis’ “The Janitor on Mars,” with students either loving or hating it, with scores ranging between 2 out of 10 and 10 out of 10.

The inclusion of this particular story raised considerable debate within the workshop, as at 11710 words it was the longest of all the short stories read. Students found the length to be interesting from a storytelling point of view, because it allowed for more detail, more characters and a more complicated storyline particularly suited to satirical type stories. At a length, which is between 4 to 5 times longer than the average length of a short story, this ‘*long* short story’ may offer significant opportunities, as a sub-genre of the short story, as a halfway point between the short story and the novella, which traditionally requires a relatively substantial writing ‘leap.’

(ii) American On-Line, Magazine and Literary Publications

The second short story reading booklet included only American On-Line, Magazine and Literary Publication short stories in order to expose the students to the type of writing contained in the publications that they may be submitting their own stories to at the end of the workshop year.

2008 Phase 2 Student Short Story Ratings
(American On-Line, Magazine and Literary Publications)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
	"Devshirmeh"	"The Second Sense"	"Driver's Education	"Revival"	"Aqua Boulevard"	"Someone Else Besides You"	"Cleanness"
Kahlan Amnell	9	7	7	7.5	7	7	7
Knives	10	8	8	6	6	7	7
Antonio	9	6	6	6.5	7.5	8	7
Emily Lyre	5.5	6.5	6	7	6.5	4.5	3
Sophie	7.5	8	7	6.5	6	6.5	6.5
Bryony	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Average Rating	**8.2**	**7.1**	**6.8**	**6.7**	**6.6**	**6.6**	**6.1**

	8	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
	"Great Men and Great Deeds"	"Fourteen Feet of Water in My House"	"Towards a Language of Desire	"The Milk of Human Kindness"	"Folie a Deux	"The Well"
Kahlan Amnell	7	8.5	7.5	7	8	6.5
Knives	4	5	6	7	3	1
Antonio	6.75	5.25	4.5	5.5	7.25	7.25
Emily Lyre	6	5.5	3.75	1	6	2.5
Sophie	5.5	6.5	6	7	6	5
Bryony	7	5	.	.	1	3.5

Average Rating	**6.0**	**5.95**	**5.55**	**5.5**	**5.2**	**4.3**

American On-Line, Magazine and Literary Publications

"Devshirmeh," Miroslav Penkov (2005: 479-492). (*The Southern Review*)
"The Second Sense," Nadine Gordimer (2007: 268-276). (*The Virginia Quarterly Review*)
"Driver's Education," Paula Whyman (2005: 241-254). (*The Hudson Review*)
"Revival," Ann Pancake (2000: 711-720). (*The Virginia Quarterly Review*)
"Aqua Boulevard," Maile Meloy (2001:20-28). (*The Paris Review*)
"Someone Else Besides You," Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Narrative Magazine.*
"Cleanness," James Lasdun (2000: 85-92). (*Ploughshares*)
"Great Men and Great Deeds," Janet Peery (2005). (*The Kenyon Review*)
"Fourteen Feet of Water in My House," Allan Gurganus (2006: 74). (*Harper's Magazine*)
"Towards a Language of Desire," Carolyn Megan (2006: 9). (*Massachusetts Review*)
"The Milk of Human Kindness," Saral Waldorf (2007: 47-67) (*The Hudson Review*)
"Folie a Deux," William Trevor (2006) (*The New Yorker*).
"The Well," John Kinsella *The Kenyon Review* (2002).

The stories were published in a range of American magazines and journals between the years 2000 and 2006. The student ratings were fairly evenly spread with the highest rated piece a fantasy story published in the *Southern Review*.

It would appear that the students found none of the stories particularly aspirational and did not choose any of them as representing their own writing aims and ambitions. This booklet and the one that followed it, American On-Line Competition and African writing Competition Winners, illustrated the dangers inherent in offering students a homogenous range of literary texts to read and evaluate. Despite being explicitly told to compare these two groups of short stories, to all the other short stories they had read during the course of the workshop programme and to rate these stories accordingly, the students naturally and instinctively compared and rated only those stories that they were reading at that specific period in time from the booklet immediately in front of them.

(iii) American On-Line Competition and African Writing Competition Winners

The final reading pack consisted of contemporary American, South African and African short stories, which have been competition winners on both continents. Students seem to prefer the South African and African texts over the American stories, but a diversity of texts is important in order to get an accurate gauge of the students' preferences, otherwise they will simply compare the immediate stories as they read them alongside each other.

American On-Line Competition and African Writing Competition Winners

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	"Jungfrau"	"Poison"	"At the sound of the Last Post"	"The Museum"	"Discovering Home"
Kahlan Amnell	9	7.5	8	7	6.5
Knives	7.5	8.25	4.75	5.5	5.5
Antonio	7	7	8	7.25	7.25
Sophie	6.5	6.5	7	7.5	6.5
Emily Lyre	-	-	-	6.5	-
Jonathan	7.5	8	-	6	-
Average Rating	**7.5**	**7.45**	**6.94**	**6.63**	**6.44**

	6	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
	"Conversations You Have at Twenty"	"Monday Morning"	"Interview with a Moron"	"Blackout"	"Seventh Street Alchemy"
Kahlan Amnell	6.5	8	7.5	6	6
Knives	4.5	5.5	5.5	5.75	5
Antonio	3.5	6	1.5	3.5	4.5
Sophie	7	6	8	8	6.5
Emily Lyre	8	5.5	10	-	5.5
Jonathan	8	5	3	-	-
Average Rating	**6.25**	**6**	**5.92**	**5.8**	**5.5**

American On-Line Competition and African Writing Competition Winners

"Jungfrau," Mary Watson (2004: 9-22). 1st Prize 2006 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Poison," Henrietta Rose-Innes (2007: 1-10). 1st Prize 2007 HSBC/SA PEN/ Literary Awards.

"At the Sound of the Last Post," Petina Gappah (2007: 11-22). 2nd Prize 2007 HSBC/SA PEN/Literary Awards

"The Museum," Lela Aboulela (1999: 70-90). 1st Prize 2000 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Discovering Home," Binyavanga Wainaina (2003: 9-26). 1st Prize 2002 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Conversations You Have at Twenty," Maud Newton. 2nd Place *Narrative Magazine*, Love Story Competition

"Monday Morning," Segun Afolabi (2006: 9-18). 1st Prize 2005 Caine Prize for African Writing.

"Interview with a Moron", Elizabeth Stuckey-French. 1st Place *Narrative Magazine* Love Story Competition

"Blackout," Janet Burroway. 3rd Place *Narrative Magazine*, Love Story Competition

"Seventh Street Alchemy," by Brian Chikwava (2003: 17-30). 1st Prize 2004 Caine Prize for African Writing.

The students also did not find any of the stories in this category to be aspirationally attractive.

(d) Student Feedback

Students were also asked to provide written feedback after reading the short story booklet containing the broader spread, namely the traditional, contemporary short story authors, novelists and poets, and to indicate what they considered the writers' objectives to be in the creation of their pieces.

Generally student responses reflected their own numerical ratings of the stories and displayed a trend towards enjoying short stories with more traditional short fiction characteristics with negative reactions to contemporary American-style, short story content

and forms.

Stories such as “Desolation,” “The Well,” “Nurse’s Story” and “City Life” were questioned as to their relevance, when compared with the more traditional short story examples. This raises certain questions about the form, content and objectives of these American contemporary short stories, three of which are rated by American authorities and competition judges, as being examples of the best of contemporary American short fiction, as they are all O. Henry First Prize Winners.

As an example, *Raymond* justifies her rating of “The Well” by commenting that *“it seems completely arbitrary”* and that *“the author has more attachment to the idea than the reader can understand.”*

Bunny describes “Desolation” as *“empty and unenjoyable”* with the writer *“trying too hard to be arbitrary and weird.” Bryony* admits that she *“could barely read three pages of ‘Nurses Story’”* and suggests that the only reason the author wrote “City Life” was to be published.

After reading and rating the short stories *Kathryn* made the following entry in her journal regarding the stories, which she had rated the lowest:

> *A problem I saw was the need to be different, subversive and original. That involves throwing all the conventions out, including the basics like narrative structure. ‘What story needs conflict, a climax, a resolution?’ they seem to be saying. ‘Or for that matter a coherent theme?’ Storytelling is an art, a craft. You do not need to slam someone in the head with a hammer of words. The theme should dance between the lines, to adapt the cliché. To entertain is no longer the goal. It is to show others how intelligent you, as the author, are. Fantastic, but why not let us come to the conclusion on our own? One of the stories was “Desolation” (snazzy title ... oh, the pain). Halfway through, the author launched into a philosophical explanation of the devices she had used in her story.*

(e) Three Short Stories

The final reading assignment given to the students of the phase 2 workshops of 2008 consisted of the reading of three very different short stories and asking students to provide feedback. *Antonio's* response to this assignment provides an example of the potential teaching and learning benefits of reading and valuation assignments.

Antonio

"The Shawl" (2000: 207) by Cynthia Ozick

> *This story is a refreshing and unique undertaking of examining the Holocaust, and concentration camp horrors by focusing not on the large statistical numbers that died, but looking at the horrors of the war through the eyes of a young women, her baby that she is trying to protect, and her younger sister. It is beautifully written, with no obvious statements, and its understated style is what makes it poignant and heart-wrenching. Showing the desperation of human nature, the story brings a close-up, personal view of a period of history that has been written about many times, but not done as innovatively as this.*

"Cocker at the Theatre" (1975: 73) by Ian McEwan

> *Completely entertaining, hilarious and very tongue-in-cheek, this story by McEwan is very enjoyable. Frivolous and a snap shot of what goes on in a theatrical production. McEwan takes a stab at the conventions: it is socially acceptable to have fake sex-scenes on stage, but once this materialises into an actual act, there is an uproar at the lack of decency. The characters are alive and quirky; and the author does a fantastic job of writing something that is very different and unique, and in some ways, traditionally British in its humour.*

"The Artist of the Beautiful" (1946: 277) by Nathaniel Hawthorne

> *This story is a parable and didactic in nature; examining the tension and dilemmas of writing — does the writer write for himself, or does he write solely for the reader? What about writing for the sake of beauty, and the art and*

beauty of writing in itself? Inspirational to all aspiring writers, and beautifully written, this short story by Hawthorne is definitely a must-read.

12. Craft Skills – The Opening Paragraphs, Character, Setting

The balance of the students' responses to workshop exercises and assignments come from the final workshop series of 2008. These exercises were only undertaken over a one year period by the last batch of students and were not amended or adapted for a second series of workshops.

The Opening Paragraph, Characterisation and Setting craft elements were 'taught' to the students by means of examples of the way in which established writers addressed and created these aspects of their stories.

The students' exposure to Opening Paragraphs consisted of eight examples from novels ranging from Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1997) to Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001).

The Characterisation 'lesson' included author descriptions of characters such as Martin Amis's Nicola Six from *London Fields* (1999: 16-17); Salman Rushdie's Sufiya Zinobia Hyder from *Shame* (1995: 122); and Samuel Beckett's Mary from *Watt* (1998: 52-3).

The five examples of Settings were drawn from a range of texts including, Zakes Mda's *Ways of Dying* (1995: 42), EM Forster's *Passage to India* (1988: 138) and Donald DeLillo's *White Noise* (1999: 167-8).

As identified earlier the students seem to respond dispassionately to the traditional craft-based teaching processes and task requirements with very few completing and submitting responses to the assignments. There is a definite need to investigate new creative ways of developing the teaching methods of craft in writing. Students need to be imaginative and creative in their development of characters, settings, conflicts and storylines by being more emotionally driven, while at the same time being allowed to be free and unrestricted. *The Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise may be relevant in this regard.

13. The Sounds of Words – The Lyrics Exercise

As the first of a two part process to sensitise students to the possibilities inherent in the sounds of words and word combinations, the students are given the songs of a range of composers and performers on CD and are asked to select one song, capture the lyrics of the song and to write an additional two verses in a style and rhyme pattern consistent with the original lyrics. The students are also asked to use the song as a creative trigger and to create an opening paragraph to and synopsis of the story underlying the lyrics of the song.

The 15 songs represented a diverse range of eras and composers and were selected for their storytelling foundations. Of the six students, who undertook the assignment, two selected Jim Croce's *Time in a Bottle*, while the others chose *Stray Cat Blues* by the Rolling Stones, *Don't Stand So Close to Me* by Police and *Like a Rolling Stone* by Bob Dylan.

Olivia chose *I'm So Tired* by the Beatles and created the additional verses and an opening paragraph based on the song's theme. (Appendices p. 186)

The second part of the 'Sounds of Words' teaching and learning exercise consisted of providing the students with relevant examples of how the sounds of words and word combinations in their sentences can enhance and add an extra dimension to their writing. They were given textual examples of the poem "My Tongue Softens on the Other Name" by Gabeba Baderoon, George Carlin's "A Modern Man" and an excerpt from Nabokov's *Lolita*.

The writing exercise component of this 'lesson' was dubbed "Fantastic Bombastic" and consisted of 10 minutes of freewriting during which students simply wrote rhyming words and any other word combinations, which generated interesting sounds and sound patterns. Unfortunately, very few students handed this exercise in after completion of the workshop. The general conclusion reached after assessing the Lyrics assignment and the sparse results of the "Fantastic Bombastic" exercise is that the concept of the 'Sounds of Words,' the theory behind and the exercises employed in the workshops in the practice of that theory still require development and refinement, but that it remains a very relevant and valuable,

yet neglected element and skill of writing.

14. The Tension Exercise

After experiencing the unenthusiastic students' responses to the more traditional craft based writing exercises, it was concluded that the standard process of 'teaching' students about the theory of conflict in fiction writing and then giving them textual examples and asking them to develop and create their own conflict situations may be met with similar ambivalence. An alternative exercise was accordingly developed.

Instead of explaining and dealing with the complexities of conflict, I made the determination that it is the tension, which emanates from the conflict situation, which is of primary importance to the capturing of the reader's attention. As a result, the Tension Exercise became little more than a simple instruction that students create and describe a situation, which provides optimal tension for the reader, involves three characters and is approximately 1000 words in length.

Seven students responded to the exercise creating interesting, clearly deliberated and enthusiastically written tension pieces, with the tension seemingly naturally emanating from human conflict situations. Most of the 7 students provided texts of 1000 words or less in length, but some clearly enjoyed the process of creating their responses and wrote in excess of 1500 words.

While all the responses answered the brief, to a greater or lesser extent, the two outstanding texts are the two that are at diametrically opposing poles in their writing styles and subject matter, yet also achieve optimal impact in the levels of tension generated. These two 'tension stories' symbolise the diversity of the students in the workshop group and entrenches the necessity of such diversity, which provides an 'edgy' foundation for experimentation and exploration.

Sophie's untitled piece is subtle and yet filled with tension, as her third person narrator takes the view of the threatening male protagonist. (Appendices p. 186) *Chadwick's* story, "The Cabin," on the other hand, describes the characters and events in an isolated location where

a collective suicide process takes place by means of a game of Russian Roulette. (Appendices p. 187)

15. Publication Research Exercise

Each student was allocated a number of American Literary Magazines and Journals to research and to acquire their submission guidelines and requirements. The selected magazines and journals had all published at least one O. Henry First Prize winning short story. The submission details captured by each student were pooled in a central publication 'database,' which became a common repository available to all the workshop attendees.

While most of the students submitted their stories to the university's annual short story writing competition, none of the students sent a story to any of the magazines or journals researched.

16. The Collaborative *Seinfeld* Teleplay Assignment

The final assignment of the 2008 workshops was the *Seinfeld* teleplay exercise, which like the lyrics and storyline writing exercise, was designed to expose students to other writing forms such as music and television series creation and production. Being stories of 22 minutes in length the *Seinfeld* series reflects the writing discipline required in the short story genre. It is also an example of writing for a visual medium, which also relies on strong characterisation and impactful storylines based on making the ordinary extraordinary.

Each student was given a DVD containing the first 11 minutes of 4 *Seinfeld* episodes and, once split into groups of 3, their brief was to imagine that the screenwriters of America had gone on a national strike and that the group had been called in by the studio to complete the writing of one of four *Seinfeld* episodes.

The exercise was aimed at exposing students via a different genre to the process of characterisation and storyline development, while also exploring the concept of and reaction to collaborative writing. The feedback regarding this issue was provided individually and anonymously on the completion of the assignment.

The groups consisted of *Antonio*, *Knives* and *Bryony*; *Sophie*, *Chadwick* and *Jonathan* and *Kahlan Amnell*, *David* and *Olivia*.

The completed stories of all three groups were true to the characters of the series and it was evident that, while they had not seen the episodes given to them to complete, all the students were familiar with the series and its characters. The completion of the episodes in terms of the storylines were also effective and, while pretty bland, in no way detracted from the style and the nuances of the original stories.

An evaluation of the results of the exercise revealed that, like the outcomes of the *A Conversation with Two Writers* CD tasks and exercises, it may not be prudent to simply judge the exercise on the textual results alone, but to also consider the value of the students' experience in simply participating and completing the exercise and experiencing the process of having to collaborate with other writers in the creation of the textual product.

The reactions of the students to the collaborative writing process experience were predominantly negative and supported the findings of Teresa Amabile's research into collaborative creative activities as having a largely negative effect on the participants, which in turn could lead to the negative levels of the creative outcomes of the collaborative process.

The students listed the following negative aspects of their collaborative writing experiences:

- *frustration at the compromise involved in the collaborative process when participants display stylistic differences resulting in an uninspired, dispassionate end-product*; (*David*)
- *discomfort of working in a group doing creative work and the frustration of having to continually negotiate and compromise when your own input is excessively precious and you resent all critiques*; (*Emily Lyre*)
- *doubt and uncertainty about the quality of my own writing when compared to the work of the others – I felt the heavy sinking feeling of dread rolling around in my stomach at the thought of my ability being measured against theirs* (*Kahlan Amnell*); and
- *fearful of the disorganisation and non-participation of others in the group*

leaving the responsibility of collaboration and creation to one individual. (*Bryony* and *Sophie*)

Unlike the majority of the students, *Chadwick* was more forthright in terms of his true emotional responses and was not interested in being constructive in his feedback. He was direct in describing his real responses to the collaborative writing exercise, while at the same time discovering the unexpected that can be unearthed during the freewriting process, regardless of the subject matter:

Chadwick

> *Fuck. Now we have to set up time and organise a date and then we have to exchange words and listen to each other and hear what we are saying. No screen-saver face this time and then I have to speak and sound interested and look interested and pretend to enjoy the verisimilitude of the world I am helping to establish. It's like a long job without music and I don't really appreciate a governess who chooses me to moan and rebuke. And then there has to be writing and more writing and more erasing and re-writing, again and again ... running low now ... dot ... dot ... dot ... there used to be enthusiasm in her eyes, now it's as if she only feels when she cries ... it's time to end the longest 10 minutes of my life ...*

The only positives of the collaborative process remarked on by the students depended primarily on the composition of the collaborating group and the active participation of those individuals. *Emily Lyre* believed that the collaborative writing experience could be a positive and creatively fruitful one, if the participants were close to her *"ideologically and emotionally." Bryony* found the overall experience to be fun and interesting, because of the 'collaboratively-friendly' personalities of her co-collaborators. For those like *Knives*, who is *"not into the whole funny-script writing thing," he was glad to have "others working with [him] so [he] didn't have to slog it alone."*

David and *Jonathan* confirmed that there were rare instances when the collaborative process had been a rewarding one, when *"the other writer takes your ideas in directions you never imagined them going"* and when *"separate ideas blended together resulting in a much stronger concept than the ones that may have developed individually."*

I. Student Short Stories

1. Introduction

It would seem that one of a number of parameters with which to gauge the 'success' of a creative writing workshop programme would be to evaluate the portfolios of short stories completed by the student writers. The measures of the effectiveness or 'success' of the workshop programme, as evidenced in the students' fictional texts, could consist of multiple elements and criteria. These may include the following:

- The quantitative characteristics of the students' writing activities and practices in terms of the number of stories formally completed and the length of those stories, as one of the primary aims of the workshop programme should be to encourage the students' propensity to write in order to learn and gain experience by being active in the writing process;
- The propensity to write extensive pieces, which undergo a number of draft stages and extensive revisions and display determination, discipline and dedication to the writing process through to completion;
- The improvements in students' outputs by comparing the texts completed during the programme to the original texts submitted before the teaching and learning process commenced;
- The qualitative characteristics of the students' textual products, as measured by their reader focus and reader appeal both in the workshop environment amongst fellow participants and the facilitator, as well as from reactions from the broader public outside the teaching and learning environment; and
- The students' texts ought to embrace and display the various characteristics and elements inherent in the criteria for creativity, such as originality, playfulness, risk taking and experimentation.

2. Quantitative Characteristics

It is important to reiterate that over the four year period the writing workshop programmes were all based on intrinsic student writing motivations with few, if any, extrinsic factors influencing the extent and determination levels of their writing practices. The student writers were not driven by optimal grade achievement in their writing activities, but driven

by their own personal passions and enthusiasm for writing. Their primary objective and focus was their writing practices and the textual products themselves.

Therefore a quantitative measurement of the number of stories written by the students and the length of those texts are valuable indicators of student writer 'seriousness,' dedication, determination and discipline, without which even the most talented writers cannot succeed. This quantitative measure is of particular importance in evaluating the 'effectiveness' of a creative writing programme designed for undergraduate students, because, young and inexperienced writers have not yet developed any positive writing habits and routines and, if the programme is instrumental in the establishment of these writing routines by awakening the students' inherent writing passion, then the workshops have demonstrated an important level of motivational success.

In total 26 students completed and submitted 80 short stories of varying lengths, styles and 'quality' levels. The shortest piece was *Jonny Rage's* "Sushi and World War" (402 words) and the longest pieces, *Antonio's* "Billiard Holdings" (7823 words) and *Jonathan's* "Father Out in Heaven" (7924 words).

This evaluation is not suggesting that longer is better than shorter. Some of the best stories to come out of the workshops are shorter rather than longer, but the longer stories do tend to show that their writers have discovered a theme and a story that they are committed to, taking it through a number of drafting and revising stages to completion. These students embraced and experienced the key processes of the 'real' writer's writing practice.

Certain texts were revised and developed by the student writers over a period of a year with some students completing five drafts of the story before they were satisfied with their final product, which they submitted to the university writing competition.

The focus on and applauding of writing propensity and writing process is based on one of the basic objectives of the creative writing programme, which is not only to provide a writing environment for the student writers' immediate textual products, but to provide a foundation for their long-term futures, with the short story being the apprentice text to potentially longer future writing projects.

The longer short stories produced by some of the students were undertaken as more serious writing projects. The extent of these writing projects, such as those of *Antonia* and *Jonathan*, is illustrated when their length at 7823 and 7934 words is compared to the average short story word count of 2500 words. Their stories are 3 to 4 times as long as the average short story and with the increase in length comes the accompanying increase in complexity in terms of storyline, plot, characterisation and conflict.

Besides *Antonia* and *Jonathan*, there were a number of other students who also focused on and developed a certain piece through a number of draft stages over an extended period of time to final completion. These pieces also tended to be longer than the other texts the students had written:

Jonny Rage – "Pick One" (5681 words)
Knives – "Clair De Lune" (4129 words)
Kahlan Amnell – "The Simplicity of Colour" (3573 words)
Sophie – "Despair" (2540 words)
Lemon – "The Artist" (2045 words)
Olivia – "Flocc" (4607 words)

3. Writing Improvement

The improvement or lack of it would also be an indicator of the effectiveness of the workshops.

With relatively few exceptions, most participant students, even those who participated half-heartedly for a relatively short period of time, showed an improved quality in their most recent work, when compared to their originally submitted pieces. The improvements in most instances were significant, from immature to mature and naive to experienced. The students were asked on the completion of the workshop programme in their reflexive essays, to compare their original story to the text they judged to be the best of their workshop writing. Few mentioned their originally submitted texts, perhaps because so substantial had the improvement in their writing been that there would be little value in making the comparison.

While it did not form part of the reflexive essay briefing process during the current workshop programme, it may be of value to require that students evaluate their writing development between phases 1 and 2 in terms of a comparison between their texts from the one workshop year to the next.

4. Qualitative Characteristics

The creative writing workshop environment, which formed the basis of this practical study, had an authoritatively neutral foundation with none of the traditional power forces.

Students were free to write what they wanted to write, how they wanted to write, relying simply on their own judgment, until they were satisfied with the final text having made use of the facilitator and fellow students as 'readers' and providers of feedback and positive support and encouragement.

In the authoritatively neutral workshop setting it is easy to discuss and agree with the students what they collectively and individually believe to constitute creativity and writing in a creative manner and for them to question and judge their own work against their own criteria. In a teacher dominated workshop programme, the teacher as judge and grader is always the only, and final, arbiter of writing quality.

Students collectively agreed that quality creative writing was writing, which appealed to readers and contained elements and characteristics which ensured that there was a high level of reader memorability. They agreed that quality writing is inherently creative in substance and that the process of writing creatively is always underpinned by notions of originality and difference and is the product of the writer's imagination, her playfulness, risk taking and experimentation in her writing practice.

In terms of the students' own, broader definitions of writing quality and the characteristics of the creative writing process, many of the students seriously attempted to encompass these creative elements in their writing products and, as a result, have created and produced, as has been previously stated, fictional pieces seemingly beyond their experience levels, both

as writers and as individuals.

Usually beginner type texts appear always to be experience based, as opposed to imaginatively created. Inexperienced writers also tend to be more comfortable with the more restrictive, but controllable, first person narrative voice, whereas more complicated texts tend to be written from a third person narrative perspective.

Of the 80 student short stories completed 29 were written in the first person, 2 in a combination of the first and third persons and 49 stories were written in the third person with 25 of those being written with an omniscient third person narrator.

The students' apparent preference for writing in the third person and in many instances in an omniscient third person voice is possibly a combination of being encouraged to explore alternative perspectives, to create and experiment with their writing topics and styles during the workshop programme, and the fact that most of the students were avid readers and fans of 'Fantasy Literature' during the height of the "Lord of the Rings" and "Harry Potter" eras. This has made them naturally imaginative, experimental and relatively fearless inexperienced writers.

J. Student Writer and Writing Categorisation

In a group environment it is not always possible to cleanly separate the students' texts from the students and the dynamics of the group in the workshop setting, because every workshop participant contributes in some way to the creation of the texts. It is necessary, therefore, not only to categorise the students' short stories, but also to categorise and identify the roles played by categorised groups of students in the workshop outcomes.

The total group of 26 students, who each submitted at least one completed short story, can be split into four broad categories of creative writing workshop participants.

The least productive of these students are those, who are attracted to the idea of being writers, but while attending the workshops and participating in the exercises remained tentative and non-committal in terms of the process of writing and the requirements of being

a writer. They are attracted to the *idea* of writing, but not committed to the practice of writing. For the purposes of this categorisation process I have called them the ***Dabblers***.

The second category of writing students are attracted to both the idea of writing as well as to the process of writing and, while not displaying the discipline and dedication required of serious writers, they enthusiastically enjoy experimenting in their writing practices, but only when an exercise or assignment sparks their imagination. They tend to 'flit' from project to project rarely completing a writing project, but always enjoying the writing process while their enthusiasm endures. For these ***Players*** writing is playing and these students are more outrageous than the norm, tending to energise the workshop and feedback sessions and, while they may not see many projects through to completion, they do contribute positively to the workshop process. Their best writing mostly comes from their responses to the in-workshop tasks and exercises.

The third student category consists of those individuals, who display the necessary traits of dedication and discipline required for them to develop and grow as writers, while also displaying the ability to embrace the qualities of playfulness and experimentation necessary to produce quality, reader focused creative texts. These students display writing processes that encompass a balance between creativity and discipline and I refer to them as the ***Balanced*** group.

The fourth category of student writers are those, who are dedicated and disciplined, but are hamstrung by their need to constantly be seeking perfection in their writing endeavours. This precludes them from pursuing experimental, risk taking and playful writing adventures. These students are acutely aware of the literary standards set by writers, as artists in the domain of literature, and struggle to overcome the daunting handicap of the 'great' writers. These students are the ***Perfectionists*** and while they participate fully in all workshop exercises and activities, their writing lacks the spark, which playfulness, experimentation and risk taking would add. For them creation is always a difficult and painful process.

In terms of the ideal of optimising an environment where the students can develop as *Balanced* writers, namely disciplined, but also creatively playful and experimental, the outcomes of this study indicate that it is vitally important that there is a diversity of students

in the workshop group, including *Balanced*, *Perfectionist* as well as *Player* students, who while they are not disciplined, may become more disciplined under the influence of the *Balanced* and *Perfectionist* students, while the *Players* through their adventurous and playful writing focus could encourage the *Balanced* and *Perfectionist* students to take more risks.

The creatively positive effects of this diversity in attitudes and practices were clearly apparent in the development of all the students in the Phase 1 2007 and Phase 2 2008 workshop groups.

The categorisation of the students' completed short stories corresponds to their categorisation as workshop participants with their texts either being *Balanced*, *Perfectionist*, *Playful* or *Dabbling* in form. The list of the short story texts by category and the student writers, who created them, is contained in the Appendices p.238 .

The Appendices p. 198 (Appendix 20) contains the full texts of 8 of the students' completed short stories. This selection is an example of the quality achieved by some of the student writers during the workshop programme and also highlights some contrasts and variations in the subject matter, themes and styles of the texts. The following are the short stories and the students, who wrote them, contained in the Appendix:

"Crowded House" – *Sophie* (Appendices p. 198)
"The Artist" – *Lemon* (Appendices p. 200)
"Denial" – *Lemon* (Appendices p. 203)
"The Simplicity of Colour" – *Kahlan Amnell* (Appendices p. 206)
"Untitled" – *Taryn* (Appendices p.211)
"Pick One" – *Jonny Rage* (Appendices p. 213)
"Clair De Lune" – *Knives* Appendices p. 221)
"Father Out in Heaven" – *Jonathan* (Appendices p. 227)

K. Student Responses to Their Workshop Experiences

During the course of the four-year programme student responses to the workshops were elicited in three ways. Firstly, any references found in their e-mail communications and in their journal entries have been extracted and examined. These are relatively few in number,

but are worth noting and discussing here.

The second form of feedback consists of students' responses to a formal questionnaire given to them to complete and return at the end of each workshop year. This questionnaire contained six questions relating to the students' workshop experiences.

The third means of acquiring responses was in the form of a reflexive essay from each of the students in which they were required to identify the benefits and disadvantages and to explain what they had learned from and achieved through their participation in the workshop programme.

1. E-Mail Communications and Journal Entries

(a) Access to an Audience

The majority of the comments made by the students pertain to the workshops providing them with access to an audience for the first time. Most of the comments are positive, identifying the benefits of receiving feedback, when it is constructive (*Kahlan Amnell* and *Adelaide*) and conforms to the jointly agreed feedback processes and parameters developed at the commencement of the workshop process. *Taryn* believed that she *"gained as much from commenting on other people's work as [she] did from having [her] own work commented on ..." Jonathan* remarked that *"getting feedback from fellow students was an excellent process"* as it helped one to *"evaluate your strengths and weaknesses."*

The negative responses provided by some of the students serve as a reminder of the complexity of the feedback process and how it should always be treated and implemented with utmost sensitivity. *Myle* admits that she feels *"intimidated by most of the other writers as they seem to have their heads around most of what's going on and what is expected from them,"* and she has *"a fear of [her] work being analysed and critiqued by people [she doesn't] know." Bryony* emphasises the need for sensitivity: *"bad feedback can be upsetting for people even if it's constructive,"* while *Vicky* takes up a contrasting view: *"sometimes people are too nice. I would like to hear some criticism."*

As they were now writing for an audience, the students understood that they would have to be more disciplined in their writing practices. *Bryony* embraced this new pressure of having to perform and complete texts: *"Deadlines feel problematic, but they teach you to live in the world of 'grown-ups;' I love having to write."* For her writing for an audience represents a maturation of her attitude and writing practice. *Crazy* echoes *Bryony's* view that the presence of an audience for the first time places *"pressure ... on one to submit work."* An audience, even in the form of their co-participants in the workshop process, forces the students to become productive writers of texts for assimilation and judging by readers.

(b) Freedom and Stimulation

The students welcomed the freedom the workshops gave them to be creative (*Charles*), the *"'permission' allowed [them] to just write"* (*Seballius*) and *Vicky* revelled in the discovery that *"[she] can take anything and make a story out of it."*

A number of students attributed their increased creativity to the stimulation they received from the workshop exercises. *Jonathan* commented that the *"workshops stimulated [his] creative juices"* and *Vicki* described the exercises as *"meaningful,"* but *"at the same time they are fun and sometimes unusual." Bryony* explained how the workshop exercises had provided her with accumulated writing benefits, which include *"opening up [her] writing to new paths"* and *"taking [her] past many potential stumbling blocks that [she] was barely aware of a few years ago."*

2. Student Feedback Questionnaire

These questionnaires were given to students for completion for the first time during the 2006 phase 1 and phase 2 workshops. Eleven students spread across all the workshops between 2006 and 2008 completed and returned the forms.

The following six questions were contained in the questionnaire:

1. What were your writing expectations at the start of the workshop programme?
2. As of today, how do your writing realities compare to your initial expectations?

3. Describe your most valuable workshop writing experience(s).
4. Describes the most negative aspect(s) of your workshop participation.
5. What are your objectives for your own future as a writer?
6. How, if at all, has your workshop experience influenced your writing objectives?

These questions are all practically orientated and are aimed at measuring the workshops against the students' specific requirements with a view to adapting the programme accordingly. The first two questions are aimed at gauging student workshop expectations and the level of fulfilment or non fulfilment of those expectations. The second pair of questions are designed to elicit polarised extremes in the students' workshop participation, the most positive and most negative aspects of their workshop experiences. The final pair of questions relate to the students' objectives as prospective writers and whether the workshop process had any effect on their personal writing objectives.

Some of the responses were singularly simplistic in nature, while others were complex and consisted of numerous factors or components. The analysis of the students' responses to the questionnaires gives a numerical weighting to the collectively uniform answers given by students, but the more complex and multifaceted answers will be highlighted in order to provide a broader and more accurate view of the students' reactions to the workshop processes and programme.

Question 1

When asked about their expectations of the workshop process at the start of the programme, 6 of the 11 students responded that they were looking for an environment, which would give them a disciplined foundation for their writing. This need for and an expectation of writing discipline is signified by the following words and phrases:

- *get me to write much more*; (*Bryony*)
- *force me to give time to writing*; (*Bryony*)
- *creative writing takes time and effort*; (*Myle*)
- *to start actually writing as opposed to merely thinking about it*; (*Seballius*)
- *experience professionalism of writing*; (*Crazy*)
- *a period of perseverance and hard work*. (*Kahlan Amnell*)

Of the 11 students 4 confirmed that they had expectations of improving the quality of their writing:

- *take my writing further and write something substantial*; (*Olivia*)
- *write better*; (*Vicky*)
- *help me become better at writing*; (*Knives*)
- *a fantastic opportunity to do some serious writing*. (*Antonio*)

Three students had expectations relating to aspects of creativity:

- *I need a creative outlet*; (*Bryony*)
- *I need to explore my creative side*; (*Vicky*)
- *exposing myself to writing creatively*. (*Antonio*)

Only *Bryony – "I hope that my writing ability would improve"* — and *Antonio — "I want to learn some special techniques and useful skills"* — had any expectations of specifically learning or improving their writing skills, while *Bryony* was also hoping that the workshops would assist her in getting out of her *"novel-writing 'rut'"* and *Olivia* was looking to become more confident in her writing practice.

Emily Lyre had the most complex mix of expectations of the workshop programme seeking *"constructive feedback on [her] work,"* the *"motivation to write"* by escaping her current *"vacuum of isolation"* and re-gaining her *"lost perspective"* of her writing.

Question 2

When asked to compare their writing realities at the end of the workshop programme with their initial expectations, most of the students were positive, but the experience had also caused some of them to become circumspect and to re-evaluate their attitudes towards writing and being a writer:

- *Whereas I believed myself to be a very mature author, the reality of writing for an audience showed me that I have massive room for improvement and my confidence suffered quite severely when the need to produce multiple short*

pieces for the workshops brought me to realise how limited the content I was used to writing about had become; (Bryony)

- *The reality is that I have been questioning myself whether writing is really for me, because it is one thing to like something, but it's another to be fully devoted to perfecting writing as a craft; (Myle)*
- *I never realised how much self-discipline it took. I think I'm less naïve; (Olivia)*
- *I must choose writing to be a priority in my life, which will take constant practice and discipline if I am to improve. (Kahlan Amnell)*

Three students confirmed that the results of attending the workshops had met the expectations they originally set for the workshop process. These expectations relate to productivity and the quality of writing:

- *I spend more time considering form and I do much more writing; (Bryony)*
- *I did more writing than I ever have before, which is fantastic; (Seballius)*
- *The realities seem to relate to my expectations; (Crazy)*
- *My writing has gotten better academically as well as creatively. (Vicky)*

Besides *Emily Lyre's* comment that sometimes *"the feedback is contradictory,"* the balance of the students believe that their original expectations had been met or even surpassed:

- *The workshops served as my motivational tool, which aided me in settling into my writing style with the feedback sessions being stimulating and assisting me practically to be critical of my own work; (Kahlan Amnell)*
- *The workshop far exceeded my expectations. I completed and polished off a short story and the exercises opened up the scope of what I thought I could write; (Knives)*
- *It was a really good, challenging experience. I have been pushed to my creative limits and constantly challenged to write better. (Antonio)*

Question 3

The most valuable workshop experiences listed are the Freewriting and Loop Writing exercises in terms of the effect these writing processes had on their texts:

- *Freewriting – I use it all the time now; (Bryony)*
- *Freewriting and Loop writing are valuable processes, which loosen up my writing and give me interesting results; (Seballius)*
- *The Loop Writing exercise helped me immensely. I was totally uncomfortable when starting out, but as I practised it more and more, it led me to a major breakthrough in my writing; (Olivia)*
- *Freewriting; (Emily Lyre)*
- *Free-style writing; (Antonio)*
- *Loop writing and freewriting helped me in my ability to create and explore an idea or theme. (Vicky)*

Other student responses were more complex. *Bryony* found value in maintaining her journal writing routine; gaining a *"better understanding and appreciation of the short story;"* learning to *"give and receive feedback;"* overcoming the habit of *"distancing [her] reader from [her] characters;"* gaining *"respect for the short story as a medium itself and a platform for creating broader texts;"* which *"aided construction of plot"* and revealed *"the delicacies of writing points of view."*

Kahlan Amnell considered the process of focusing on one piece of writing through to its completion as the most valuable aspect of the workshop process, as did *Knives*, who celebrated *"finishing off a story, entering it into the competition and achieving a 'highly commended' recognition in the competition."*

Antonio valued the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise; the *Hero's Journey* storyline structure; line-by-line edits and preparing and submitting her writing to competitions, because this motivated her and brought her closer to becoming a serious writer.

For both *Emily Lyre* and *Myle* the feedback process was a valuable one, with *Emily Lyre* appreciating *"reading other people's writing"* and *Myle* enjoying the attention of the

audience when she read out her story and *"noticed that [she] was actually being listened to and that [her] writing was taken seriously."*

Emily Lyre celebrated her presence in the workshop group, as it allowed her to *"escape from isolation."* She also found value in learning to write *Sentences with Soul*.

Question 4

Only 3 students mentioned specific negatives relating to the workshops themselves, while all other responses described the students' own shortcomings, as detracting from their ability to optimise what the workshops offered.

Crazy complained about the perceived slowness of some of the workshop 'teaching' components: *"we go on, and on, for like 15 minutes on one particular concern."*

Knives and *Bryony* commented that a reduction in the number of students participating in the workshops had had a detrimental effect on the value of the workshop experience. *Knives* felt that *"others in the group not being able to continue"* had a negative impact on the workshop's collective performance. *Bryony* explained the reasons for this negative impact and suggested that changes to the workshop composition could bear positive results:

> *There were periods when workshop groups grew too small and grew stagnant and the lack of diverse writing styles was very draining at times, but when the two workshop groups were combined in 2008, the workshops were refreshed and I think that temporarily shifting the structure of the workshop groups might be beneficial at times. (Bryony)*

Myle considered her *"failure to critique [her] fellow members work"* as a negative contribution to the workshop process and *Emily Lyre* felt that her own *"difficulty in commenting on other people's work"* contributed to her negative workshop experience.

Seballius and *Olivia* commented that their lack of writing discipline negatively affected their own workshop experiences, while *Vicky*, *Kahlan Amnell* and *Bryony* blame the lack of time to focus on their writing as the primary negative aspect of their workshop participation.

Question 5

In respect of their writing objectives and futures at the end of the workshop programme, 4 students confirmed that they would continue with their writing practices; *"I aim to become a well-known writer/author;"* another was determined to become *"the best in the field of journalism;"* and 4 students mention specific writing projects they intend to complete. Three of those projects entailed the writing of short stories and one student was determined to *"write a complete novel and keep writing no matter how busy I get."*

Question 6

When asked to describe the influence their workshop experiences had on their writing objectives, students responded that the experience had been motivationally positive, had broadened their writing experiences, increased their propensity to take risks, had formalised their writing practices and had hardened their resolve to institute and maintain their writing discipline.

Three students listed the motivational aspects of the workshops, as having a positive influence on their writing objectives:

- *The workshops increased my confidence on several levels; (Bryony)*
- *The experience has given me the inspiration to carry on writing; (Myle)*
- *Participating in the workshops has motivated me enough to continue to write. (Antonio)*

Two students credited the workshop process with their realisation and determination to embrace a more disciplined writing practice:

- *I now understand the discipline needed to fulfil my writing objectives; (Seballius)*
- *I now know that if I work hard and keep at it I will eventually achieve my writing objectives. (Vicky)*

Olivia and *Crazy* expressed the view that the workshops had formalised and validated their

own writing activities:

- *It's made my writing more official; my writing has gone from a meaningless hobby to a legitimate career path; (Olivia)*
- *I now have a more formal knowledge of writing and it has certainly influenced my writing objectives. (Crazy)*

Four of the students believed that the workshop experience had served to extend and broaden their writing perspectives with two of the students confirming that this wider writing view had increased their propensity to take writing risks:

- *The workshops made me much more realistic about what it means to be a writer and exposed me to so much writing that I have been able to discover what I want my writing to be in terms of style and subject matter; (Kahlan Amnell)*
- *I have been exposed to many different journals and styles of writing, which have affected my own work; (Antonio)*
- *My workshop experiences have caused me to set myself the objective to broaden out my subject matter, because, after reading other people's work, which is not generic and typical, I have decided to branch out from the normal and expected; (Myle)*
- *Exposure to other writers has broadened my perception of what forms there are to write in, which has given me more freedom. The workshops have made me brave enough to risk my mark average by doing a creative writing course in my Honours year. (Bryony)*

3. Student Reflexive Essays

(a) Introduction

At the end of each 'workshop year,' the students were asked to reflect on their overall workshop experiences and to write and submit a one page reflexive essay, which considered the positives and negatives of their workshop experiences, any improvements they found in their writing compared to the pieces they submitted at the commencement of the workshop programme and a general commentary on their exposure to the structured setting of the workshops as a creative writing teaching and learning environment.

The reason for the length 'restriction' was to ensure a greater number of responses and that the students would focus on the primary aspects of their workshop experiences.

In total 17 students submitted reflexive essays covering the period between 2005 and 2008 with 4 students submitting essays after their attendance of both the phase 1 and phase 2 workshops. Three of the students also had undertaken the university's *Experiments in Telling* module during their Honours year.

(b) Extra-Curricula Creative Writing Workshops and the University

Some students commented on and attempted to explain their frustrations in participating in an extra-curricular creative writing workshop programme, as an adjunct to their academic activities and objectives. They mentioned the fact that their participation in the workshops was a personal decision with no legitimate or validated rewards on completion, as would be the case with the successful completion of their academic programmes.

The passion and determination of the students to develop their writing abilities and skills by devoting some of their time and attention to the workshop process, with only their own personal satisfaction as reward, attest to the strength of the students' levels of intrinsic motivation.

The conflicting, constrictive and restrictive conditions and emotional pressures the students had to bear, while participating in the programme, is reflected in their essays.

For perfectionist type students like *Bryony* the academic institution sets the standard for all her writing activities. As she *"searches for authenticity,"* she is her own *"harshest judge,"* because she *"longs for [her] writing to be accepted and respected by the university."* She is torn between the expectations and academic standards of the university and her own creative writing practice, because she knows that if she *"changes [her] writing to fit the institution, [she is] damaging it and ... needs to follow [her] own path."* She realises that she needs to be rebellious with her creative writing and concludes with a pertinent question: *"is the university the right place for a writer?"*

Another perfectionist, *Taryn*, having just completed her Honours long-essay, concluded that *"there is something undeniably more dead in the form of essays than in creative pieces."* She is dissatisfied with her creative writing efforts, and her frustrations are palpable:

> *I have written three short stories this year — that is, three plots from which words can hang by their necks — they are bloody, half-formed things that I can't live in yet, and that I can't let out. (Taryn)*

The students admitted that their academic objectives and responsibilities were overwhelming, stifling and distracting in nature, both from a practical, as well as an emotional and motivational perspective and that their academic requirements influenced their creative efforts.

While *Olivia* attempts to blame her unproductive creative writing practice solely on her own undisciplined, unfocused and procrastinating nature, she cannot dismiss the fact that the academic pressures on her will always have an affect on and influence her writing motivation and propensity:

> *It stands to be said that this year has not been my most productive. I could start this essay off by saying, 'due to the laborious and somewhat boring nature of the tedium that is my degree, I have found it altogether difficult to allocate the necessary time to writing,' or perhaps 'I just couldn't do it, every time I sat down to write, there would be a plethora of other things niggling at my poor addled brain!' Unfortunately, they would both be complete rubbish. (Olivia)*

Antonio was less dramatic and admitted that *"academics did manage to get in the way and at some point creative writing took a back seat and I realised how easy it is to forget about writing, how easy it is to simply let it slide and to postpone writing."*

One of the students, who did the university's Honours level creative writing module, made the comparison between writing for marks and writing intrinsically for the sake of the writing itself and questioned the suitability and desirability of the existing academic grading processes in the creative writing workshop environment:

> *Where the Experiments in Telling workshops differed most notably was that the writing we were producing was for marks. The fact that the lecturers facilitating the workshops and commenting on our writing were also the markers seemed a bit like a conflict of interest to me. However, I did not have a problem with the fact that the work was marked, only with who was marking it.*

(c) Writing Difficulties

In describing their own writing processes, the students' reflexive essays illustrated the inherent difficulties individuals have with the process of writing and how complex, often irrational and serious, the practice of writing is for most people. These vulnerabilities and frailties should serve as a continual reminder that the workshop environment should always be sensitive, supportive and encouraging.

Kathryn admits to having constant *"expectations of perfection"* and always *"writing with an audience in mind."* She is her *"own worst critic"* with *"paralysing results,"* because the crux of her perfectionism is the notion that the quality and value of her writing are a direct reflection on her as a human being: *"I was afraid that if anyone were to define my writing as awful and uninspired, that that would somehow be a definition of my value as a person."* *Kathryn* describes her sensitivity to the views and comments of others to the fact that she has *"always felt isolated and distanced from other people:"*

> *I live in my imagination more than in direct contact with 'reality.' While I have always viewed this as a negative character trait, writing has given me an outlet for those feelings. It sounds bizarre, but writing is almost a compromise between my imagination and the real world. On paper my imagination becomes tangible. (Kathryn)*

Sylvia also has a heightened reader awareness, which causes her writing process to be one, which consists of *"hesitating, over-thinking and being unwilling to relinquish absolute control over the writing process."* For her, as for many others, *"writing is a daunting, difficult and mentally and emotionally draining endeavour"* and she always *"struggles to get started,"* experiences frequent *"mental blocks"* and as a result tends to *"limit the scope"* of her writing products, preferring to take the safer option of writing about what she knows or has experienced personally.

Similarly, *Sophie* is *"only comfortable in [her] writing if [she is] writing about a familiar setting and world,"* while *Antonio* describes her own writing process as *"difficult, exhausting and demanding,"* which is further exacerbated by her irrational tendency to *"write better when [she is] unhappy with [her] feelings giving rise to certain kinds of characters and story-lines."*

Benjamin's biggest writing frustration is his inability to get his story from his head onto the page. *Kathryn* and *Chadwick* illustrate the various writing idiosyncrasies writers adopt to explain and overcome their writing frailties and perceived shortcomings. *Chadwick* talks of *"that Demon on my shoulder telling me to stop"* and *Kathryn* wages a never-ending battle with her *"Frustration Monster."*

Kathryn's description of her writing routine and process illustrates again the heightened sensitivity that is necessary in the workshop environment when addressing students as writers and their writing as *"a reflection of their human value."* It also underlines the importance of every writer discovering, accepting and adapting to their own motives, needs and processes in their own individual ways, if their writing is going to become a public reality:

> *The crux is that I have discovered how I write. Writing for me is ritualistic. It must be done with a sharpened pencil, on a blank white sheet of paper, with an eraser by my side. The pencil and eraser to reduce my anxieties by convincing me that nothing I write is permanent. It allows me to fail. Any editing must be done with a coloured pen. By contrast, I may only write in my journal with black pen. The permanence of pen in this case forces me to be completely honest. (Kathryn)*

(d) Workshop Dynamics

Given the traditional absence of research into and the lack of theoretical pronouncements on the dynamics of workshop groups, it is interesting that some of the students considered it important to comment on the composition and dynamic properties of the workshops that they were part of. This provides valuable, first hand insights into the importance of

workshop dynamics, a neglected, yet influential, component of creative writing teaching and learning.

Jonny Rage commented on the importance of the *"atmosphere"* of the workshop, which he felt was dependent on the *"composition of the workshop group"* to which each and every person contributed. When all group members *"respected each other's work"* (*Jonathan*) and *"shared a passion for writing"* (*Knives*), all participants benefited in terms of their creativity and their writing motivation.

For *Knives* and *Lemon* the diversity of their fellow group members in terms of personality, styles and interests, was a significant component of the workshop's dynamics, as it contributed positively to their experiences. *Knives* described *"the large variety between writing styles and interests as a pleasure to experience,"* while Lemon found the variety intriguing and creatively stimulating: *"By being in a group setting it was fantastic to get a variety of responses and styles together and to see what people with different tastes thought of my work in relation to writing."*

The high standards and serious commitment displayed by participating students had an uplifting effect on student writers such as *Knives*, who admitted that being around and reading the work of such committed student writers had driven him to improve his own writing and had caused him to *"notice a bit of competitiveness"* in himself.

When the phase 2 2006 workshop group was left with only 4 participants, *Jonathan* identified the negative repercussions of insufficient group numbers and its effects on the workshop and the remaining participants:

> *The fact that there were only 3 or 4 of us in the group became disconcerting as a bigger group would have given us the opportunity to get more varied commentaries on our work, as well as achieve a more focused group dynamic. (Jonathan)*

(e) Workshop Format, Routines and Principles

Some students commented on the format, routines and principles of the workshop process.

Emily Lyre appreciated the balance of *"information and advice"* with the *"feedback on each other's writing"* and she made specific mention of the 'teaching' elements as being *"extremely useful and interesting,"* including the *"excerpts from other people's writing, writing Sentences with Soul and Freewriting."*

Antonio enjoyed being exposed to *"different styles and techniques of writing,"* as opposed to *"simply learning universal skills to be used in all writing."* She specifically mentioned the *Seinfeld* collaborative exercise, the Lyric-Writing task and the *"Rhyming and Rhythm exercises."*

Jonny Rage stated that the workshops would have benefited from more in-workshop exercises as they serve to *"maintain the creative energy,"* give the participants *"5 or 10 minutes to produce a piece and to walk out of the workshop having already practised and tested a newly acquired skill."* While he believed that the in-workshop tasks would assist the workshop members with *"putting their works on display,"* students such as *Kahlan Amnell* always felt intimidated by the immediate pressure to write in the workshops.

Ironically, and indicative of the complexity of individual writer motivations, rituals and idiosyncrasies, *Chadwick* dismissed as less important the 'teaching' components of the workshop process and structure, but identified as most valuable the writing freedom orientation of the workshop's underlying principles, coupled to the workshop structure, the group dynamic and the responses to his writing from and his interaction with his fellow workshop participants:

> *What I found most useful about the workshops was the fact that we were encouraged to just write with no restrictions and for as long as we wanted. That, for me, really helped in getting past my biggest sticking point, which was not finishing anything. I think it's safe to say this year has been a great one for writing. I am doing it with more consistency and I'm enjoying it more. That demon on my shoulder telling me to stop got knocked out into the traffic. I enjoyed hearing the comments from my peers as well as reading their stories and seeing their viewpoints on things. (Chadwick)*

Echoing *Chadwick's* appreciation of his writing freedom *Bryony* and *Antonio* expressed their enjoyment of writing *"something that's new"* (*Bryony*). Antonio remarked that her

long-short story, *"Billiard Holdings," "was quite a divergence"* from her usual style of *"simple stories involving normal people set in mostly South African locations"* and that it had been *"exciting for [her] to try something new."*

Bryony also commented that, through the workshop processes, she had come to appreciate the short story as an ideal medium with which to grow as a writer, as it allowed *"much room for experimentation and change."*

The concepts of writing freedom, newness, experimentation and change seem to flow into the notion of playfulness, which is often associated with and deemed to be one of the key characteristics of creativity. Students such as *Chadwick* suggested that some workshop time be allocated to the exploration of experimental writing and *Jonathan* expressed disappointment at the fact that a suggested collaborative writing exercise, which would see a complete story, under a pseudonym, sent to a literary journal for publication, had not eventuated.

The students also enjoyed being *"stretched"* and challenged in terms of their writing experiences and practices. *Antonio* confirmed that during her second year as a participant of the workshop programme *"the creative writing course became tougher and more challenging, yet thoroughly more enjoyable." Benjamin* considered being challenged and stretched to be one of the primary components of the experiential learning process:

> *If I've learned anything from these workshops, it is that trying to stretch myself to a task I would not normally consider helps my writing and my confidence. Not always immediately, and not in ways I might initially expect, but new possibilities will inevitably emerge. I would earnestly hope that a creative writing course could be offered to all undergraduates so that they too may stretch muscles they may not know they have. (Benjamin)*

(f) Writing Discipline

In a workshop environment, which focuses on writing freedom and creativity, but places less formal emphasis on writing discipline, it is both satisfying and rewarding to see in their reflexive essays how the students all learnt in their own individual ways the significance of

the discipline of their writing practices, as a counterpoint to their writing freedom, creativity, experimentation and playfulness.

Even with flexible deadlines, no sanctions for non-submission and no grades or formal evaluations of their written pieces, the students came to realise and understand that the disciplined process of writing, revising and editing is as important as the creativity and quality of their work. This paragraph from *Lemon's* reflexive essay serves as an overview of the discipline obstacles most students face in their writing practices:

> *A big problem of mine is really getting down to the business of writing. This was actually my main reason for joining the workshop, to get my creative juices flowing and to make writing a habit, a pleasure and something that is done with little effort. I discovered, in reality, it is seldom just an easy, steady flow of creative genius: it's something one works hard at. I learned to accept that and work within that paradigm. The more you work at writing, the less work writing becomes. Personally I'm a terrible procrastinator, so I didn't write as much as I should have — perhaps I didn't reap the full reward of the course for that reason. However, I'm still writing a lot more than I was. By giving us bi-weekly assignments, we were forced into writing pretty regularly and I'm grateful for that — keeping writing is the only way I'll ever improve or increase my productivity. (Lemon)*

The students felt a need to explore the often ignored facets of writing productivity and discipline with evaluations of *"the deadline and the 'last-minuteness' of creative writing;"* explanations of what constitutes *"productiveness"* and descriptions of the importance of the mechanical drafting, revising and editing regimen, which is necessary to see a text through to its completion. *Knives* describes with pride how he took one of the short stories through a five draft process of revision and editing, a process, which was *"a month and a half long."* The students became so aware of the importance of writing discipline that some even developed (and quoted) various maxims pertaining to the writing process and writing discipline:

- *Good writing is worth working towards; (Taryn)*
- *Good writing is worth working for; (Taryn)*
- *Writing is a long, tough and arduous task; (Antonio)*

- *Writing takes place in the confused realm of the everyday; (Bryony)*
- *To see a story through to completion you must love the piece you have written; (Antonio) and*
- *Great discipline is necessary for the art of writing. (Jonny Rage)*

While all the students, who submitted reflexive essays, made some mention of the importance of discipline in their writing and while most managed to achieve increased levels of productivity in terms of textual completion and delivery, certain students like *Olivia* continued to struggle to bring their writing projects to some form of finalisation. *Olivia's* work had been *"developing and changing,"* but it had *"not been cohesive and prolific in a literarily acceptable sequential sort of way:"*

> *The problem that should be occupying my mind is a way in which to make my writing prolific. I have no idea why I find it so difficult to write things down. The Soul Sentences are a piece of cake, the dialogues and snippets of stories are easy too. It's those damn short stories that are giving me a headache. (Olivia)*

Ironically *Chadwick*, the least conforming, most experimental and least bashful writer of shockingly violent texts, rates his recognition and acceptance of the discipline aspects of the writing process as an *"invigorating experience,"* because during his participation in the workshops he had *"done more writing than ever before: I have completed more pieces this year than any other year of my puny 21-year existence."*

(g) Writing Tasks, Exercises and Assignments

Although the teaching and learning components of the workshops, the students' writing activities and reading practices can be viewed as the accumulative foundation of the workshop programme, the specific writing exercises and assignments had the most direct and immediate impact on the students' writing practices and products and on their own insights into their development and growth as young writers.

The most valuable workshop exercises were those, which forced students to identify and adopt alternative writing perspectives and which showed the students their inherent capabilities to find and explore different viewpoints. This allowed them to produce multi-faceted, multi-dimensional texts in a range of writing voices.

All the students expressed different levels of surprise at the results of their Participant/ Spectator, Freewriting (Elbow, 1958: 13) and Loop Writing (Elbow, 1958: 59) tasks. *Lemon* confirmed that the broadening of her own writing viewpoint was one of the highlights of her workshop experience:

> *The versatility of my own mind was one of the greatest discoveries the workshops granted me. I have always seen myself, more or less, as a somewhat serious, somewhat light-hearted commentator on life and the human condition. My ambitions never really ranged beyond small treatises and collections of thoughts in this style. But of course, and I am making an obvious point here, creativity is paramount in creative writing. Not simply to reflect, but to create, to portray things in a way never imagined before, to ascribe meaning in different and multiple ways. After this year, I feel as if I have become creative in a way I never was before. I have composed narratives, which I didn't think I was any good at and discovered perspectives I had no idea were within me. (Lemon)*

The only student to refer to the Participant/Spectator exercise was *Benjamin*, who described it as *"stretching unknown muscles"* because it forced him to change viewpoints and consider *"new vistas."*

The Loop Writing (Elbow, 1958: 59) exercise received acclaim across the board. *Chadwick* and *Jonny Rage* discovered that loop writing had significant benefits for their characterisation processes:

> *The concept of writing from different perspectives really helped me in getting a grasp on how to discover telling stories through characters, not just telling the reader about them; (Chadwick)*

> *Loop Writing was really fun, as it encouraged us to look at our story from as many sides as possible making the characters more complex, allowing us to see and show different sides of them, making them more real and feel more alive. (Jonny Rage)*

The exploration of perspective set into motion by the Loop Writing (Elbow, 1958: 59) exercise also made students realise that they had the ability of writing in a range of 'voices'

and therefore in a range of styles:

> *Events could be seen and examined with different attitudes and opinions, with the prejudices of the individual narrators working together to shape the story; (Jonny Rage)*

> *I found the loop writing exercise a brilliant way of liberating my style from the usual way I tend to write and place my perspective. I was surprised with what had come out through me in doing that exercise; (Knives)*

> *Loop writing has also helped me realise that I can have different voices and stances in my writing; at the same time, though, it has helped me refine what my voice really is. (Lemon)*

The students also learned to appreciate the Freewriting (Elbow, 1958: 13) exercise as a routine, which could be of ongoing benefit. While students like *Kathryn* and *Kahlan Amnell* were in the minority, finding Freewriting difficult because of its messiness and untidiness and, in the case of *Kathryn*, because of the lack of her ultimate control over the product of the process, most of the students were positive about the exercise, and some confirmed that it had become an instrument that they routinely used in their writing practices:

> *I learned that freewriting is possibly the best way to go about getting a new idea for a story, because you are not constrained by any criteria, and many thoughts from your subconscious surface, while writing; (Antonio)*

> *Every workshop piece I have written this year had its origins in a journal entry or a bout of freewriting; (Taryn)*

Jonny Rage provides a useful description of the process and the benefits of adopting freewriting as a writing technique and *Lemon* explains the value she discovered in Freewriting as a means to shift from her academic writing focus into her creative writing world:

> *Of the skills and techniques we learned, by far the most useful exercise was freewriting, to just let go of all influences, prejudices and inhibitions and write what comes to mind as it arrives, without question or correction. I found this*

allowed for substance to form quickly, making the whole writing experience much more enjoyable as less time was spent stressing over the right word, and a near-complete story could be constructed in the minimum amount of time. Afterwards, it is much easier to focus on refining and perfecting sentences, editing the story by a process of dilution, as if 'sculpting' a story; (Jonny Rage)

Freewriting is so, well, freeing in that it allows one to write nonsense, make mistakes and say the most ridiculous things, in a safe space where no-one will read or judge them. I think having to do so much writing in an academic sphere makes me quite cautious of how my writing will be perceived (I definitely use a lot more technical terms, and I search much harder for the right word). But creative writing is NOT academic writing; it's for enjoyment — both of the reader and the writer. (Lemon)

(h) Reader Focus and Awareness

Besides the form of audience awareness forced on the students by the reading and feedback processes inherent in the workshop structure, the students confirmed that they had also benefited from the discussion surrounding the reader as a co-creator of their texts.

A number of students, like *Bryony*, had only written for their own personal pleasure and had not considered the needs and requirements of a broader readership:

I was looking at my writing within my own head. I did not consider the thoughts and needs of an audience, and if I did, it was with a lack of conscious understanding about what an audience needs to be given. The workshops have provided me with an understanding of the need for clarity (as opposed to brevity, coldness and nonchalant offhandedness, which plagues short story writing today). (Bryony)

Although certain students were overly concerned about their readers to the detriment of their writing:

In terms of audience awareness and its impact on the writer, I think that I still have lots of self-consciousness to lose as a writer as it is also difficult to try and get rid of the sense of academic duty, and thought, in writing. (Sophie)

A few students managed to successfully create a balanced basis for their writing practices:

> *Something that I have taken out of my experiences in the workshop is that you write as much for yourself as you do for others if you are to be satisfied as an author. (Kahlan Amnell)*

Taryn identified one of the reader's primary needs to be writing *"with gaps in it, space for the readers to find their own meaning within the story"* and that, as a writer, she has to develop some *"understanding of the difference between [her] intention as [she] puts words on paper, and their interpretation as they read."*

There were a number of exercises aimed at developing a reader and audience focus and the textual characteristics, which were necessary to attract and entertain the readers of texts.

As was pointed out earlier, the concept of showing, and not telling, proved difficult for the students even with detailed theoretical explanations and numerous examples. Only three students mentioned the concept of showing and not telling in their reflexive essays, but provided no elaboration of their perceived value of the process or concept.

In terms of the Characterisation exercise, *Kathryn* admitted that the character in her final short story had *"lived through"* her as the writer; *Chadwick* praised the Loop Writing process as an aid to the development of his characters and *Antonio* confirmed that she had enjoyed the *"Favourite Character"* exercise, which was more a theoretical reading exercise than a writing task.

The *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise and the *Sentences with Soul* writing routine were very successful in capturing the students' imaginations, passions and enthusiasm.

(i) <u>*The Sins Virtues and Graces* Exercise</u>

Most of the students were very positive about the effect this particular exercise had on their writing and described the task as a 'spark,' 'inspiration' and 'trigger,' which led to a flow of character, conflict and story evolutions in a seemingly free and unforced manner. *Kahlan Amnell* describes the *Sins Virtues and Graces* exercise as one that magically offers a *"topic*

that creates its own characters, which just jumped out at [her]." Benjamin relates a similar reaction to the exercise:

> *The attributes assigned to me were Lust and Hope. After some blank staring, traits and attitudes swirled about until Lust and Hope, as characters, emerged. This tiny event was, for me, a much-needed breakthrough. I knew there was something about these two I wanted to work with and for once I didn't let myself get discouraged. (Benjamin)*

Antonio describes how the *Sins Virtues and Graces* Writing Exercise had inspired her and strengthened her characterisation process and her storylines:

> *Since my Sins, Virtues and Graces exercise, I have seen a refining of my writing — the characters are real and the story-line is far more gripping and stronger and I also discovered I have a talent for dialogue writing, which is made possible by my more tangible characters. Overall I enjoyed the subject matter and was inspired by my characters. (Antonio)*

Knives, echoing *Benjamin's* description of the exercise as a *"much-needed breakthrough,"* describes his *"experience with the Sins Virtues and Graces exercise"* as a *"'revelationary' experience,"* one which he found to be a *"very inspiring method of writing,"* as well as a *"most valuable method of developing story."*

The impact of the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise, both on his writing processes and the stories evolving from that process, caused *Knives* to extend his writing focus beyond his favourite sub-genre, Fantasy Stories, to include texts, which are more realistic in nature:

> *My Sins and Virtues exercise prompted me to put more consideration into writing realist pieces. This is something I'd never really held much stock in since Fantasy was my passion. Possibly I will operate within both spheres in my future writing projects, maybe even combining them. (Knives)*

Jonny Rage provides a useful overview of the value he found in the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* exercise, as he identifies the multi-level and multi-faceted effect the exercise can have on textual creation:

The Sins and Virtues exercise works well as it hands us the tools to create a variety of characters with multiple layers and more depth of personality. With this process we know our characters inside and out and, therefore, know exactly how they react to the events around them; this would further shape the story as our characters' own personalities begin to take charge of the writing. (Jonny Rage)

(j) <u>*Sentences with Soul*</u>

Most of the students reacted positively to the routine of writing *Sentences with Soul* and provided detailed explanations of their sentence writing experiences and the benefits they derived from the process. For *Bryony* the writing of *Sentences with Soul* was an abbreviated writing experience, which while creative, was 'un-pressurised,' open ended and playful in nature:

An exercise such as Sentences with Soul is very beneficial. It does not force one to deal with the 'stakes' of story writing. Rather it gives one free rein to have fun on the page without the pressure of writing a 'complete' work. Wonderful things can come out of this. (Bryony)

The *Sentence with Soul* routine caused *Antonio* to become more observant and heightened her awareness of the value of observation to the creative writing process:

I am grateful we had to write one of these sentences each day, as it helped me to notice the little things around me and I realise it is the everyday things in life that make for good stories. It is these everyday occurrences that are gems to include in your writing pieces. (Antonio)

Not all the students were immediately positive about the *Sentences with Soul*. *Knives* provides a valuable glimpse of his conversion from being doubtful of there being any real benefits in the *Sentences with Soul* routine to recognising that the creative attributes of individual sentences can add to the quality of the writer's textual products:

At first I was sceptical about the concept of the sentence with soul. My belief was that what made a good story was to have strong, believable characters, an

original plot and a clear mode of writing that would engage the reader and draw them into the world you have created. I didn't think you needed flowery or significantly powerful sentences that were artworks in their own right. Sure, I knew that you had to write good sentences that conveyed the information, tone, mood, feeling, etc., of what you are writing, but I never thought that each individual sentence was so important and needed to convey all these aspects on its own. Funnily enough, with respect to what I've just said, my first attempts at writing a sentence with soul in one of the sessions was really encouraging and inspiring for me ... As the course progressed and I had to give feedback on more stories, I started to appreciate the good sentences in their own right. I became more critical and less satisfied with some of my writing and thus put more effort into each word I typed out. I noticed a change in the quality of my writing, with better sentences the quality was better represented. Looking back on the year, the concept of Sentences with Soul improved my writing, it has matured, there is quality in each sentence and my writing now is so much better. (Knives)

Taryn also found the *Sentence with Soul* process to be of value to her, because it gave her an abbreviated writing instrument and a rewarding outlet during a period when she was not able to devote herself to larger writing efforts or projects. Her *Sentences with Soul* also represented a collection of thoughts and ideas as a potential basis for her future writing initiatives:

The sentences with soul were my 'beacon of helpfulness' for the year. Reading them again I was happily surprised by how many of them there were. There are several that I wish had carried on — I want to know what happens next — and now I have a library of stories from which to plagiarise ideas. It is interesting too to discover the strange sort of stuff I write and it is these that I can enjoy reading as a reader ... If nothing else has been gained from this year, the skill of doing a bit of work on something every day has been enough of a development for me. (Taryn)

(k) <u>Reading</u>

Some of the students felt a need to comment in their reflexive essays on the effect their reading practices had on their writing processes. While all the students read and rated the 58 short stories in the short story packs, only *Jonathan* remarked that he had found the reading and rating of the selected short stories and the *"various discussions about the published*

short story pieces" to have *"beneficial"* benefits in terms of identifying certain standards and *"as vital in the construction of [his] own short stories."*

This process of exposing students to a broad cross section of fictional texts, within the domain of the short story, helps to establish a more realistic and accurate writing standard, previously unknown and unconsidered by the students. Prior to the exposure to the selected short stories, it appears that the students had been comparing their own textual products to the 'literature' that they would be reading at that time, setting impossibly high writing standards for themselves with largely negative repercussions.

For example, as a *"voracious reader" Kathryn's* reading *"did not tell [her] how to write, only how to evaluate [her] writing,"* an *"evaluation that set an incredibly high standard that is impossible to achieve."*

Chadwick commented that one of the negatives of the reading activities undertaken during the workshop process was that there wasn't any exploration of more experimental-type writing.

(l) Student and Facilitator Feedback

In their reflexive essays the students all recognised and appreciated the importance and value of the workshop feedback process, as one of the primary benefits of participating in a workshop programme. Being able to expose their texts to like minded readers and receive constructive feedback from them is invaluable to young writers, who would usually not have shown their writing beyond immediate family and friends. *Kahlan Amnell* provides a useful précis of how she experienced the workshop feedback process, involving both input from the facilitator and her fellow students:

> *Pieter's knowledge and constant constructive criticism, though a bit discouraging at first, definitely brought out my full potential, which I have not reached, but am well on my way to achieving. The opportunity to critique each other's work gave us the chance to separate ourselves from our work and try to look at it objectively. I have never felt as vulnerable as I did each time I allowed everyone to read my work. It was like letting someone take a peek at your soul.*

> *By the end of this course, however, I feel that I have learnt and improved so much and have also become a more complete person as a result. (Kahlan Amnell)*

The students appreciated the complexity of the feedback process, which includes both the giving and receiving of feedback and the fear which is attached to both components of that process. *Kathryn* describes how she fears being exposed as a *"fraud,"* because of her perceived opinion of her writing as having no value and *Taryn* is fearful of *"hurting another workshop participant by commenting on their work."* During the course of the workshop programme *Taryn* learnt that *"critiquing and editing others is a skill that requires alertness and sensitivity"* and that *"the real damage that could be done to another's writing would be done by saying nothing at all."*

If the feedback environment is positive and encouraging in nature, students like *Sophie*, who *"stifled [her] writing because of [her] own inhibitions and fears"* and feared *"being seen by [her] peers as inferior,"* overcame those fears and *"came to see everybody as unique and full of potential."*

Jonathan and *Antonio* emphasised the importance of and seemingly different critiquing role to be fulfilled by the workshop facilitator compared to the peer feedback on their textual products:

> *What was most valuable to me about this experience was the feedback sessions where each member of the group voiced their individual opinions about one another's pieces. For me this highlighted a real engagement and interest in each individual's work rather than, simply, a bunch of mere, positive comments in aid of sparing a person's feelings. I found Pieter's critiques of my work to be very helpful and eye-opening and honest when compared to the always-positive comments I had been receiving from family and friends. (Jonathan)*

> *I felt the workshop feedback process to be fantastic. Pieter gives us critical feedback that is not discouraging or malicious — rather, his help is constructive, and as a novice writer, that has helped me the most. (Antonio)*

The workshop feedback process has strengthened *Chadwick's* confidence as a young writer:

I think more than anything taking this workshop has really given me a newfound confidence in my writing that I was lacking before. I was never sure how I felt about a piece, but after the discussion and reviews of our various stories, that has changed and I no longer feel so insecure about my work anymore. (Chadwick)

For both *Lemon* and *Jonny Rage* it was important that the workshop group consisted of a variety of diverse individuals with different backgrounds and styles of writing, as this diversity ensured that their own writing would receive a thorough evaluation and a range of feedback responses:

The group setting is fantastic for getting a variety of responses and styles together. I got to see what people with different tastes thought of my work, and take a peek at how their minds work in relation to writing. (Lemon)

The criticism has great potential to aid us in our writing as it gives us an outside view that is aware of the process of writing that provides us with a range of opinions to guide us to be more successful writers. Because the truth of writing is that different ideas appeal to different people, and the views of the workshops are indeed different as each one of us has our influences and enjoys different styles of writing. (Jonny Rage)

It was the negative responses to the feedback process provided by *Lemon* and *Jonny Rage* during the latter stages of the workshop programme, which resulted in the development of more focused feedback parameters against which the students' texts were evaluated during the final phase of the 2008 workshop programme:

As good as criticism is in theory, the criticism we offer as workshop participants is severely lacking in value and content, as we actually don't know how to give proper constructive criticism. What would benefit the course is a brief focus on the process of analysis and studying professional critics: that way we would do more than just simply read a work and give an unconstructive 'it was nice,' 'I liked this part,' or 'this worked well.' (Jonny Rage)

On the 'con' side, there's not much to say. Because the workshops have to deal with everyone's work, there is a somewhat limited time to deal with people's

pieces in-depth. People don't seem that motivated to provide individual feedback by e-mail, though, so this might just be a natural pitfall of the process. I would perhaps like to have some guidelines of common flaws and errors to look out for in others' writing, in order to be able to critique it better. At the moment, although I'm reasonably comfortable to point out flaws, I am never sure how qualified I am to do so: is that a mistake, or a matter of personal taste? (Lemon)

(m) Competitions and Publishers

Making students aware of the competitions, literary magazines and journals to which they can submit their completed short stories, while only achieving limited responses, is a workshop component, which provides indirect value to the students' own writing practices, as evidenced by responses in the reflexive essays:

My hopes and plans to get published are more tangible. Next year will be very interesting as we start trying to get our short stories published. Even a rejection slip is pure gold to me at this moment. (Knives)

Pieter's focus on writing short stories with the intention of submitting to publishers is definitely a strength of the workshops. I think submission is a great motivation to write, even if a rejection letter is all you receive, it is proof that you are a writer and it encourages you to push yourself further. (Antonia)

(n) Workshop Benefits

Benjamin in his reflexive essay describes *"the buzz, the joy and pleasure"* he derived from taking the risk of writing and submitting two 'creative' academic essays, and in so doing, being able to achieve levels of creativity, of which he was proud, that also appealed to his lecturer and for which he was awarded high marks. *Benjamin* admits that more than the reward of high grades, he took great pleasure in *"reading the essays again and again and was gratified to know that [his] lecturer enjoyed the essays too."* The attendance of the workshops gave him the added confidence to apply his creativity to his other fields of study.

Lemon felt that she derived both *"practical and creative"* benefits from being part of the workshop process, while *Antonio* confirmed that the workshops had given her *"much*

pleasure and joy and had caused her to appreciate literature and the art of writing far more."

The benefits identified by one of the students, who had completed the University's *Experiments in Telling* Honours creative writing module, provides a real glimpse into the different principles and natures of the two programmes. Having recently completed the Honours module, the student admitted to a need for *"guidance and support"* and that the student had *"not written much since"* the completion of the module:

> *I found the extra-curricular workshops to be extremely meaningful and useful. I learned a lot about writing and really feel my writing skills have improved. What I appreciated most was that writing of all types was encouraged, and our writing was not disregarded or seen as less valid if it was unusual or challenged conventions in any way. Overall I gained skills, and my view of creative writing changed drastically.*

(o) Writing Improvement

Relatively few of the students compared their latest writing products to the original work they submitted before the commencement of the workshop programme, but they remarked on the improvement in their own writing quality:

> *I can see a definite improvement; (Kathryn)*

> *I have noticed a vast improvement in both my style and my strength of narrative and I do not pressurise myself to emulate my favourite authors, but rather I allow my own unique style to come across in my writing; (Antonio)*

> *By the end of this course, I feel that I've finally become comfortable with my style of writing and allowed my inner spirit to come through in my work, which is an exhilarating feeling. If I compare my original piece to my most recent story, I can't believe it's the same person; (Kahlan Amnell)*

> *In terms of quality my writing has matured and I am no longer limiting myself to any specific genre; (Knives)*

When I look back on my previous writing, it seems rather pedestrian in comparison: good first level, but not really serious or mature, and with little structure or depth. I feel that I'm capable of more than a passing, first-person commentary on a certain issue. I am in love with postmodernism at the moment, so I like how I've grown to take a critical view of everything, and play with textual styles and genres in what I hope is an original way. I certainly think I'm turning more and more into the writer that I'd want to read. (Lemon)

L. Facilitator and Student Textual Feedback Process

The absence in the creative writing workshop programme of the writing teacher as master/ mentor/marker/editor/promoter resulted in the students being more reliant on the feedback of the workshop facilitator and their participating peers. This heightened importance of the feedback process resulted in a negotiated process and parameters being established at the commencement of each new workshop group. As the students became more experienced in their writing practices, some of them expressed their dissatisfaction with the standard of the feedback they were receiving and the feedback process was revised to include clearly measurable textual parameters.

The initial workshop feedback process and parameters were based on the elements contained in Peter Elbow's book *Writing With Power* (1958: 240-1):

1. Writing groups are not therapy.
2. A writing group should be a safe house.
3. Writers are in control of what they submit and read to the group. The following method ensures that writers have reasonable control over the discussion of their writing:

    - The writers tell the group what they should listen for and what specific feedback they want.
    - The writer reads the text or extract aloud. Reading aloud lets writers hear their words and will often prompt self-correction or revision and is a powerful way to establish ownership of their words.
    - Readers respond to the writer's concerns first.
    - The group should offer suggestions rather than directions.
    - All writing should be distributed and read before the meeting of the

writing group

4. The writer doesn't need to follow every piece of advice.
5. Constructive criticism with reasons
6. No interruptions
7. Humane responses
8. Feedback should be Reader-Based and not Criterion-Based.

Peter Elbow makes the distinction between Criterion-based feedback — feedback that helps the writer to find out how her writing measures up to certain criteria — and Reader-based feedback, which tells the writer what her writing does to particular readers.

While this reader based approach was accepted and welcomed during the first years of the programme, some of the students later required qualitative responses to their creative work and the decision was taken during the phase 2 workshops of 2008 to establish a list of parameters in respect of which the students (and the facilitator) would provide at least one written sentence of feedback in their comments. The criteria were decided upon after discussion amongst the participants and ended up including a number of the traditional craft based elements contained in most of the creative writing handbooks:

- Beginning
- Storyline
- Tension
- Characterisation
- Emotions
- Ending
- Enjoyment
- Additional Comments

The following responses are examples of the quality, value and sensitivity that can form the basis of a feedback establishment process in an environment, which seeks to support, encourage and nurture the student writer.

Two of the feedback pieces focus on the 'tension' stories of *Sophie* and *Chadwick*. The referenced feedback pieces are contained in the Appendices p. 241.

The first feedback piece is a student-to-student example with *Sophie* giving *Chadwick* her response to his tension generating story, "The Cabin." In this example *Sophie* does not use the feedback parameters.

The second feedback example is the facilitator's feedback to *Sophie* on her untitled 'tension' story using the agreed parameters as a framework for the response to her writing piece.

The third example is the facilitator's response to *Knives* after reading his story, "The Tale of Emargo."

The final feedback example shows how productive student feedback can be, as a result of the use of feedback parameters, even when it is obvious that a student writer 'hates' the work of a peer. This was the case with *Knives'* evaluation of *Jonathan's* mockingly irreverent and irreligious story "Father Out in Heaven."

XIII. THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE THESIS

A. Introduction

The conclusions gleaned from examination of the creative writing teaching literature and analysis and the conclusions drawn from the results of the extracurricular creative writing workshop research study constitute the primary principles, processes and exercises for the design and development of a creative writing environment and pedagogy to address the needs and expectations of undergraduate student writers.

These principles will form the foundation for the structural, procedural and methodological framework of the syllabi of the undergraduate creative writing programme and the postgraduate creative writing teaching course.

B. Institutional Findings

It appears that the historical dominance of institutional motives and objectives in the teaching of creative writing has resulted in a lack of research and development of pedagogic methodologies, systems and processes for the teaching of creative writing and has restricted creative writing instruction to the teaching of craft, which focuses on the specificity of writing technique. The institutionalised academic creative writing teaching system has become commercially reliant on what the student writer consumes — creative writing teaching and learning. What the student writer produces — the text — is of lesser significance.

Given the relative absence of pedagogic development and progress in the teaching of creative writing, resulting from a lack of focus on creative writing as a practice in and of itself as a literary art form, creative writing as a field of study and the student writers studying it would benefit significantly, if it were to be detached from the traditional control of English Studies and relocated, as an independent discipline into the field of The Arts alongside the Fine Arts, Music, Drama and Film Making.

C. The Conclusions - Pedagogic Principles for the Teaching of Creative Writing

1. Workshop Dynamics

One of Teresa Amabile's primary research findings emphasises the ultimate importance of locating all creative writing teaching principles and methods within an appropriately developed and maintained creative environment: "It is easier to enhance creativity by changing conditions in the environment than trying to make people think more creatively." The following workshop components and conditions are the most important in creating and maintaining such an environment:

(a) Inviting and Supportive

While traditionally described as a community-orientated practice of a community of writers supporting and caring for each other, the workshop goal should not be to always achieve agreement and settle things. Debate and discussion should be encouraged and diversity and individuality welcomed in an openly interrogative and dialogic setting.

(b) Creatively Tolerant and Understanding

Cognisance should be taken of the character traits and behaviour of creative individuals participating in the workshop processes. These student writers may be different, independent, display high levels of personal freedom and control and they may be motivated to extreme levels of excitement and intensity. They may also display inherently complex personalities, which reflect rebelliousness and extremes of self-belief, self-centredness, self-importance and self-absorption.

(c) Freedom

The environment should celebrate the students' creative freedom and their individuality and always emphasise that in their writing practices there is no right or wrong, correctness or incorrectness and that there are only possibilities and no restrictions. Student writers should have freedom of choice in whatever is being asked of them in terms of exercises and assignments. Absolute freedom is key to the establishment of the focus required for the

attainment of a significantly highly motivated state, which forms the foundation for creative processes, practices and achievements.

(d) Disciplined

The student should be made aware of the duality inherent in the practice of writing creatively, which requires a balance between chaos and organisation and disorder and order. In order to provide this balance the workshop should offer a disciplined teaching environment, which focuses on creative freedom and on an active and regular writing practice based on the ultimate importance of the reader as both receiver and co-creator of the text.

(e) Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation

The motivation to create underlies all creative activities and practices and should play a fundamental role in the development and establishment of all creative writing pedagogy and the environment in which it takes place. Motivation is the source of the characteristics of passion, determination, drive, focus and perseverance, which ensure that creativity moves from an intangible state of inspiration to productive reality.

In an intrinsically motivated state individuals undertake creative activities purely for their own interest in and enjoyment of the activity, focusing single-mindedly on the pursuit of creativity and not on the attainment.

Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity, whereas the extrinsically motivated state is detrimental to creativity. The difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is the difference between the creator's divided and undivided attention. Because intrinsically motivated work is more satisfying than extrinsically motivated work, factors that decrease the individual's enjoyment of the task undermine creativity, but factors that increase the individual's enjoyment should enhance creativity.

(f) Restricting Extrinsic Motivation

The creative writing teaching environment should be an intrinsically dominated setting, which attempts to minimise extrinsic motivational factors and to delay the advent of unavoidable extrinsic factors, until the intrinsically motivated creative activities have neared the final stages of their completion.

Extrinsic motivation results in attention being diverted from the creative task itself and factors such as awards, accolades and expectations of evaluation are detrimental to creativity. The effect of the presence of others on individual creativity also needs to be considered in the collaborative creativity projects and group evaluations, both of which are extrinsically motivated factors. Reactions by participating students to the collaborative, team writing exercise were largely negative and had a negative effect on motivation, creativity and participation levels.

In contrast to the need for solitude during creative writing processes, the traditional bias toward writing as a group activity in many of the writing workshop practices may have counter-creative influences on individual workshop participants.

(g) An Intrinsic Learning Environment

The following are the pedagogic characteristics, which distinguish intrinsic from extrinsic learning orientations in a teaching and learning environment:

- Learning motivated by curiosity versus learning to please the teacher;
- Incentive to work for one's own satisfaction versus working to please the teacher and get good grades;
- Preference for challenging work versus preference for easy work;
- Desire to work independently versus dependence on the teacher for help; and
- Internal versus external criteria for determining success or failure.

(h) An Experiential, Writer Focused Environment

The teaching focus in the teaching and learning of creative writing should be realigned from teaching the student, as student, to teaching the student, as writer. This realignment would require a paradigm shift from the academically entrenched pedagogic objective of teaching knowledge and skills to the objective of teaching students to *become* writers. The teaching process and outcomes should shift from simply being the transference of knowledge and skills to being experiential, student focused teaching and learning processes in a dialogic, interrogative environment in which students undergo the experience of being and becoming writers.

I believe that the emphasis in the creative writing classroom should be focused on the students, not as academics, but as prospective and committed writers. Specific components of the workshop programme should be designed and implemented to expose the students to 'the writing life' by reading and discussing the experiences of established writers and being exposed to the aspects of leading a writer's life, such as its inherently twice-lived and double-experience nature. Students should also be exposed to the personal attributes and characteristics required to successfully develop and sustain a writing life.

(i) A Life Time Experience

The ultimate objective of providing students with writing experiences is to encourage and develop inexperienced 'natural' writers into more mature, confident and productive writers, who maintain their passion for and dedication to their writing pursuits and are equipped to continue their personal writing practices for the rest or at any stage in their lives.

2. Group Dynamics

There should be an acknowledgement and ongoing awareness of the importance of workshop group dynamics in the outcomes of the teaching and learning of creative writing. The workshop is a group based teaching and learning location and therefore relationships, influences and dynamics inherent in the composition of the group are vitally important to

the optimisation of the creativity and quality of the work created by the workshop participants. The workshop environment should be an authoritatively neutral, nurturing environment, which is sensitive to the interactive complexities of the workshop feedback process, as well as the dual dynamics of the interrelationships between the individual participants and the group and between the participants themselves.

Some of the more important components in establishing a group dynamic that is conducive to imaginative and creative learning outcomes are:

a. The creative writing teacher should be accepted as a facilitator and collaborator, who optimises the creative writing abilities of every student participant. The objective is creativity in writing, not conformance to any pre-determined norms and styles;
b. In order to reduce the peer pressure to conform, divergence, experimentation and alternative perspectives should be welcomed and applauded with teachers enhancing creativity by teaching students as individuals; encouraging students to be independent; indicating that excellence is expected and can be achieved and accepting students as equals.
c. Group teaching and learning should provide a balance between instruction, participation, feedback and writing with the 'teaching' components being based on 'exposing' students to diverse styles, authors, stories, authorial processes and idiosyncrasies; and
d. The workshop group should be as diverse as practically possible consisting of culturally, socially and psychologically dissimilar students, who support and assist each other by being ordinary readers, commentators and collaborators for each other. The group characteristic of diversity is important for a number of reasons:

    i. A diversity of students in a workshop group provides a group dynamic, which provides an 'edgy,' risky and vibrant foundation for textual creativity, experimentation and exploration. Students remarked on the importance of the 'atmosphere' of the workshop, which comes from the composition of the workshop group, and how it was a pleasure to experience the variety of writing styles and experiences;
    ii. The commitment displayed by the student participants also has an uplifting effect on other students by causing them to improve their own writing in response to personal feelings of competitiveness;
    iii. Student writers find 'edgy' alternate writing perspectives refreshing and invigorating and welcome the opportunity to receive writing feedback from

a variety of readers;

iv. The existence of diversity in the workshop group is linked to the concept of newness, the newness of ideas and experiences, which forms an integral part of the notion of writing freedom.

e. From a more practical perspective, the size, style and condition of the workshop venue will affect the state of mind and creativity of group participants, as will the number of creative writing students. Too few students results in familiarity, repetition and creative boredom, while too many participants leads to a lack of time for adequate individual attention and focus in terms of the workshop facilitator and the feedback from fellow students with workshop sessions seldom completing their teaching and feedback agendas.

3. Student Participation

Unlike the concept of student participation attached to traditional fields of study, which are largely knowledge and skills based, the definition of 'participation' in a creative writing teaching environment is multi-layered, fluid and less clear cut. Participation consists of more than simple class attendance, responses to given tasks, submitting essays and passing examinations. In the dynamic group environment participation includes continual interactions between individuals on a range of subjects, as well as the emotionally laden and sensitive process and responsibility of reading, analysing and providing feedback on the texts of fellow participants.

The collective participation of all the students has some effect on the creative products of the participants in the workshop group. Some students thrive on the human contact experienced by attending the workshop sessions, while other students prefer responding to tasks and exercises and giving and receiving feedback electronically.

Student participation should be managed flexibly in the best interests of the students and on a case by case basis with student freedom, creativity and textual quality being the primary participation criteria.

4. Student Writer Categories

The research results revealed that the student groups consisted of four broad categories of participants and that the mix of the categories of each workshop group affected individuals and their writing outcomes. These findings are valuable to the process of determining a category mix, which will optimise the creative performance of the workshop group and its participants.

The first category is the *Dabblers*. These students are attracted to the idea of being writers, but while attending the workshops and participating in the exercises and smaller assignments, remain tentative and non-committal in terms of the process of writing and becoming a writer. They like the idea of writing, but do not commit to the practice of writing.

The *Players* enjoy both the idea and practice of writing, but are not disciplined and dedicated, preferring to experiment and play with exercises that spark their imaginations and grab their relatively short attention spans. They rarely complete a project, simply enjoying the writing process, while their interest endures. For the *Players* writing is a game and these students tend to be outrageous, setting out to shock, challenge and energise the other workshop participants in their interactions with them. They fulfil a highly influential, positive and catalytic role in the group dynamic of the workshops and tend to play a substantial role in the creative textual development of other students.

The *Balanced* students display the necessary traits of dedication and discipline required for them to develop and grow as writers, while at the same time displaying the ability to embrace the qualities of playfulness and experimentation to produce quality, reader focused creative texts.

The *Perfectionists* are dedicated and disciplined writers, but are hamstrung by their need to constantly be seeking perfection in their writing, which precludes them from pursuing experimental, risk taking and playful writing adventures. Their writing lacks spark and edginess and for them creation is a very painful process.

The analysis identified that, if the ultimate objective of the teaching and learning of creative writing is to produce imaginative and disciplined writers of creative texts, the workshop participants should consist of a mix of the student categories, *Balanced*, *Players* and *Perfectionists*. The *Players* tend to become more productive and disciplined when exposed to the active writing practices of the *Balanced* and *Perfectionist* students, while the *Players* (and to a lesser extent the *Dabblers*) through their passionate, adventurous and playful writing focus encourages the more conservative *Balanced* and *Perfectionist* students to have more fun and take more risks with their writing.

The mix of profiles and personalities of the workshop participants, particularly when the workshop is not dominated by the power and authority of the traditional writing teacher, will have a significant effect on the writing processes, practices and products of all the participating student writers.

5. The Students' Academic Mindsets Predominate

Students, particularly at undergraduate level, often find their academic objectives and responsibilities to be overwhelming and distracting to their creative writing aims and activities, both from a practical as well as an emotional and motivational perspective.

The students' academic mindsets have a negative effect on their creative writing attitudes, processes and practices causing their writing to be overly controlled. As a result, there is the need for an ongoing emphasis in the workshops on:

- Student enjoyment of creative writing as a free and unrestricted practice with boundless possibilities;
- The celebration of the students' individuality and difference;
- The absence of any correctness or incorrectness in the practice of writing creatively; and
- The necessity for students, as far as humanly possible, to divest themselves of their academic mindsets — and literature students, their favourite authors — during the workshop sessions and to be less judgmental and less controlling when they are writing in response to the workshop exercises and assignments.

6. The Creative Writing Teacher

The power and authority of the creative writing teacher, as master writer, assessor, grader and sometimes 'controller' of student writer futures, has historically been a strong influence on the workshop environment and its dynamics. This teacher dominance has had the following effects on the teaching of creative writing:

- In this type of setting all other elements of the workshops dynamic become less influential, because the student's primary focus and single minded objective will quite naturally be to perform according to the exact standards set by the teacher.
- Teachers are able to exercise unrestricted control over the students' texts with non-conformance to the teacher's evaluation and suggested revisions carrying the risk of poor student grades.
- The teacher as judge and grader is always the only, and final, arbiter of writing quality and leaves little room for the development of 'public' reader awareness and notions of the quality components and levels expected and insisted upon by a more general reading audience.

The teaching and learning of creative writing should be an authoritatively neutral practice, which would allow the group dynamics and inter-participant feedback to play a far greater role in the students' creative development and writing practices.

There needs to be a shift in concentration in the teaching and learning of creative writing from department and teacher to student, creativity and reader. In order to achieve this shift creative writing teachers should fulfil the following requirements:

- They should have some writing experience;
- They should be extensive readers and be acquainted and familiar with a broad range of books about writing and the teaching of writing;
- They should be experienced and knowledgeable in a significant breadth of fictional texts on which to base the examples given to students in the workshop reading process;
- They should adopt flexible and experimental methods and processes in the teaching of writing;
- Creative writing teachers should display diminished authority and adopt a more, nurturing and developmental teaching style; and

- They should always be aware of the possible nonconformist and unpredictable behaviour of creative individuals and should recognise and adapt to those behaviours and not ignore or reject students displaying those sorts of behaviour.

7. Creativity

The theories of creativity specialist authorities from outside the realm of the academic teaching of creative writing provide a valuable foundation for the re-evaluation and re-formulation of current creative writing pedagogy. This would result in teaching principles and processes based on a student, as writer, and in motivating and optimising student creativity in their practices and products.

Creativity is a latent quality inherent in every individual and writers can and do become successful at any stage of their lives, which contradicts the traditional belief that creative writing teaching authorities have the innate ability to distinguish between talented and talentless students at the commencement of their creative writing practices.

I believe that creative writing teaching and learning principles and processes should be based on a celebration of creativity in an environment that enhances the intrinsically motivated factors which are so beneficial to creativity, and suppresses the extrinsically motivated factors that are detrimental to student creativity.

The origin of the creator's intrinsically motivated state is the freedom to exercise personal control over her creative practice. The vital creative byproducts of this freedom are playfulness, experimentation, enjoyment and naïveté. In embracing their creative freedom student writers may display strong departures from conformity in work that is often subversive, disrupts existing patterns and may resemble acts of rebellion.

The creative process is a contradictory and polarised one requiring high levels of active discipline with which to complement the creative freedom in converting inspiration and ideas into tangible creative products. It requires the creator's acceptance of both elements of the creative process, the freedom and discipline. A disciplined style of work, which is conducive to creative production, includes an ability to concentrate effort and attention for long periods of time; an ability to use productive forgetting; a persistence in the face of

difficulty; a high energy level and a willingness to work hard.

Creativity also entails critical processes, which require students to be dedicated readers to enable them to grasp and maintain their own criteria for writing quality and to learn the rules and content of the domain, as well as the criteria of selection and the preferences of the field within which they write.

Based on the primary principle of creativity, that a process can only be deemed to be creative if the product of that process is adjudged to be creative, it follows that the creativity of the product can define the criteria for processes deemed to be creative. By answering the following questions it may be possible to develop effective creativity focused writing teaching principles and methodologies: 'What aspects of artistic products lead us to evaluate them as creative ones?' and 'What kind of process could possibly result in such creative products?'

If the readers of the text are the primary judges of the creativity and creative quality of the text, based on their own reading experiences as co-creators of the text, it follows that the styles, techniques and mechanisms utilised in the text, which contribute most to the reader's enjoyment and involvement in the text, are the skills, processes and methods, which should be taught as fundamental components of quality creative texts. If a creative text is described as one in which the imaginations of the writer and reader meet and become entangled, then the text will contain gaps, indeterminacy and pluralities with which to confront, entice and enthral the reader.

Of great importance therefore in the teaching and learning of creative writing are techniques and skills such as showing and not telling and the components of comparison (simile, figures of speech and metaphors), which provide a way to draw from the readers' subconscious visual images, experiences, memories and dreams giving the text double the power. Student writers need, however, to be creative, original and innovative in their use of simile, symbol, image, personification, metaphor and allusion, because the effective and successful use of these figurative instruments and techniques is always dependent on their freshness and originality.

8. The Reader

The concept of the reader, as primary target, recipient and ultimate judge of the textual products of the creative writing teaching process warrants more theoretical focus and dialogic attention than it has customarily received. Along with creativity, the concept of the reader should be viewed as a core component of creative writing pedagogy.

An examination of the characteristics of readers, as textual participants, provides a useful foundation for student writers to consider and incorporate in their writing processes. The reader of the text is always an active participant, not a passive witness, who awakens the words and sentences of the text as a dormant entity. The role of the reader has been identified as that of co-producer, individualised performer, co-writer, inventor, aesthetic realiser, composer, collaborator and interpreter. The reader makes, formulates and captures the meaning of the text by unconsciously supplying the information, which is needed to make sense of the text in what has been called a 'performance of meaning.'

The reader and audience oriented insights and theories of specialist authorities serve to balance the traditional craft bias of creative writing pedagogy. The awareness of readers and the role they play in the creation of the text forms an integral part of the writer's writing process.

The textual criteria of readers are rarely examined in the traditional creative writing teaching literature. These simple criteria include maintaining the reader's attention, capturing the reader emotionally, and texts, which are detailed, new and original and contain elements of indeterminacy. The need for textual indeterminacy supports the focus in the teaching of creative writing on skills and techniques such as showing and not telling and the elements of comparison.

9. The Student Writer as Reader

Beyond the traditional focus on students reading as writers in order to identify the methods and techniques of established authors for use in the student writer's own textual creations, the practice of reading should also be seen as an integral and valuable component of the teaching and learning of creative writing, as a means of

- Inspiring and motivating student writers — when they read something good they want to write;
- Improving, generating and expanding student vocabularies and word options and choices;
- Teaching student writers that by reading, as readers, and writing as readers, in their own writing practice, they should not forget or ignore the needs and expectations of their prospective readers in the creation of their texts; and
- Providing the student writer with a valuable and perhaps crucial opportunity to gain a perspective and a personal judgment of fictional history and the contemporary state of the domain of fictional texts in which she will create and into which she will release her own texts.

10. Facilitator and Student Textual Feedback

Traditionally student writers have viewed the workshop feedback process and activities as one of the primary benefits and attractions of a creative writing programme, because they are able to expose their texts to writing focused readers, like themselves, and receive constructive feedback from them and the writing teacher. The research findings have provided some alternatives, adjustments and additions with which to augment the effectiveness and add extra value to the feedback process:

a. In an authoritatively neutral creative writing teaching and learning environment in which the writing teacher's role is that of facilitator, student writers are more reliant on the feedback to their textual efforts from their co-participating peers;
b. Student writers understand and welcome the fact that a workshop group, which consists of a variety of diverse individuals with different backgrounds and styles of writing, ensures that their own writing would receive a thorough evaluation and a range of feedback responses;
c. There is a level of fear attached to the dual process of giving and receiving feedback and the practice of critiquing and editing the work of others is a skill that requires sensitivity and an important awareness that real damage to another writer and her writing could be done by saying nothing at all; and
d. The workshop feedback process and criteria for this study was originally derived from a group negotiated and reformulated version of the principles and guidelines espoused in Peter Elbow's Chapter on Feedback in *Writing With Power* (1958: 237-277). Towards the end of the workshop research process students called for more focused and balanced feedback parameters, which they found to be of more immediate value to the revision and editing of their texts. In providing their fellow

participants with textual feedback students were required to respond with at least one sentence to each of the following criteria:

- the storyline
- tension
- characterisation
- emotions
- ending
- enjoyment

11. Workshop Processes

Besides the processes and practices traditionally associated with the teaching and learning of creative writing in a workshop setting, namely exercises, assignments and textual feedback and assessment, the workshop research study included the implementation and the evaluation of two additional pedagogic components: the continuous writing of *Sentences with Souls Inside* and the student *Reading and Rating* of a variety of *Short Stories* supplied to the students in the form of compilation reading packs.

(a) Sentences With Souls Inside

The Sentence With Soul exercise was devised to be a daily writing activity designed to get student writers

- Into a regular, concentrated, time efficient writing routine;
- To focus on the smallest meaning-making component of any larger text;
- To create sentences that are alive and have the power to engage, capture and intrigue the reader and spark the imagination in such a way that the reader yearns for additional sentences to explain and develop the 'soul' of the first;
- To sensitise students to the contribution to textual quality emanating from the creation of quality sentences, as the primary building blocks of all texts; and
- To assist student writers in uncovering and discovering potential topics, themes and ideas, which may become the triggers, or subjects, for their future writing projects.

The routine process of workshop participants writing, submitting and reading their *Sentences with Souls Inside* during the course of the workshop programme provided specific

value and benefits to the creative writing teaching and learning experience.

Each student interpreted and based her written responses to the *Sentence With Soul* exercise in accordance with her own writing style and preferences. While very few students managed to write and submit a *Sentence With Soul* every day, most did provide sentences regularly albeit in a batched form.

As an open ended, time efficient and unpressurised writing process, the exercise underlines the creative significance of the elements of playfulness and experimentation, which was released by the students' enthusiastic and creative approaches to their sentence writing activities. The combination of freedom, diversity and playfulness and a reader-orientated focus can result in the creation of highly imaginative, original, thought provoking and entertaining writing, which can become the basis for a regular, artistically focused student writing practice.

Writing *Sentences With Souls Inside* provides student writers with valuable 'building block' size examples of their own, inherent, untapped creative abilities and potential. Students become more observant and their awareness of the value of observation to the creative writing process becomes more heightened. They begin to recognise that the creative attributes of individual sentences can add to the overall quality of a writer's textual products.

For some student writers the *Sentences With Soul* writing routine provided a rewarding writing outlet during periods when they were not able to devote themselves to larger writing efforts or projects.

(b) Short Story Reading and Rating Exercises

As the primary apprentice text in the teaching and learning of creative writing, particularly, at undergraduate level, it is vital that creative writing teachers become experienced and knowledgeable in the short story genre and domain so that the creative writing programme exposes the student writers to a broad range of short story examples representative of the short story domain in terms of period, author and location. This expands the student's

horizons and experiences, both as readers and writers of the short story genre, in terms of textual quality and aids the location of their own texts within the short story domain.

The process of exposing student writers to a cross section of fictional texts within the domain of the short story also proved to be valuable in establishing a more realistic and achievable writing standard for the students. Prior to their exposure to the short fiction texts, most student writers were comparing their own textual creations to the standards set by the 'literature standard' novels they were reading at the time, setting impossibly high standards for their writing practices with resulting negative repercussions. Students also became more positive and hopeful of their own promise and potential when discovering that the story they rated 2 out of 10 was written by a successful, award winning author.

The reading and rating by the workshop participants of a range of 58 short stories during the two year workshop programme gives them the opportunity, as student writers, to evaluate and determine their own perceptions of short story quality and, instead of writing in a creative writing vacuum, they become aware of a short story 'space' within, and a line on which they can locate their own texts and identify the writing, which most closely resembles where they would ideally want their own texts to be situated.

The compilation, printing and distribution of booklets containing the short stories to be read and rated optimised the chances of the students undertaking and completing the exercise. The short stories selected for the booklets consisted of a broad spectrum of texts from a range of periods, locations and authors with all the short stories being provided in a 'naked' form stripped of their authors' names in an effort to avoid the influence of awards, prizes, fame and celebrity in the evaluations and judgement of the texts.

Because individuals will naturally and automatically compare and rate only those stories that are contained in the booklet that they are reading at a specific point in time, an accurate rating comparison between the texts of various booklets will never be possible. It is necessary therefore to include a diversity of texts in each and every compilation given to student writers to read, compare and rate.

The reading and rating of short fiction texts also led to the discovery of content and form within the genre, such as the existence of the *long* short story, which at a length of 10000

words is 4 to 5 times longer than a 'standard' length short story. Student writers felt that, as a possible sub-genre of the short story, the *long* short story offers them significant opportunities to explore and extend their own writing in terms of storyline complexities, detail and characters and characterisation without having to make the difficult stretch into 'novella' territory.

From a purely creative perspective, the student writers' exposure to a broad range of texts represents the vital first phase of their experience of creative writing as a domain, because a person cannot be creative in a domain to which she is not exposed and she cannot transform a domain, unless she first thoroughly understands how it works. Creative individuals must have a thorough knowledge of the rules and expectations of the domain, but should also to a certain extent remain aloof from it.

12. Workshop Characteristics

The examination and analysis of the workshop programme research results highlighted some key characteristics, which should underly all creative writing workshop platforms:

- A simple, brief analysis of the profiles of the students and their desires and obstacles provides a wealth of information for the fine tuning of the workshop programme content.
- Many student writers are dwellers on the margin of their environments, are more introverted than extroverted and they all have differing levels of self-doubt, as to the quality and relevancy of their writing.
- In describing their own writing processes student writers identify the inherent difficulties they have with the process of writing, how complex, irrational and serious the practice of writing is for them. These writer vulnerabilities and frailties should serve as an ongoing reminder that the workshop should always be sensitive, supportive and encouraging.
- Student responses to the range of workshop objectives and activities suggested strongly that it is more beneficial for the students to focus on their writing processes and experiences as writers in order to encourage and develop their writing practices, than to prematurely concentrate on the aspects of the craft of writing.

13. Workshop Content

The examination and analysis of the workshop programme research results also identified effective, ineffective and experientially important workshop activities, exercises and assignments.

The traditionally emphasised and sometimes compulsorily required practice of keeping a **Writer's Journal** is accepted by those students, who have a history of diary-keeping and memoir writing, but an insistence on the practice amongst those students, who are more private and diary averse, does have a detrimental and adverse effect on their workshop attitude and writing processes. The pressure to keep a writer's journal negates the realisation of an environment of writing freedom.

The **'Untruths' Poem** exercise provides a further example of the inherent sensitivity students have in respect of their personal privacy. The psychological change from negative to positive, from dread to anticipation shows the universal fascination with fiction and making up stories compared to the mundanity of the 'real' and the 'now.' The exercise, which is aimed at being a light hearted workshop participant introductory game, is of more value as an example of the power of the human urge to imagine, to play and to create. The exercise also serves as a reminder of the reluctance of many individuals to disclose information about themselves and their lives, which raises questions as to the potential harm that may have been and continues to be caused by those writing modules and programmes, which include compulsory autobiographical and, in some instances, trauma-based writing assignments, as the basis of student portfolios for assessment and grading.

Despite providing extensive support material explaining the theory behind **Showing and Not Telling**, as well as providing a range of examples, students' responses to the concept, both dialogically and in the form of their own writing examples, were unenthusiastic, disinterested and generally un-participative.

In contrast, writing process orientated exercises such as **Freewriting**, which have as their object the development of the students' writing processes, as opposed to the objectives of writing craft, are more enthusiastically and creatively received and practised by student

writers. Freewriting found broad favour, as a valuable technique for students to use to trigger their writing content and processes, and for some student writers it provided the welcome means with which to change from their academic writing mindset into their creative writing world.

Focusing on the concept of perspective that is so vital to creativity and quality texts, the **Participant and Spectator** exercise served as an introduction to Peter Elbow's **Loop Writing** concept and exercises. The **Loop Writing** exercises and the students' enthusiastic responses to them represented one of the most impactful and valuable writing process instruments used during the workshop programme.

The Loop Writing process enabled students to experiment with dimensions and perspectives in their writing, which added credibility and authenticity to their texts and resulted in textual products of a maturity level seemingly beyond the students' years and personal experiences. Students realised and embraced the fact that they were capable of imagining and creating a myriad of stories, characters and situations. Providing imaginative and creative verbal triggers Loop Writing processes allowed the students to discover that they are capable of writing in innumerable writers' voices and are capable of taking creative risks. The Loop Writing process can assist in alleviating the universal student concerns and dilemmas relating to the discovery of their writers' voices.

The Loop Writing process was embraced by most student writers, who believed that that process had made their writing more substantive and multi-dimensional, that their characterisations processes had been extended to include the creation of a multiplicity of voices and that, as an overall result, the Loop Writing process enabled them to write in varying styles.

The design and development of the ***Sins, Virtues and Graces*** assignment was aimed at achieving more positive student writing outcomes from a characterisation and storyline perspective, as the traditional handbook teaching processes and methods consist of impersonal and emotionless responses to a scientific, checklist-based process of character development.

Student writers exhibited enthusiastic and imaginative responses to the assignment producing character profiles, insights and texts beyond their experiences, as both individuals and writers. In their textual responses to the assignment, students did not reveal and describe their characters from a mechanically distant perspective, but 'showed' the reader the characters and the situation from the 'close-up' and complex view of the narrator, as an additional character.

It was not just the apparent simplicity of the good versus evil paradigm, which awakened the students' imaginations. Some student writers also grasped and explored the complex notion that an excess of any of the Virtues or Graces can be as disabling, negative and evil as any of the Sins.

Students also described the *Sins, Virtues and Graces* assignment as

- a dynamic and imagination-sparking starting point, an inspirational trigger, which led to a flow of character, conflict and story evolutions in a seemingly free and unforced manner;
- a topic that creates its own characters, which just jump out at you;
- a much-needed breakthrough, a 'revelationary' experience, an inspiring method of writing and a most valuable method of developing story; and
- an exercise that provides the tools to create a variety of characters with multiple layers and depths of personality, showing how they react to the events around them thereby allowing the characters to shape the story and to take charge of the writing.

The student participation in and their completion of the **Collaborative *Seinfeld* Teleplay Assignment** provided two important pedagogic results and indicators. Firstly, The assignment emphasised the importance of experiential learning in the teaching of creative writing. While their textual responses to the exercise reflected their understanding of characterisation and storyline, the greater benefits came from the experience gained from actively participating in the collaborative writing process, as if they were a team of writers called in to complete an actual television series script for production and flighting due to a general writers' strike. Secondly, the predominantly negative reactions displayed by the students to their participating in a collaborative, group writing assignment appear to substantiate Teresa Amabile's research findings that collaborative group creative activities

generally have a detrimental effect on the creative performance of participating individuals.

The mechanical and uninspiring techniques expounded by many of the traditional creative writing handbooks in the teaching of the elements of the craft of writing, such as the development of conflict in the story, did little to motivate or inspire the students. So much in the same way that the ***Sins, Virtues and Graces*** assignment was developed to provide an alternative to the standard ways of teaching characterisation and storyline, the development and implementation of the simple **'tension'** exercise was designed to circumvent the inherent complexity of the teaching of the craft based component of conflict. Instead of being asked to create conflict situations, students were simply asked to imagine and develop situations, which contain high levels of tension with which to captivate and keep the attention of the reader.

Although it was only introduced and explored as a writing component and workshop exercise toward the end of the workshop research process, **textual lyricism** and the sounds of words have an important role to play in overall textual quality, because lyricism in fiction that plays with sound and rhythm buries the story deeper inside the subconscious of the reader.

While only the 'Fantastic Bombastic' writing exercise was developed for students to experiment with the sounds of words and euphony, the theory of the effects of the sounds of words and the appropriate writing exercises to activate that theory, require further experimentation, development and refinement.

As significant and fundamental components and tools of creative writing pedagogy, **workshop exercises and assignments** must exhibit certain properties, if they are to be effective in successfully eliciting the required responses from student writers. Exercises should

- be specific and concrete, but also sometimes cosmic;
- make use of surprise;
- utilise mood variations such as seriousness, playfulness or outrageousness;
- should always be offered as an invitation, not a command;
- sometimes should be risky, humorous or taboo; and

- should always be creatively and originally developed to emotionally ignite and optimise the inherent creativity of the student writers.

The **creative writing effectiveness** of exercises and assignments can be determined by analysing and interpreting students' responses to in-workshop feedback questionnaires, but also, and perhaps more accurately, by evaluating the students' personal and textual responses to the workshop activities.

- The inherent freedom embedded in the workshop structure can be gauged by measuring the extent of student deviations from written instructions whenever a task or exercise has elicited alternative or diverse interests or passions.
- Student enthusiasm in response to exercises and assignments can be gauged by the length of texts students have generated.
- The quality of the texts can be measured against what it is expected that readers would enjoy.
- The quality of the texts could also be assessed on the basis of the difference of the text when compared to the type and quality of text that could be expected of a writer of the age and in the situation of the student. For example, is the student's writing highly imaginative and original, as opposed to auto-biographic, diaristic, domestic, and stereo typical or clichéd?
- Effective exercises and assignments always seek to extract extraordinary and refreshingly new perspectives from student writers thereby surprising and motivating them by exposing them to their own inherent creative capabilities.

14. Student Workshop Feedback

The extracurricular creative writing programmes, which formed the basis of the workshop research, were relatively special and unique in that the courses were offered free of charge and student participation was completely voluntary with their attendance, participation and writing responses based purely on their own intrinsic motivation to attend and take part. The responses of the students to requests for workshop feedback can therefore be considered to be relatively accurate and unbiased.

The students' comments on the workshop processes, objectives and outcomes contained in their reflexive essays focused on four broad components of the workshop programme and indirectly on the teaching and learning of creative writing, namely creative discipline,

creative freedom, high expectations and the importance of perspective in writing originality:

- Students were looking for an environment, which would give them a disciplined foundation for their writing. Their own lack of writing discipline negatively affected their own workshop experience and they learned to recognise the significance of the discipline of their writing practices, as a counterpoint to their writing freedom, creativity, experimentation and playfulness. They admitted that the discipline aspects of writing are as important as creativity and the quality of their work.
- The workshop environment allowed the existence and development of creative writing freedom and allowed the students to experiment and play.
- Students enjoyed the writing expectations placed on them by the writing exercises and assignments in terms of their imaginations, creativity and writing and welcomed being stretched and challenged by the expectations of the creation of quality texts.
- The most valuable workshop exercises were considered to be those, which forced the students to identify and adopt alternate writing perspectives and showed the students their inherent capabilities to find and explore different viewpoints, which would allow them to produce multi-faceted and multi-dimensional texts in a range of writing voices.

XIV. THE HONOURS AND MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAMMES

A. Introduction – The Broad Structures, Principles and Processes

The previous chapter, *The Study's Conclusions*, represents the detailed, theoretical and methodological philosophies, principles and processes of the teaching and learning of creative writing, which will form the basis of the two creative writing programmes, which are the ultimate objective of this study.

It is not the intention to provide a detailed curricular outline, content, process description and explanation of the two writing programmes here. These elements will be designed and completed prior to both courses being finalised and offered to students. The intention is to concentrate on the broader framework, structure and principles, which have emerged as a result of the alternative pedagogic theories and methodologies established by this study. Any innovations or radical alternatives to the current manner in which creative writing is taught will obviously need to be carefully evaluated and practically tested prior to final implementation.

B. Location

The development, administration and teaching of the creative writing modules and the two degree programmes should take the form of an independent field of study, with students treated as student writers studying writing as a literary art form in a writing school type environment situated ideally in the field of The Arts in an Arts Faculty alongside the Fine Arts, Music, Drama and Film Making.

C. The BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing

What was originally envisaged in the Thesis Objective as a BA Degree with creative writing as a major subject has, as result of the research findings, become a four year Honours programme. The first year consists of a standard BA programme with the creative writing components commencing in year 2 and students being selected for progression to years 3 and 4. Based on the detailed principles and processes contained in *The Study's Conclusions*,

the BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing may take the following shape and include the following features:

The second year module would be the introductory entrance to the creative writing discipline with students selected based on an evaluation of examples of their previous written work. Students complete a portfolio of 3 short stories for assessment and grading and those results determine, which students proceed to the third year of study. The assessment and marking process and parameters will be described separately. At this stage students have an opportunity to experience the practice of writing creatively and to decide whether they want to proceed into their third year with its study as a major subject. It is envisaged that the module will consist of 14, two hour workshop sessions, 7 per quarter over a six month period. It may be considered whether students should complete English Literature 1 or 2, as a prerequisite to proceeding to the full year course in the students' third year of study.

The third year module is a full year course consisting of 28 two hour creative writing workshops. Student numbers would be restricted relative to the qualified teaching staff available with no more than 12 students per class and no less than 8 attending the workshops. The students' portfolios will contain 8 short stories, 2 of which will be *long* short stories, between 8000 and 12000 words in length. Based on the assessment and grading of their portfolios students will be selected for the Honours year programme should they wish to continue with the course to its completion.

Based on one of the core principles of *The Study's Conclusions*, namely that the teaching of creative writing should be an experiential process, which gives student writers the opportunity to experience what it is like to be a writer and at the same time to test the student writer's resolve and gauge her 'talent,' in their Honours year the students write and complete a novella, which will be assessed and graded. The requirement for the writing of two *long* short stories in their third year of study provides an indication of the students' readiness for and provides a form of preparation in making the leap to the longer, more complex form of the novella. The students will attend workshops while they create their novellas giving and receiving feedback from their fellow writers and the workshop facilitator.

There are many opinions on the issue of the length of a novella, but for the purposes of the proposed BA Honours Degree in Creative Writing, the experienced opinion of John Gardner will suffice. He suggests that a novella's length should fall between 30000 and 50000 words. The novella's length provides specific advantages in terms of student writing experiences. In his introduction to a novella anthology, *Sailing to Byzantium*, Robert Silverberg explains the value of the novella:

> [The novella] is one of the richest and most rewarding of literary forms ... it allows for more extended development of theme and character than does the short story, without making the elaborate structural demands of the full-length book. Thus it provides an intense, detailed exploration of its subject, providing to some degree both the concentrated focus of the short story and the broad scope of the novel (2000).

In experiential terms this provides the student writer with a true writing experience and lays a valuable foundation from which student writers can proceed to novel length projects.

As a result of the novella based final form of the Honours year of the programme, a separate reading and evaluation process was undertaken of the novella and its history and the following list of 25 novella was compiled as a representative reflection of a spread of examples of the genre in terms of period, author, location and subject matter. Honours year students will be required to read some examples of the novella genre from this list in preparation for their own novella writing efforts and experiences:

> *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll, London: CRW Publishing Limited, 2004.
> *Daisy Miller and Other Stories*, Henry James, Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1994.
> *Pafko at the Wall*, Don DeLillo, New York: Scribner, 1997.
> *Anthem*, Ayn Rand, New York: Signet, 1946.
> *The Loved One*, Evelyn Waugh, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977.
> *Notes From Underground*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, London: Penguin Books, 2006
> *Tumble Home: A Novella and Short Stories*, Amy Hempel, New York: Scribner, 1998.
> *A Lesson of the Master*, Henry James, Sioux Falls SD: Nuvision Publications,

2008.
Welcome to Our Hillbrow, Phaswane Mpe, Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001.
Rape: A Love Story, Joyce Carol Oates, New York: Carroll and Graf, 2003.
Brokeback Mountain, New York: Scribner, 2005.
The Comfort of Strangers, Ian McEwan, London: Vintage Books, 2006.
Heart of Darkness, Joseph Conrad, London: Penguin Books, 1973.
Animal Farm, George Orwell, London: Penguin, 1989.
The Metamorphosis and Other Stories, Franz Kafka, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1996.
The Final Solution: Story of Detection, New York: HarperCollins, 1999.
Breakfast at Tiffany's, Truman Capote, New York: Signet, 1958.
The Lifted Veil, George Eliot, New York: Penguin Books, 1995.
The Fox, The Captain's Doll, The Ladybird, London: Penguin Books, 2006.
Ward Number Six and Other Stories, Anton Chekhov, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Chronicle of a Death Foretold, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.
Where Three Roads Meet: Novellas, John Barth, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.
When William Came, Saki, La Vergne, TN: Tutis Digital Publishing, 2009.
Dusklands, J.M. Coetzee, London: Vintage Books, 2004.
Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck, London: Penguin Books, 1978.

D. The MA Degree in the Teaching of Creative Writing

This Masters degree programme will be 2 years in length and will consist of modular, course work components in the first year and require the creation and production of a fictional text and exploratory essay in the second year. The first year will consist of a concentration on the theory of the teaching of creative writing, as captured in this study, together with the practical experience of participating, in a 'learner/facilitator' type role, in the various teaching and learning processes taking place in the undergraduate and Honours year workshops. This Creative Writing Teaching Programme will have as its foundation and will focus its teaching methods, processes and content on the fulfilment of the following primary criteria for creative writing teachers:

- They should have creative writing experience;
- They should be extensive readers and be acquainted and familiar with a broad range of books about writing and the teaching of writing;
- They should be experienced with and knowledgeable in a significant breadth of fictional texts on which to base the examples given to students in the workshop reading process;
- They should adopt flexible and experimental methods and processes in the teaching of writing;
- Creative writing teachers should display diminished authority and adopt a more nurturing and developmental teaching style; and
- They should always be aware of the possible nonconformist and unpredictable nature of creative individuals and should recognise and adapt to their behaviour and not ignore or reject students displaying those sorts of behaviour.

In more specific terms the content of the syllabus for the first year of the course will consist of modules developed using the research undertaken in the examination and analysis for this thesis. For example, these modules could include:

- Can Creative Writing be Taught?
- Workshop Group Dynamics
- Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation
- The Creativity in Creative Writing
- The Creative Paradox
- The Reader and Audience
- Effective Workshop Exercises and Assignments
- Effective Feedback and Evaluation
- What is Quality Writing?
- The Short Story

During the second year of the course the Masters students also write a novella developing their work in their own workshop groups, but as an adjunct to their novellas, the Masters students will compile and submit an exploratory and explanatory essay documenting their own writing experiences and addressing those experiences from a teaching perspective by examining how these experiences benefit and add to the effective teaching and learning of creative writing.

Students selected to study the MA Degree in the Teaching of Creative Writing may be students, who have completed the Honours degree programme, or they could be students with postgraduate degrees from other fields of study, but they should have some previous writing experience to be considered for entrance to the course.

E. Student Assessment and Grading

This study revealed that the traditional overriding influence on the workshop environment and its dynamics has been the authority of the creative writing teacher, as judge and grader. The students' writing focus and conformance has been to the teacher's standards and requirements at the cost of neglecting the student writer's awareness of the needs and criteria of a more general reading audience. The establishment of an authoritatively neutral, or at least less dominant, creative writing teaching environment would remove these traditional obstacles allowing for a freer, creatively more positive teaching and learning environment.

In both creative writing programmes the creative writing teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator and manager of a creativity conducive and nurturing environment with the creative writing facilitator not being responsible for the grading of student portfolios or novellas.

The creative writing facilitator will, however, be responsible for allocating a mark, representing a small percentage of the student's overall grade, for each student's performance as a workshop participant in terms of criteria, such as providing feedback to fellow students.

All of the students' final portfolio texts and the Honours' and Masters novellas will be read and graded by independent, individual (not as a panel) and anonymous readers specifically selected against a carefully developed list of criteria and paid as professional readers and graders of the students work. This process adds a real world dimension to the students' writing experience and will be a far more accurate measure of the students' writing quality, skill and potential than being graded by the writing teacher.

It is envisaged that in the second year module, only 3 readers will be required with 5 perhaps being sufficient for the third module, but a broader spread of 10 readers being required in the assessment and grading of all the novellas.

The only ‘glimpse’ the student writers will have of their readers will be when the students are shown how the readers rated the short stories, which they themselves have read and rated during the programme.

Such an innovative change to the traditional academic institutional assessment and grading methods obviously requires more detail and practical evaluation and testing, but a concept and a system of independent readers grading the work of student writers, which brings the writing teaching process and the student writers’ writing practices closer to the way real writing is received, judged and valued outside the academic enclave, will most certainly add significant value to the students’ writing learning experience as well as provide a more accurate reflection of the actual, reader based quality of the students’ fictional texts.

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