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**DISCIPLINING THE MUSE:
EVALUATING CREATIVE WRITING STUDIES' EFFORT TO
ESTABLISH ITSELF AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE**

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by

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Dedication

To the writers, every one.

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Disciplining the Muse: Evaluating Creative Writing Studies' Effort to Establish an Academic Discipline

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Disciplinarity in the humanities has long been neglected by writing-in-the-disciplines (WID) scholars in favor of science and business writing. *Disciplining the Muse* argues that there is much for WID scholars to learn by investigating non-traditional fields that make claims for disciplinarity; additionally, emerging and contested disciplines offer insight into the nature of disciplinarity itself. My work bridges WID issues of disciplinary definition and development by looking at one extreme case within English Studies: creative writing studies (CWS). CWS rhetorically disidentifies with literature, composition and traditional creative writing while inspiring cohesion within their own field. Complicating this project, long-held ambivalence towards disciplinarity within creative writing creates a riff between the vanguard and many practitioners. The CWS vanguard declares disciplinary criteria of research, pedagogy and institutional sanction in order to bolster their claims. Instead of using outsider definitions of disciplinarity, in this dissertation I employ qualitative and quantitative research methods to evaluate the gap between the vanguard's disciplinary claims and practices. The material and cultural implications of being a discipline can be high, and WID scholars should seek for the insider view for new disciplines—how well developing disciplines live up to their own stated standards and aspirations.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: The Golden World in the Age of Disciplinarity	1
Origins of Disciplines	11
Disciplinarity in the Humanities	15
Creative Writing Makes a Case for Disciplinarity	19
Describing Disciplinarity	23
Research	24
Pedagogy	29
Institutional Acknowledgement	31
Investigating Creative Writing Studies	34
Chapter Two: Manifestos of Creative Writing Studies	38
Origins of Resistance	40
The Vanguard	43
A Selection of Manifestos	48
Defining a Discipline Part 1: What CWS Isn't	50
Definition against Literary Studies	52
Definition against Composition	56
Self-marginalization in Creative Writing	59
Research	63
Pedagogy	65
Institutional Structures	67
Defining a Discipline Part 2: What CWS Would Be	69
Research	72
Teaching	78
The Workshop and Other Options	81
Composition Pedagogy	85
Institutional support	86
Hiring	90
Journals and Conferences	92

Conclusions.....	94
Chapter Three: Research and the Promise of a Manifesto Journal.....	96
Journals as Litmus of Knowledge Production	98
Creative Writing Studies and the Case for Creative Writing Knowledge ..	101
Form and Characteristics of <i>New Writing</i>	102
Methods.....	106
Results.....	108
They Say: Quantity of Publication.....	109
What They Say: Publishing Focus	112
Who They Say It With: Citation	118
What They Say It About: Sentence Subjects	121
Conclusions.....	134
Chapter Four: Teaching the Unteachable in Creative Writing	138
Neoromantic Charges Against Pedagogy	140
The Living Spirit: Neoromantic Pedagogy in Creative Writing	144
Neoromanticism in Action: Method, Purpose, Student and Teacher.....	148
Teaching Method	149
The Student	158
The Teacher	161
CWS Responses to Neoromanticism	165
A Survey of Creative Writing Instructors' Pedagogy	168
Methods.....	169
Results.....	174
Teaching Method	174
Purpose of Teaching	178
The Student	180
The Teacher	181
Discussion and Conclusion	185

Chapter Five: Castles in the Sky with Foundations of Tenure Review	187
Creative Writing’s Ascension Amid the English Crisis	189
Methods (Reprise).....	194
Perceptions of the Creative Writing PhD.....	195
Departmental Relationships	201
Publishing Scholarly and Creative Work.....	208
Hiring	216
Discussion	219
Chapter Six: What Win CWS If They Gain the Thing They Seek?	222
Include and Ignore/ Exclude and Engage	228
The Golden World and Filthy Lucre.....	231
Work Cited.....	235

Chapter One: The Golden World in the Age of Disciplinarity

We are living in an age of disciplines. Disciplinary status is the teleological aspiration of academic divisions, even for those fields that have resisted traditional forms of institutional approbation. It is appealing to be a discipline. Disciplines lay claim on the institutional resources, intellectual cachet, and public recognition that fringe interests and sub-disciplines and proto-professions lack. The battle for disciplinarity is familiar to the many fields, from chaos theory to biochemistry, that have arisen in recent decades. Tony Becher and Paul R. Trowler have noted an increase in disciplinary bids across the spectrum, from “fast-moving fields” in the sciences to “more reflective and conservative” humanities (43). Manfred Max-Neef suggests that we are now experiencing a “disciplinary big bang” across and within disciplines (10), and in the years since his article, claims for disciplinarity seem to have only increased across the university and within professional organizations. But wishing doesn’t make it so, and bids for disciplinarity are often contested or—worse—ignored. While this study will focus primarily on the seemingly undisciplinizable field of creative writing, the implications of disciplinarity struggles apply more broadly. Examining moments of disciplinary contention yields fruitful discussions about why disciplinarity matters so much to so many and why such fervent bids are made to achieve it, even within the arts.

The first step in such a discussion must be to define what makes a field a discipline. Spatial metaphors dominate definitions of disciplinarity, and they have a long history of doing so. As early as the 1640s, Robert Boyle used the phrase “invisible colleges” to describe the loose confederacy of chemists and alchemists, though possible interpretations of the “invisible college” have run the gamut from a proto-Royal

Academy to a secret society on par with the Illuminati— with only perhaps a nominal difference (Wagner 18). The metaphor, though, points out some crucial characteristics of disciplinarity: like a college, disciplines have a common focus and aim, but because the association focuses on accepted principles rather than personal association, the connection is “invisible.” In the early seventies, Diane Crane built on the scope of the invisible college; instead of just a small circle of very similar aristocrats who research (and live) in much the same way, disciplinary invisible colleges now unite across national boundaries, from esteemed senior researchers to undergraduates, throughout and beyond the university system. These invisible colleges constantly bear upon the work, research, and teaching of their members. Gary Pool has described them, again spatially, as “homes” and has argued that “disciplinary affiliations trump institutional affiliations, sometimes to the chagrin of university administrators” (51); these invisible colleges may be more foundational to individuals’ identities than the actual physical college in which they work. The way that an invisible college unites even beyond physical proximity was illustrated in John Swales’ *Other Floors, Other Voices*, where Swales describes a single university building that houses three abstract disciplines in constant material negotiation.

The spatial metaphor is not always so cozy as colleges and homes. Becher and Trowler use the metaphor of “academic tribes and territories” (the title of their thrice reprinted book) to describe the disciplines. This metaphor serves to emphasize a distinction in a discipline between the people involved (the tribe) and the epistemic focus (the territory). By separating the social from the epistemic, Becher and Trowler hope to demonstrate how the community can choose to occupy different territories although they are “in practice [...] inseparably intertwined” (23). The metaphor of tribes and territories also emphasizes that “Boundaries [between disciplines] do not exist merely as lines on a

map: they denote *territorial possessions* that can be *encroached* on, *colonized* and *reallocated*” and “when *patriotic feelings* within a discipline run high, deviations from the common cultural norms will be penalized” (59, emphasis mine). The metaphor of territory that can be contested in bitter and raging wars highlights the real stakes, both material and philosophical, at risk with the advent or growth of a new discipline.

But even though spatial metaphors predominate in discussion of disciplines, other, more abstract, definitions exist. Thomas Kuhn, focusing primarily the sciences, defined a discipline in terms of the sociality only, as “global, embracing all the shared commitments of a scientific group” (459). Clifford Geertz goes even further into abstractions to suggest that “the terms through which the devotees of a scholarly pursuit represent their aims, judgments, justifications and so on, seem to me to take one a long way [...] toward grasping what that pursuit is all about” (qtd. in Becher and Trowler 46).

Subcategorization of disciplines is similarly important: Becher and Trowler make three important distinctions. First, disciplines can be either “pure” or “applied,” and either “soft” or “hard” (see Table 1.1). For instance, this categorization could offer insight into the current question of disciplinarity within English studies: is the field of composition an applied soft discipline focused on achieving better practices of teaching and composition? Is literature a soft pure field? Is creative writing applied because it focuses on creating a product, or pure because it concerns reiterative holistic practice? Becher and Trowler’s vocabulary gives a framework to begin talking about disciplinarily sub-sets in English studies.

	Pure	Applied
Soft	Reiterative, holistic, question-searching, interpretation (Humanities, and “pure social sciences” e.g. anthropology)	Functional, concerns include protocol and procedure, improving practice (Applied social science, e.g. education, economics)
Hard	Concerned with universals, discovery, explanations, impersonal (Pure sciences, e.g. chemistry, physics)	Practical, focus on outcomes, develops products/ techniques (e.g. engineering and clinical medicine)

Table 1.1: Classification of Disciplines, After Becher and Trowler (6).

Also useful are Becher and Trowler’s discussion of rural and urban disciplines, which are reiterated in Susan Peck MacDonald’s *Professional Academic Writing*. “Rural” disciplines are those disciplines where research is dispersed, competition on one area of research is low and the amount of time between research and publication is quite long, while so-called urban disciplines focus many researchers in a relatively small area of study. Gerald Graff’s complaints against what he calls “field coverage” imply that English is not just rural, but downright frontier. You can almost hear the English studies scholars cry, “Don’t fence me in,” as areas of study from sentence combining to ecological criticism become popular and then, almost as quickly, depopulated. But English studies is, nevertheless, a discipline.

As Ken Hyland has said, “while members may *aggregate* around certain practices and ways of thinking, they do not necessarily *integrate* [...] Differences of opinion are normal and natural, but often hidden by a veneer of agreement and a common symbolic discourse which constructs a boundary to outsiders” (*Disciplinary Identities* 12, emphasis

in original). And in Hyland's estimation, "Research in the humanities [...] recasts knowledge as sympathetic understanding in readers rather than cognitive progression" and are "reiterative [...] in that they are obliged to revisit and reinterpret material already studied" (*Disciplinary Identities* 31). English, in other words, is about the process you go through, rather than the progress you make. In this sense, the type of discipline that English studies is, rural and soft, yet may include disciplines like composition or literary studies that may value process or progress at varying levels.

But overall, English departments, unlike those in the sciences, seldom build a consensus. While an electrical engineering department may position itself through faculty hires to focus itself on batteries or alternative energy, even large English departments seldom have more than one faculty member representing a sub-field: each large English department needs a Miltonist, a creative non-fiction writer, an early Americanist, a contemporary literary theorist, a rhetorician, etc. in order to assure that the broad range of sub-fields are all represented. Beyond the university, other scholarly institutions, like conferences and professional organizations support an eclectic English. These institutions are full of deeply specialized sub-fields and areas of inquiry. Within a conference like the MLA, there may be sections on Jewish folklore, lexicography, digital queer studies and pre-modern German poetry—and that's all at the same time block¹-- while journals listed on the popular database Literature Online include journals as diverse as *American Indian Quarterly*, *Poetry*, the *George Herbert Journal*, and *Digital Philology* ("Browse Full Text Journals"). These sub-fields illustrate how broad the discipline is, and even within each of these sessions or journals, you will find few scholars working on similar projects.

¹ 2014 MLA Conference: 8:30 am Friday Jan 10.

These definitions of disciplinarity often underscore the changeable nature of these disciplines, as they respond to forces both within and without the college, home, or territory. These changes often depend on the type of discipline in flux. With Kuhn leading the way, many early studies of the connection between epistemological and social elements of disciplines have focused on the sciences (Ravetz, 1971; Latour and Woolgar 1979; Myers 1990), and accordingly these studies have focused on the intellectually violent revolutions of thought within the progress-based disciplines. Yet Becher and Trowler have pointed out that changes in disciplines, such as a threat to orthodox status quo, are not weighted the same in more rural disciplines:

In closely articulated, hard pure, knowledge areas, revolutionary theories may have the effect of overthrowing and replacing the current orthodoxy (Kuhn 1962); in other domains (because, one might say, there is no clear orthodoxy to replace), they tend rather to be absorbed into the more organic, amorphous conceptual structures, which are in their very nature not readily amenable to being superseded. (71)

In a particularly rural discipline, there is plenty of space for new homesteaders to keep moving on west instead of battling for control with their neighbors. Those disciplines which are, as Hyland puts it, “more divergent and loose, where members lack a clear sense of group cohesion, where disciplinary borders are ill-defined, and where ideas cross boundaries more readily” (*Disciplinary Identities* 24) may be more flexible in including heterodox methods and objects of study. There will be resistance, of course, but ultimately new fields develop and gain legitimacy.

To illustrate the changing bids for disciplinarity within English studies and how those bids always read in terms of disciplinary territory, imagine three scenes, each hypothetical, but based in the experience of actual practitioners:

In 4th century BCE Athens, a rhetoric instructor is confronted by a philosopher, who asks how rhetoric could be taught when some people seem born with the natural ability to persuade. Since everyone makes use of language and persuasion, the philosopher argues that such skills are, at best, a “knack.” Besides, there are far too many charlatans promising the rhetorical equivalent of “thinner thighs in thirty days”—quick and dirty tricks that will make the student instantly rhetorically savvy. If rhetoric is either a natural-born inclination or else something that can be taught in a few formulas, what’s the point, the philosopher accuses, of engaging students long term? Can rhetoric be, in fact, an academic pursuit like philosophy? The rhetoric instructor, incensed by the conflict, sits down to write a defense of rhetoric that will outline the principles and purposes of the field for thousands of years.

Thousands of years later, indeed, and at the far edge of 19th century America, a tweed-jacketed Classics professor confronts his junior colleague about whether there can be such thing as the academic study of “modern language” and literature. Studying English-language literature — even “American literature”— may be fine for literary societies in the off hours or for women’s liberal arts colleges, but what serious research can be done when the literature is so similar to the scholar’s own language and culture? The English professor admits he isn’t entirely sure *what* kind of scholarship will dominate English literary studies, although he remembers someone at the newly formed MLA insisting that American literature was valuable “precisely because it admits a complete severance of literature from philology” (cited Graff 72).

That very same English professor, now emeritus, served many years in the leadership of the MLA and witnessed the NCTE split off from the parent organization. Now a new conference on “college composition and communication” has just started. Not only is there a new conference, but there’s a new journal being published and they’ve sent him a copy *gratis*. As he thumbs through the inaugural issue of the “C’s” journal, he’s pleased that there is a way for composition teachers to connect with each other, although he sees the journal as more of a trade magazine. Each of the articles relates “what I do at my school.” It reminds him of what literary studies was like not so long before, because composition doesn’t seem to have any focus for research. He wonders why *College English* or even *English Journal* wasn’t enough to also cover issues of composition as well as literature. “Too many journals,” he concludes, tossing it on his end table.

These three scenes, although semi-fictional, illustrate real patterns in the way that disciplines emerge within English studies. The study of disciplinarity continues to be relevant for writing-in-the-disciplines scholars, as over the last twenty years, we have increased our study of disciplines outside of the sciences, including English studies and other humanities. In examining English studies and its emerging fields, we develop an increasingly nuanced view of principles of disciplinarity.

Initially, much of the early work in writing in the disciplines has focused on sciences that have been traditionally characterized as clear cases of stable, progressive disciplines, and the humanities were dismissed as too diffuse to research. Although the sciences once seemed unified and absolute, WID research has exposed their complexities; the humanities may seem haphazard and adisciplinary, but careful study exposes the way they are responding to their own disciplinary criteria. Our definition of what a discipline

looks like becomes richer and fuller. We discover the ways in which English studies are different from other disciplines and what it means that they, too, are recognizable disciplines.

Even disciplines that have coherence suffer from recurring anxieties among their members, who then may double down on their claims for disciplinarity. English studies periodically suffers re-occurring waves of anxiety in defending its branches as disciplines. The above scenes are snapshots of disciplinary anxiety, but such anxieties are likely to cycle around again. Literary studies didn't get comfortable once there were dedicated chairs and academic conferences. For example, in the late 1980s and 1990s, Gerald Graff's *Professing Literature* joined a small library of disciplinary histories from James Berlin and W. Ross Winterowd as English departments in America spasmed under traumatic changes. Subfields on the edges of literary studies were changing institutional organization: English language and linguistics were frequently jettisoned from departments and rhetoric and composition began to demand separate institutional space. Within literary studies itself, it took a colossal struggle to accommodate new theories such as New Criticism and postmodernism, or cross-disciplinary sub-fields like cultural studies. This was the time of the great "culture wars." Describing and narrating the disciplinary history of English became a way to make sense of the sub-fields struggling within and across literary studies.

Similarly, composition has seen periodic high points of disciplinary discussion. As with literary studies, these discussions have revolved around both relationships with external disciplines in English studies as well as internal disagreement over disciplinary standards and methods. During the 1980s, composition began to see an increase in the number of PhD-trained practitioners and, along with more researchers, new research

venues, both of which led to calls for more direction as a community of teachers and researchers as well as a clearer distinction from other branches of English. Maxine Hairston's 1985 CCCC address "Breaking Our Bonds and Reaffirming Our Connections" starts with a paean to composition's disciplinarity and quickly moves to suggest that literary studies are "this intimate enemy [though] a member of the family" (277) and that composition must learn to defend itself as an independent discipline. Hairston's address built on earlier manifestos such as "The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing" in 1982, where she begins by introducing Kuhn as "a professor of science history" (76) who "considered only the hard sciences" and "did not claim or even suggest that his model for revolution could or should apply [...] to the humanities" (77). Nevertheless, Kuhn's theories of paradigm become fodder for Hairston's argument that English departments are out of touch with the research and methods of composition studies. Dissatisfaction with research standards within composition blossomed after the publication of Stephen North's *Making of Knowledge in Composition Studies* in 1987, and again after Davida Charney's "Empiricism is Not a Four-letter Word" (1996) and Richard Haswell's "NCTE/CCCC's Recent War on Scholarship" (2005). Even the titles of the latter two works demonstrate the intensity of composition's internal debate about research standards, although each was written nearly a decade apart. Disciplinary anxiety can come and go like floods, when internal and external pressures build up behind the dam.

The above three historical scenes for branches of English studies also demonstrate that the desire to become an academic discipline (rather than an interest group or a practitioner's skill or practice) arises individually and unevenly. Acceptance of a new academic discipline is difficult as it is emerging, and only in hindsight may members

recognize that a movement or special interest group is, in fact, the bud of a burgeoning discipline.

Recently, Richard Ohmann reflected on how, as editor of *College English* in 1966, he found himself institutionally underestimating the role of composition in English studies – “in spite of [his] own strong identification with comp at the time” – when he “failed to imagine the campaign of rhetoric and composition teachers for a measure of independence from literature, failed to anticipate the professionalization of comp, and failed even to wonder if conceptual subordination of comp to lit was a good thing” (“What Is” 270). Ohmann didn’t appreciate composition in the 1960s, but Gerald Graff recently saw that his own understanding of the discipline of composition was stunted even into the 1990s.

Similar to Ohmann’s regrets, Graff’s introduction to the twentieth anniversary edition of *Professing English* offers a *mea culpa* for having ignored composition’s contribution to English studies. Graff admits that it wasn’t until “the focus of [his] teaching since the 1990s has shifted from literature to composition” that he could “better appreciate the role composition should have played” in his original publication (xvii). It’s impossible to pinpoint a moment when rhetoric became accepted as a legitimate counterpart to philosophy or to find the one publication that exemplifies composition research, and even today there are still skeptics in the academy who are baffled by the disciplinary rules and boundaries of rhetoric, English or composition.

ORIGINS OF DISCIPLINES

None of the disciplines described in these scenes emerged *ex nihilo*; they were always responding to other, established, disciplines. The first composition teachers were trained in literature. The first literary scholars had degrees in Classics, linguistics or even

rhetoric. The lines between established and emerging disciplines are blurry and uneven. Articulating these lines between disciplines becomes a major way of defining a group's scholarly and educational project. What is rhetoric? It is different from philosophy. What is English? It's not philology. And composition? It's not literary studies.

Conflicts *within* these emerging disciplines are similarly important for group coherence. When Isocrates denounces the sophists and Aristotle begins the *Rhetoric* by complaining about handbooks written by hacks, they define rhetoric: part of disciplinarity is keeping out the riff-raff. Creating and—more importantly—defending internal standards through debate, editorial decisions and institutional gatekeeping establish a discipline. Conflict within and against another disciplines, develops disciplinary consensus. The mix of positive and negative definition of a discipline might look familiar for rhetoric and composition scholars who recognize Kenneth Burke's work of identification and identification against; the practice of defining who you are by who you are *not* isn't just for nations or individuals, but holds also for disciplinary identities. We are, in part, the remnants of what we insist we are not.

In the study of emerging disciplines, as in disciplinary study in general, sciences have received the most attention, perhaps because outsiders may see the sciences as cohesive and their mechanisms for change as predictable. Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, first published in 1962, allowed that sciences do, in fact, change, and in revolutionary ways, as when Copernicus or Galileo tipped the scales of accepted scientific fact. Furthermore, Kuhn argues, once the revolution has taken place, histories of science are re-written to suggest that the revolution was written, so to speak, in the stars.

The mutability of science and the importance of rhetoric to construct accepted scientific fact created a space for rhetorical and composition research into the sciences. As David B. Downing would later put it, “Kuhn was one of the first historians of the sciences to recognize the tremendous importance of social and institutional factors in the establishment and perpetuation of disciplinary paradigms of normal science” (95). In other words, Kuhn challenged the immutability of established sciences, highlighting the roles of very human agents. Kuhn’s research led to the proliferation of the phrase “paradigm shift” by laypeople and specialists, in the sciences and in the humanities. The success of these ideas have also resulted in what Steve Fuller has called “the Kuhnification” of the philosophy of science: “The main symptoms are a collective sense of historical amnesia and political inertia, which together define a syndrome ‘paradigmaitis’” (*Philosophical* 318). A witty characterization, for certain, and what might be expected from a philosopher of science who also wrote an article asking “Is There Philosophical Life After Kuhn?” (2001), but even Kuhn himself admits in an interview that “Paradigm was a perfectly good word, until I messed it up” (“Second Thoughts” 298-9). Kuhn’s influence has been pervasive, but is not always accepted.

Stephen Toulmin’s *Human Understanding*, for instance, criticizes Kuhn’s “all-at-once” paradigm shifts, and posits in its place that the sciences (and disciplines in general) undergo constant small revolutions. Toulmin describes three types of disciplines: a developed, compact discipline, which boasts clear research questions and professional institutions and so enjoys wide-spread acceptance as a discipline; the “would be” discipline, where “disciplinary development has as yet scarcely begun;” and the diffuse discipline, which “conforms only loosely to those requirements” of research and institution (379). It’s illuminating that throughout *Human Understanding* Toulmin uses

the example of psychology as a field, which he describes as a “would be” discipline. In the years since Toulmin’s book was first published, psychology has perhaps accomplished some of the objectives Toulmin sets for it, emerging as a recognized discipline in the end. In Toulmin’s snapshot view, it’s hard to tease out just how psychology managed to emerge as it was doing so.²

Capturing the development of a discipline in real time is a little like standing around staring at chrysalises: much of the change appears hidden. Danette Paul and Davida Charney provide a rare example of watching a discipline emerge in their study of chaos theory’s compacting practices. Because chaos theory was a relatively small field, its development could be observed in the actual process of making rhetorical choices that build its disciplinary claim. For instance, the introduction sections in chaos theory articles made frequent, explicit connections to the literature in a wide variety of more familiar disciplines, even despite the radical changes chaos theory made in methods and philosophy. This voice merging from established disciplines built credibility for the discipline even as it underscored its unique contributions.

From Kuhn’s discussion of radical revolutions to Toulmin’s argument for frequent revolutions to Paul and Charney’s examination of article-by-article rhetorical choices, writing-in-the-disciplines scholars have developed models for how new disciplines in the sciences emerge, rhetorically situating themselves in and against other disciplines. The acknowledgment of rhetorical distinctions within scientific communities

² In the nineties, though, Susan Peck MacDonald’s investigation of infant attachment research within the field of psychological research did just that. MacDonald found that infant attachment research had distinct community expectations and a body of common knowledge from which to base its research without completely breaking away from the rest of general psychology (*Professional*). Infant attachment research remains nestled within psychology, instead of wanting to form its own discipline.

has accompanied another trend in WID studies: increased attention to disciplinarity in the humanities.

DISCIPLINARITY IN THE HUMANITIES

When a discipline shuffles through some conflict and comes to points of consensus, their disciplinary standards may look different, even radically different, from those of other disciplines, including the parent discipline. This is true also in the case of English studies. Toulmin himself, uncertain at how to categorize literature and the fine arts within his taxonomy, finally concludes, “there is something of the continuity-through-change that is characteristic of natural science” (397). This “continuity-through-change” has been described at various time by disciplinary historians like Shumway and Dionne (2002), Berlin (1988), Graff (1989) and Winterrowd (1998), who record literary studies’ changing definition, first in opposition to philology and classics and later as a foil against creative writing and composition. Literary studies today *doesn’t* resemble philology, just as the young teacher at that early meeting of the MLA exclaimed. To judge literary studies by the standards of philology, or of any other discipline, would be to miss the point. “What progress is being made in English?” a friend of mine in physics once asked. “Have you figured out what the white whale means yet?”

But lately, WID scholars investigating the humanities and English studies have found that while English doesn’t look like, say, physics, it does have its own internal characteristics of a discipline. Instead of just teaching taste or exposure to great works, literary studies uses critical theories and teachable techniques of analysis to train young scholars in both the declarative knowledge of authors’ lives and works and the procedural knowledge of how to write good literary analysis. Laura Wilder, in her 2002 article “Get Comfortable with Uncertainty,” describes the way that this procedural knowledge is

transferred in English classes— even when that transfer is implicit and not articulated by instructors. Whether or not instructors are aware of how they teach, literary studies positions itself as a teachable set of skills and knowledge; contrast this contemporary perspective to an earlier faith in amorphous, in-born taste or good breeding. English itself doesn't look like other disciplines, but that doesn't mean that English isn't a discipline or that it isn't a fully formed discipline, only that it has different disciplinary standards. This is as true in how it disseminates knowledge as it is in how it creates it.

Knowledge production in literary studies expresses a continuity of approach, certainly. Following Susan Peck MacDonald, if we were to put disciplines along a spectrum of how clearly they define their disciplinary problems, we'd place "literary interpretation near one end and scientific writing near the other" ("Problem Definition" 315). While scientific disciplines' problems are public, limited, communal and generalizable (319), the "problems" that English studies seeks to solve are less obvious, more dispersed, and specialized (320-1). In contrast, look at cancer research. It's easy for an outsider to know that cancer is a problem, and one that can, in theory, be solved. Cancer research focuses on changing minute inputs, the whole cancer research community works on the same problems and disseminates their work in a way that can apply to other settings, research and clinical.

For a literary scholar, though, work is about creating a problem in a text and then seeking an explanation, often a specialized one. Richard Ohmann describes literary studies as a discipline that values "the work itself, [...] its complexity and uniqueness" more than solving problems, or answering questions (*English* 13). Elsewhere, MacDonald classifies literary studies as "data-driven," starting with a known, concrete text and becoming "upward[ly] divergent" as scholars problematize the text through

abstract interpretations (“Data-driven” 414). She contrasts this with the sciences, which begin with a hypothesis and then seek concrete data to prove or disprove the hypothesis. Such a model means literary studies starts with the concrete and becomes particularistic in the abstract, leading to potentially infinite divergent abstract theories and interpretations. This is not to say that literary studies, or the humanities writ large, doesn’t have disciplinarity, just that the communality is “particularistic or amorphous” (*Problem 322*). James E. Warren (2006) has researched the ways that literary scholars conduct their research, using similar methods to approach literary artifacts and use theories that connect with other scholars in the field. The process of English scholarship may not look like physics scholarship, but it nonetheless presents discernable patterns. These, and other, studies suggest that there are repeatable ways of approaching a topic that become grounded in the discourse community. Literary studies may not have put down the final word on *Moby Dick*, but someone familiar with a community within literary studies, say, New Historicism, could imagine the research questions, methods, and evidence that would constitute a literary studies article on the topic. Contemporary cultural artifacts, references to Foucault, and connections to the text itself are in, while laboratory experiments and large-sample surveys are out. Literary studies is a discipline, despite its love of the individualistic, idiosyncratic and esoteric.

Composition, too, has begun to garner attention as a discipline that, while not entirely like the sciences, has its own internal continuity of research. As chronicled in Louise Wetherbee Phelps and John M. Ackerman’s 2010 report on the success of the Visibility Project, an effort targeted on raising composition’s status as a discipline, composition had to fight in order to get a seat at the table of English studies disciplines. As they say, “A disciplinary identity is necessary [...] to be taken seriously in the

meritocracies of higher education” and argue that composition has had to acknowledge “that our work has value as a science and not (merely) as an art” (181). Phelps’ earlier work, *Composition as a Human Science*, sought to describe what she calls the “ecology” of composition, where composition’s multivalence is its asset in the post-structuralist university. In 2000, Maureen Daly Goggin published both a disciplinary history of composition, *Authoring a Discipline* and her edited collection *Inventing a Discipline*, which brought together composition scholars to assess the state of the discipline.

But these scholars recognize, too, that composition’s disciplinarity has been a gradual, and sometimes long, process. Composition and rhetoric is itself officially an “emerging discipline” according to the NRC Taxonomy of Research Doctorate Programs. The story of how composition has become a discipline in less than a hundred years is important for WID scholars investigating the origins and contours of disciplinarity in the humanities. James Zebroski, in *History, Reflection and Narrative*, describes the early development of the discipline as a “proto-community”—a “long historical moment” when members of a parent discipline feel a vague discontent with the “existing social formations and identities” and begin to articulate their institutional and methodological distinctions (“Expressivist” 109-10). In this early phase, there may not be a clear sense of what the discipline *is* but there is a developing sense of what it is not. Maureen Daly Goggin describes this stage of development as an establishment, characterized by being “open to a wide range of potential practices,” with, perhaps “little evidence of common theories, methods or topics that might mark a discipline,” but nevertheless “clear evidence of a common set of problems” (“Composing” 325). Both Zebroski and Goggin characterize the early stage of disciplinarity in terms of finding problems and articulating them, describing what makes composition’s project so potentially incompatible with the

parent discipline of English. Composition, as Zebroski and Goggin each argue, is different not only from the sciences or even from other humanities, but English studies as a whole. But while there have been disciplinary histories of composition, there hasn't been research on how those bids are made in real time, how they enact the shifts that Kuhn and Toulmin have described.

It's easy to look back on the disciplinary histories of rhetoric, literary studies and composition and retroactively compose a sort of manifest destiny on the bids they made for disciplinarity, but Richard Ohmann and Gerald Graff separately admitted that they didn't sense how important composition's disciplinary bid would become. Similarly, it may be difficult to evaluate a new field's claims for disciplinarity to distinguish whether it is a "would-be" or "diffuse" field. The difficulty is more pronounced because, as MacDonald has pointed out, English studies are less compact, focusing more on new questions for research than on solutions. Evaluating such a discipline requires tolerance for the field's own definitions of disciplinarity rather than imposing disciplinary characteristics from other areas. Additionally, to evaluate a newly emerging discipline means that the researcher must be able to abide a certain degree of ambiguity to walk a thin line between becoming the field's cheerleader and condemning it to failure. Finally, bids for disciplinarity within a field as new as English studies do not come around every day; we are lucky to catch a movement as it is struggling to define itself.

CREATIVE WRITING MAKES A CASE FOR DISCIPLINARITY

A recent movement in creative writing may provide the opportunity to witness a contemporary bid for disciplinarity within the humanities. To parallel the examples in rhetoric, literary studies and composition, let me describe one more hypothetical scene. This one takes place in the 21st century, maybe in the United States or maybe in Australia

or Great Britain. A scholar who was educated in composition, but who also has published in creative writing, is just finishing her presentation at a creative writing conference. She has argued that creative writing could be considered an academic discipline because it can be teachable and has its own methods of research. She has described research into creative composing practices that borrow from composition, literary studies, and educational psychology. She has mentioned recently published books that have challenged conventional wisdom about creative writing workshops and other bastions of pedagogy. She has pointed to the increase in PhD programs in creative writing around the world and the presence of an international journal for what she calls creative writing studies. Now it is time for questions and answers. One audience member seems personally offended at her suggestion and quotes Keats, that we “murder to dissect” and any research into writing practices will surely destroy creative impulse. The presenter is not sure what the question is, so she says something politely non-committal and takes another question from the back of the room. This questioner is more sympathetic, but asks, pragmatically, whether creative writers at universities need any more responsibilities. They have to teach classes full of students and they have to publish their own creative work in an ever-more competitive market and now she’s asking them to also write scholarly articles about their and their students’ practices? How will they have time? The speaker admits that not everyone who is a creative writer at a university needs to be in creative writing studies, but concludes hopefully, “After all, maybe there’s space enough at the table for creative writing as well as creative writing *studies*.”

This scene represents an actual small, vocal group of scholars who call their project “creative writing studies” (CWS).³ CWS scholars see their project as distinct from creative writing, composition and literary studies. They claim to study the phenomena of literature, through composition’s modes of inquiry, with creative writing’s theories and history, into an evolving body of knowledge that is allegedly distinct. The emergence of the term and concept of creative writing studies is relatively recent, arguably starting in the nineties with Wendy Bishop’s work and accelerating with CWS books, articles, journals, and its own nascent publishing tradition. CWS scholars are often insistent that they are the vanguard of a new discipline; for example, Dianne Donnelly’s *Establishing Creative Writing as an Academic Discipline* (2009) sets an agenda for the future of creative writing studies. CWS scholars see themselves as part of an emerging discipline, one that may be currently only inchoate, but, CWS claims, has the potential to be a full-out discipline equal to composition or literary studies.

If English studies is, in fact, so rural and divergent that new fields can be “absorbed,” then the creative writing studies scholar should expect to have an easy time convincing her colleagues in creative writing and English studies that there is, to use her metaphor, “space at the table” for one more discipline. However, absorbing another discipline is not as easy as setting another place. Making a disciplinary bid requires definitional arguments: the petitioners must identify characteristics that define a discipline and then demonstrate how they fulfill those requirements. The humanities especially are a fruitful case for writing scholars to learn more about the origins, contours

³ The origin of the term *creative writing studies* is murky. Graeme Harper says that he vaguely thinks that he and his co-editor Jeri Kroll could have been the first ones to use it in print for the title of their 2008 collection *Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy*, but that it might have been floating around among creative writing scholars before then (personal communication July 2012).

and limits of disciplinarity by looking at the specific cases within English studies. Building on the quantitative and qualitative methods of discourse analysis and ethnography, this study looks to examine the claims and evidence for disciplinarity within one would-be discipline in English studies.

In addition to expanding WID understanding into the disciplinary claims of an emerging humanities discipline, our interest in CWS is also warranted from our perspective as part of composition studies. Like composition studies, CWS focuses on text production rather than interpretation, and perhaps because of that, often invokes anxiety about whether text production is teachable. Like composition, CWS's concerns about teachability have led to campaigns against conventional wisdom and "lore" in writing pedagogy. Also, CWS, like composition, harbors many institutional anxieties that may hinder or support a disciplinary identity. The university's first-year composition requirement may have given rise to the professionalization of composition studies, and it's possible that the increasing enrollment in creative writing classes has given CWS the institutional toehold to do likewise. In terms of research, like composition, CWS research often focuses on pedagogy, which has made it difficult to define and defend a knowledge-making agenda and determining the validity of different methods of inquiry. However, while composition and creative writing have proliferated on the university campus through the second half of the 20th century, practitioner-instructors in creative writing may not have the same institutional impetus to support a bid for disciplinarity.

For creative writing studies to make a claim for disciplinarity demonstrates the cultural cachet that being a discipline can hold for a field, but it also stretches the definitions of disciplines to their very extremes. As the two hypothetical questioners in the scene above asked, *can* creative writing be a discipline and why *should* creative

writing be a discipline? Taking CWS claims seriously means predicting the success of an inchoate discipline based on comparisons to previous disciplines, including those in English studies. We have to consider legitimate criticisms to CWS's claims: how can creative writing, an art long juxtaposed to scholarly criticism, become a discipline? And should the effort of becoming a discipline be a priority for creative writers who have long occupied a unique, but comfortable niche in the university? Certainly such a discipline, distinct in both epistemological and institutional backgrounds, could not be evaluated in exactly the same ways that other disciplines have. To begin to understand CWS's bid for disciplinarity, the whole project of disciplinary studies has to be reexamined.

In this dissertation, I will address CWS's own claims and attendant criteria for disciplinarity. I will focus on three major elements—research, teaching and institutional support—as criteria evident in CWS scholars' own disciplinary manifestos. To evaluate the current state of CWS according to these criteria, I use a variety of methods and instruments. Because knowledge production looks different from passing knowledge on through teaching and both processes are different from building institutional recognition, it is all the more important that I use “multiple sources of evidence and a combination of techniques to analyze them to increase the construct validity” of my examination of CWS (Hyland *Discourse* 138). I use interviews, surveys, and discourse analysis in evaluating CWS's criteria for disciplinarity. Through this analysis, I hope to demonstrate that WID scholars can seek for internal criteria for disciplinarity, and discover the fissures between theory and practice among members of the would-be discipline.

DESCRIBING DISCIPLINARITY

Although all of the established definitions of disciplinary are valuable to position English studies and its disciplinary strengths and weakness, any outside definition of

disciplinarity will leave out what the field itself deems important. My own tripart criteria for evaluating disciplinarity come in part from the claims being made by CWS scholars themselves, but are also based in the wealth of disciplinary studies scholarship from over the past half century. Sociologists, rhetoricians and historians have all turned their attention to the moves that academics make in becoming a discipline. Interest in the subject of creating a discipline stems from recent proliferation within disciplinary taxonomies, which betrays the very real benefits of being a discipline in a university.

To synthesize from the many different definitions of disciplinarity described above, a pattern of three characteristics emerge: a discipline creates knowledge within its field, it can transmit this knowledge to novices through pedagogical methods, and it has institutional support granting it disciplinary status. These three claims have been critical for CWS's bid for disciplinarity and provide a way to evaluate those claims within their own context, instead of imposing the characteristics of an urban, hard science on any other discipline. A definition of disciplinarity that includes description and evaluation of knowledge-making, pedagogy and institutional support could be used in exploring disciplinarity in other developing fields in the humanities.

Research

The production of replicable knowledge is one of the hallmarks of the modern discipline. The development of a discipline depends on creating the resources that can create research standards. Roger Gieger describes the necessity of gatekeepers of disciplinary knowledge through conferences and journals:

If there is a single crucial point in the process of academic professionalization, it would be the formation of a national association with its attendant central journal.

By giving form and function to an inchoate or potential scientific community, associations enhanced the knowledge-generating capacity of the disciplines. Competent and advanced figures in the field assumed positions of leadership, so that their influence became more widespread in the evaluation of scholars and scholarship. Channels of scholarly communication were also enhanced, thus bringing local networks of scholars into wider, quicker, and more regular contact.

(22)

Journals and conferences give authority to experts, people who begin to occupy editorial and reviewer positions, and these experts, in turn, become gatekeepers, giving people the publications, presentations and other bits of academic currency to become experts themselves as they advance within the discipline. The social communities of journals and conferences create a hierarchy to define disciplinary expectations.

However, knowledge production in an academic discipline is a rhetorical act, not an objective exploration according to unchanging, iron-clad methods and assumptions. Susan Peck MacDonald has argued that the purpose of academic writing is for “constructing and negotiating knowledge claims” among experts and that the “processes of negotiation” evident in academic writing can define a discipline (*Professional* 9). Ken Hyland uses this same word, negotiation, when he defines academics writing “careful negotiations with, and considerations of, their colleagues” rather than the “abstract and disengaged beliefs and theories” that typically are said to define a discipline (*Discourse* 1). In “Novelty in Academic Writing,” David S. Kaufer and Cheryl Geisler describe how individual scholars—no matter how iconoclastic—publish within the frameworks of consensual knowledge, working in terms of a whole knowledge community’s

expectations for knowledge (290). Others such as Myers (1985), Berkenkotter, Huckman and Ackerman (1988) and a collection edited by Ravelli and Ellis (2005) have emphasized how when writers engage with their disciplinary discourse community, they have to change their writing in order to be understood by their audience.

The work of researching in a discipline demands an interplay between author and audience and this work is even more difficult when a discipline is still forming and disciplinary standards are inchoate. Stephen Toulmin in *Human Understanding* suggests that there are two attributes that the nascent disciplines must develop. The first is to create methodological distinctions—how things are done in that discipline, what counts as sound reasoning and research, and what are the ultimate desired outcomes from work in that discipline. Methodological distinctions may appear to be subtle to the outsider, but those within the parent discipline will see them as critical. The second concern for the developing discipline is to establish the *institutional* forums to monitor and inspire work according to the methodological criteria. Method and institution are closely intertwined.

For example, think of a new academic journal. The journal provides institutional support for the discipline, while the editorial board of the journal authenticates the methodological validity of work published in their pages. Both the institutional support and the research methods are subject to the relationship between author and audience: the author has an audience because the audience expects certain things of the author in such a journal. The editorial gatekeepers must make certain that the journal doesn't disappoint or confuse the audience through publishing authors who don't adhere to the community standards. What counts as research for a literary studies journal may not pass the gatekeepers of a composition journal and vice-versa. The establishment of new institutional forums can solidify methodological differences.

To create knowledge, then, is not just the task of the individual researcher or theorist. The entire discipline is in implicit conversation, in negotiation, in validating the knowledge-building claims of any piece of academic writing. The negotiation may include issues like the appropriateness of an inquiry, the validity of knowledge sources, and the expected form of knowledge transmission. Knowing that they must satisfy the community's standard in these and other aspects, researchers and theorists form their arguments in the backgrounds, sources and forms familiar to community while advancing their own contributions. When the goal of academic writing is academic publishing, the discipline's standards are perhaps more explicitly recognizable, as Bazerman's 1988 study of scientific writing famously explored. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a disciplinary community to publish an article.

To argue that all disciplines negotiate some standards of knowledge production is not to say that all disciplines have the *same* standards of knowledge production, or even that they should. MacDonald insists that WID researchers must be careful not to “eras[e] important differences within academic inquiry” nor should we allow so-called science envy to “dominate our new interest in scrutinizing the discourse of the academy” (*Professional* 10-11). While MacDonald has in mind primarily the potential prejudices of humanities-trained WID researchers seeking to “debunk” the harder sciences, similar cautions should be used when we examine those disciplines that are even “softer” than our own. When the standards of knowledge production are different from those of our own, we must take extra care that, rather than trying to impose our stamp of approval on a discipline where we are only outsiders, we seek to be only descriptive.

Descriptive studies of disciplines can take into account a variety of disciplinary dimensions. For instance, MacDonald alerts us that different knowledge-making

disciplines may have radically different definitions of how knowledge is made. MacDonald uses the term “compacting”⁴ to refer to how a discipline focuses on so-called progress⁵ in the field, and privileges solving problems as opposed to opening up new questions. Disciplines that are more compact are likely to be more “urban,” to use Becher and Trowler’s term. A compact discipline’s signs include “a high percentage of references to recent work” (*Professional* 25) and “sustained attention to interpretative problems” in a “cohesive, working discourse community” (42), while less compact fields value originality of research topic. Additionally, MacDonald mentions that the degree to which the production of new knowledge, and not some other goal, is a priority becomes a spectrum along which disciplines can be arranged, not along lines of some imaginary better to worse, but simply as a “continuum” along which “knowledge-making goals and practices are in the foreground” (13).

For CWS to be an autonomous discipline, it must create a community with “knowledge-making goals and practices.” Instead of positing that creative writing is

⁴ Toulmin describes characteristics of a compact discipline in *Human Understanding*:

1. “the activities involved are organized around and directed towards a specific and realistic set of agreed collective ideals.
2. “These collective ideals impose corresponding demands on all who commit themselves to the professional pursuit of the activities concerned.
3. “The resulting discussions provide disciplinary loci for the production of ‘reasons,’ in the context of justificatory arguments whose function is to show how far procedural innovations measure up to these collective demands, and so improve the current repertory of concepts or techniques.
4. “For this purpose, professional forums are developed, within which the recognized ‘reason-producing’ procedures are employed to justify the collective acceptance of novel procedures.
5. ‘Finally the same collective ideals determine the criteria of adequacy by appeal to which the arguments produced in support of those innovations are judged’ (379)

⁵ Progress, MacDonald points out, “in the sense of moving forward and solving enough parts of the problem to leave parts of it behind” (*Professional* 110).

exclusively about creating an aesthetic product, creative writing studies proponents argue that there is an emerging community committed to creating disciplinary standards for writing and publishing. These proponents emphasize CWS's potential for research.

Pedagogy

The research requirement in disciplinarity emphasizes the way that new knowledge goes through gatekeepers in order to become accepted within the community; the pedagogical requirement describes how novices within the discipline are trained in both subject material and processes that allow them to identify with the discipline. Ken Hyland's *Disciplinary Identities* highlights the ways that individuals interact with their disciplinary identities. He explains, "If identify is *performed*, then actors need to have some understanding of [...] what *counts* as performing a competent identity in those events" (12, emphasis in original). Simultaneously positioning oneself as an insider and as an innovator within a certain discipline is a process that requires teaching and mentoring at all academic levels. To use Pierre Bourdieu's famous term, students develop the habitus of their field through acculturation as well as through learning discrete subject-appropriate knowledge. Both declarative knowledge (like facts) and procedural knowledge (like practices) reinforce a developing identity within a discipline. The ability to pass on this knowledge becomes one of the hallmarks of a discipline, rather than just, as Richard Young puts it, an art, craft, gift or knack.

Questions of pedagogy have had significant bearing on whether English, especially, could be considered a discipline. Gerald Graff describes how early literary studies began as so-called literary appreciation, seen as "mere social accomplishments" (37) for students at women's colleges looking to acquire a sense of taste and familiarity with key great works, (221). Acquiring taste was something that was not really teachable:

it was something that students could have from family upbringing and constant exposure within their class institutions (Bourdieu *Distinction*). Reportedly, one early teacher of literature would spend much of the class time reading and then, leaning back from the text, exclaim, “Isn’t that beautiful?” (Kitzhaber 68). Students, listening attentively or otherwise, could learn that such texts, were, indeed, beautiful.

Most literature teachers today are comfortable with the idea that they are teaching their students a way of thinking about literature. Wilder has demonstrated that literary studies does have a teachable method and that teachers of literary studies pass on community values and practices to their students—even if those teachers are unaware of what they’re doing or hostile to the idea that they are doing it. Still, the unteachable quality of good taste persisted well into the 20th century. There may still be traces of taste in the titles of courses called “Literary Appreciation” or in canonical reading lists for applicants or students; mere exposure to so-called great works takes the place of being taught specific methods of reading and analyzing literature by an expert in the field. If taste is the argument against a literary studies pedagogy, genius is the argument against teaching writing.

The idea of genius in writing is a little like the inverse of taste. Just as taste comes from a combination of inborn ability and constant exposure, writing genius is similarly unteachable. Many texts in the early 20th century attested to how unteachable writing is. Robert Neal’s 1914 text qualifies that “it is not written with the belief that short story writing, or any other form of literary composition, can be taught. It cannot. Literature is art and art is not communicable” (qtd. Adams 77). As Ross Winterowd describes the process, “In fact, the writing teacher can ask the student to be original, to develop ideas, and to give examples, but can offer no help in the techniques whereby a writer finds

subject matter. [...] One can help students with their styles, they must discover their own voices” (182).

Creative writing, perhaps more so than even composition, suffers from the idea of genius. To make the move of what one proponent calls “one simple word” from creative writing to creative writing *studies* (Mayers “One”), CWS must demonstrate that their methods are teachable, so that novices in the field can know what it looks like to do creative writing studies and develop their habitus and identity.

Institutional Acknowledgement

Disciplines can be defined by the philosophical lenses of research and pedagogy, but still perhaps our most concrete expectation for independent disciplines is that they will command significant institutional resources on and off of the university campus. Institutional acknowledgment feeds on itself: the more you have, the more you get. Support of institutions is critical for a developing discipline. Hyland even claims that “how far realms of knowledge come to be accepted as *disciplines*, rather than remaining as, say, *approaches* seems largely a matter of institutional recognition” (*Disciplinary Identity* 24, emphasis in original). Becher and Trowler also recognize the importance of institutional acknowledgement, although they see it as insufficient alone for a definition of disciplinarity, although, for many, “discipline” and “department” are read as synonyms “Disciplines are thus in part identified by the existence of relevant departments but it does not follow that every department represents a discipline,” nor entirely do other institutional standards (41).

Off-campus institutions can sanction a discipline, but universities in particular become powerful sites of approval for justifying the existence of a discrete discipline. Universities, with their limited resources for both research and pedagogy, make decisions

about which disciplines to foster. When resources from the university are earmarked for a discipline, that discipline receives higher standing relative to other disciplines. From PhD programs to required first-year courses, higher education institutions can promote sites of pedagogy, while tenure “point” systems give authority to certain types of research and service.

English departments have progressed from the redheaded stepchildren of classics and philology to become integral in the modern university. It is almost impossible to conceive of an institution of higher learning, from two-year colleges to liberal arts colleges to big research universities, without an English department. English departments may accommodate or disallow any number of diverse subfields from linguistics to gender studies to composition within their faculty, but they never disappear altogether. The English department has an institutional mandate to award jobs, fellowships and resources to scholars of the university; however, that certainly does not mean that such resources are abundant.

Within English departments, budgetary struggles for resources have gone hand-in-hand with debates over disciplinarity. Despite what Graff describes as wide “field coverage,” some sub-groups within English studies have gained the professorships, PhD programs and requirements that lend themselves to disciplinary gravitas, while others have floundered. Over the past fifty years, composition has felt its disciplinary status buoyed up by the advent of separate rhetoric and composition departments, degrees and programs. Some of this change has come from the side of administrators responding to institutional needs, such as the influx of students after more universities instituted open admissions, but some have come from consistent lobbying of adherents. In the early and mid-eighties, composition scholars fought for institutional distinction and support.

North's *Making of Knowledge in Composition*, for instance, suggests that separate composition departments are just as important a requirement for its disciplinary maturation as better methodological consciousness and egalitarianism within composition (370-1). Maxine Hairston, too, emphasizes the need for composition to get its fair share of resources within the English department. Certainly, much of composition's disciplinary development is related to changes in its university role since the seventies and eighties.

Creative writing has long been a fixture within the American English department, but its institutional role has never been entirely settled. Originally hired as writers-in-residence or as writers-cum-critics, creative writing faculty often face different requirements for research, teaching and service than other English faculty. While most English faculty analyze something (texts, sentences, student writing), creative writers produce, more like sculptors and directors in the fine arts departments—where, incidentally, many universities in England and other commonwealth countries house creative writing. The publication outlets and conference venues for creative writing faculty reflect a broader audience than the academic publications of other English faculty. These outlets are not so compact as those for literary studies or linguistics, and are not focused on writing for other scholars. Creative writing faculty are sometimes seen as strange bedfellows within the English department, viewed with alternating admiration and suspicion. They enjoy a sort of prestige marginalization where they are heralded for their creative production although administrators don't know how to accommodate them into wider English studies methods of the research, teaching and service. With such an unusual institutional background, it's difficult to predict whether the vanguard of creative

writing studies will galvanize the rank-and-file creative writing instructors the way North or Hairston did for instructors in composition.

INVESTIGATING CREATIVE WRITING STUDIES

Examining CWS's bid for disciplinarity within English studies will necessitate analyzing the claims for knowledge making, teaching and institutional support. The study of the bid highlights the possibilities for would-be disciplines within English studies as well as defines the contours of English studies itself. Is creative writing studies an art, a discipline or something in between? Can it be a discipline? In this way, we can look to Toulmin again for how to approach the question of CWS's bid for disciplinarity as we distinguish between

those [disciplines] which are 'disciplinable' and those whose concerns and concepts do not, in the nature of the case, lend themselves to such 'disciplined' debate and improvement. Meanwhile at another level, we can draw a second distinction, which holds within the class of disciplinable enterprises itself: between those which already have, and those which have not yet, achieved the disciplinary status at which they rightly aim. (378-9)

Whether CWS is a "disciplinable" discipline or cannot ever be a discipline calls into question what it takes to be a discipline in the humanities and English studies in specific. Research into new disciplines in social studies and the sciences has created a toehold for research into emerging disciplines in the humanities. CWS scholars are often insistent that they are the vanguard of a new discipline; for example, Dianne Donnelly's *Establishing Creative Writing as an Academic Discipline* (2009) sets an agenda for the

future of creative writing studies. CWS scholars see themselves as part of an emerging discipline, one that may be currently only inchoate, but, CWS claims, has the potential to be a full-out discipline equal to composition or literary studies.

Regardless of comparisons to composition, it is crucial that CWS's disciplinarity be examined according to the claims made by proponents, instead of by some outside disciplinary standard. One can still evaluate disciplinarity without insisting that every discipline look like other traditionally accepted disciplines. The cultural implications of being a discipline can be high and WID scholars should be sensitive in approaching claims for disciplinarity. I've tried to make my definition of disciplinarity as broad as possible and these definitions match claims of CWS proponents. An investigation of disciplinarity that includes description and evaluation of knowledge-making, pedagogy and institutional support could be used to explore disciplinarity in other developing fields as well, as long as such a study was tempered to the stated aims and outcomes of the nascent discipline itself.

The preliminary results of my research found that while there is enthusiasm for the project of CWS, there is little evidence that CWS has the coherence that has made composition a successful emerging field. My comparison of the first eight years of *New Writing*, a journal for CWS, show a lack of a clear subject or methodology in CWS publications. Despite growing enthusiasm for academic disciplinarity in creative writing, even the proponents of CWS have a difficult time establishing the academic gatekeeping and disciplinary standard that Stephen Toulmin includes among the requirements of disciplinarity (*Human Understanding* 378-9). But if there is little consensus on what CWS should look like in the ideal, there is even less concordance among practicing instructors of creative writing.

This dissertation also highlights the division between a vanguard's claims for disciplinarity and how those claims are (or aren't) realized by practitioners. Just as early composition and literary scholars noted a gaping chasm between the disciplinary party line and what was being taught on Monday mornings around the country, CWS struggles to change practices and attitudes of practitioners. My survey of creative writing instructors at PhD-granting institutions, suggests that while instructors resist some of the anti-disciplinary views of teaching creative writing, few espouse the pedagogical practices and theories of CWS. Finally, surveys and interviews with creative writing faculty suggest that there is little institutional discontent to demand a separate space in universities, journals or conferences for CWS. Some of this may be because of the prestige marginalization of creative writing. On one hand, their universities trumpet the creative writing department and its authors in recruitment materials and on commemorative occasions, but on the other hand, the everyday work of creative writing faculty seems so different from their colleagues' work. In the words of one creative writing program director I interviewed, "They don't know what we're doing" (Personal Interview, 2013).

Disciplinarity in the humanities in general, and in English in particular, has often been inclusive. If, as Graff has suggested, English keeps bringing more people to the table without encouraging productive competition for idea supremacy, CWS has, so far, a high tolerance for seating a disparate group. As university budgets have tightened for hiring faculty and funding research, the many branches of English studies have been put under greater pressure to justify their legitimacy and relevance. Creating and defending a strong disciplinary ethos is one way to argue for a place at that table. This dissertation shows the nuances of both the claims for disciplinarity CWS has made as well as the

realities of actual creative writers in the university setting. The case of CWS illuminates the difficulties of gatekeeping, of creating the resistance both internally and externally necessary to define the discipline and then creating boundaries around the discipline.

This study of CWS could be a model for other researchers evaluating disciplinary claims, both within English studies and in other fields. Results suggest a need for careful empirical evaluation of pedagogy, knowledge-making and institutional aspirations for supposedly emerging disciplines because there may be—as in the case of CWS— a significant gap between claims and practices. This is not a prescriptive study; in the disciplinary age, the stakes of being a discipline can be high and WID scholars should be sensitive in approaching claims made by groups that look so different from those which we have studied before. If the “disciplinary big boom” is going to include what Winterrowd calls “Sidney's golden world” as well as “the brazen world of the quotidian” (75), then WID scholars will need to listen to the golden world carefully, their golden claims, to see if they, too, are subject to the quotidian world of disciplinarity.

Chapter Two: Manifestos of Creative Writing Studies

Before investigating the relationship between CWS claims and practices, it's important to know what, exactly, those claims are, or, in other words, how the proponents of a would-be discipline categorize their work. In this chapter, I will lay ground for the next three chapters by identifying the primary claims of the CWS vanguard. The first section will discuss the vanguard's impetus to declare disciplinary independence and the latter section will discuss specific aims the group makes in terms of research, teaching and institutional support.

Previously, I discussed some of the cultural importance of developing a discipline, what disciplinarity has to offer and how the humanities—especially English and creative writing—invite new definitions of disciplinarity. Each prospective discipline will stake out its own claims and collective standards of research, pedagogy and institutional organization. These claims are often implicit, dispersed across methods sections of articles, in graduation requirements of programs, or in bylaws of professional organizations, but sometimes proponents will make explicit arguments for disciplinary recognition. This has been the case for creative writing studies.

While the creative writing studies vanguard may not describe these books and articles as manifestos,⁶ many write arguments that explicitly declare what a future discipline *should* look like. These prescriptive documents begin by describing how the vanguard sees the current—flawed—position of creative writing in the academy and then

⁶ Janet Lyon's 1999 definition is perhaps useful here. On the most basic level, Lyon suggests that "'Manifesto' may be shorthand for a text's particular stridency of tone" (12). But in a deeper sense, the CWS scholars write "the testimony of a historical present tense spoken in the impassioned voice of its participants" (9) who offer "an alternative historical narrative, one that foregrounds the group's grievances" (15) full of "declarations with assurances of unobstructed rhetorical clarity" (14). Most importantly, each disciplinary manifesto, like a political manifesto, "both generates and marks a break in history: is it both a trace and a tool of change" (16).

propose creative writing studies as a solution. The tone of these works is hortatory, even revolutionary. Such declarative artifacts are particularly useful for the WID researcher because these manifestos explicitly describe the group's own ideal criteria for disciplinarity. Instead of using another group's definition of disciplinarity, these manifestos describe what the vanguard sees as failings in the field now and where they expect research, teaching and institutional support to develop.

Before looking at CWS manifestos in specific, it might be useful to consider the role of manifestos in other fields, especially in the analogous discipline of composition. Composition manifestos such as Stephen North's *Making of Knowledge in Composition* (1987) and Louise Wetherbee Phelps's *Composition as a Human Science* (1994) first critique the current state of the field and then advance disciplinary reform. Disciplinary claims can come in a variety of genres, like Maxine Hairston's 1985 speech "Breaking Our Bonds and Reaffirming Our Connections" or Louise Weatherbee Phelps and John Ackerman's visibility project, whose purpose was to convince insiders that "disciplinary identity is necessary" and also to convince outsiders that "our work has value as a science and not (merely) as an art" (181). Composition studies, like creative writing studies, is littered with declarative manifestos as scholars like North and Phelps and Hairston wrote speeches, articles and books articulating the need for clear disciplinary direction and arguing that there was something "disciplinizable" about composition studies.

These disciplinary manifestos may position themselves as a fresh beginning for a discipline, but are always rooted in a continuous tradition of criticism, redefinition and justification of the developing discipline. Just as I described in chapter one, disciplines don't spring up all at once; similarly, no single article or book definitively sets forth the essential manifesto. Instead, there are several key authors and texts that consciously set

out to define the nascent discipline and establish its rules. For academic creative writing, insiders can be resistant to the disciplinary standards proposed by the CWS vanguard.

ORIGINS OF RESISTANCE

Making an explicit case for disciplinarity involves convincing a two-fold audience: outsiders, often the institutional gatekeepers—such as university administration and taxonomists of learned societies—as well as insiders, the practitioners who may not see the benefits of disciplinarity, researchers and editors who have not coalesced a research agenda, and inchoate organizations beginning to articulate their political and professional objectives. Convincing both outsiders and insiders that an area of study can be a cohesive discipline is never an easy task. Creative writing studies, though, faces three additional objections: first, that creative writing is nondisciplinary work and should be valued as such; second, that creative writing’s relationship with the university is already comfortable; and third, that banding together in a discipline would destroy creative writing’s own individualistic culture.

First, there exists a line of argument that creative writing doesn’t need to develop a disciplinary branch because such development would imply that only disciplines are valued. David B. Downing, a literary scholar who focuses on the market forces of academic scholarship, challenges the assumption that only disciplines in a narrow sense should receive institutional support. Downing argues in *The Knowledge Contract* that the humanities shouldn’t be trying to get their work recognized as disciplinary; they should be encouraging support for what he calls “nondisciplinary” work. Although Downing is not a creative writer himself, he includes creative writing in the kind of nondisciplinary work that he feels universities should support. Because definitions of disciplinarity “simply work better for some other disciplines, especially the sciences” who can bring in

outside grants and sponsors (250), he calls for the arts and humanities to band together politically in order to end “the dominance of the disciplinary models of the knowledge contract [as] the exclusive measure of academic performance” (259). Downing acknowledges the very real benefits of disciplinarity, but prefers instead a coalition among professional—yet nondisciplinary— groups. Such a coalition could bring to the attention of universities and other institutions the worth of teaching and serving on committees along with the creative work done by poets and playwrights. He suggests that these nondisciplinary actions,

are indeed vital concerns in the professional life of many academics. But they can’t just be disciplinized without destroying them. In order to appropriately reward these kinds of labor, something else has to happen, and that something else is the message of [this] whole book: the modern knowledge contract has to be renegotiated [...] allowing [...] for many nonmodern practices and alternative kinds of knowing. (17)

Downing’s call for a broader view of academic work includes the creative arts and he often invokes the arts as examples of “nondisciplinary” productivity.

Although Downing doesn’t address creative writing’s disciplinizing movement (likely, he doesn’t yet know of it), I suspect that he would disapprove; if creative writing studies seeks disciplinarity, it is fleeing a potential coalition that could rally support for nondisciplinary work. While creative writing is among the least disciplinary of potential disciplines, it garners enormous institutional support compared to other nondisciplines. If

creative writing, as a representative of a valuable nondisciplinary field, were to move towards disciplinarity, recognition of other nondisciplinary work would falter.

The second type of resistance to creative writing's disciplinarity comes from the inertia of a relatively comfortable position. Since creative writing is among the most visible of the nondisciplinary activities on campuses, writers have teaching loads, research support and administrative opportunities comparable to other faculty members. It's possible, even, that creative writing has a more secure institutional position than other branches of English studies. As Thomas Bartlett wrote in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2002, there has been an increase in the programmatic presence of creative writing at universities at all levels, and this "growing interest comes as the number of English majors has declined significantly since 1970" (156). If this is the case, why should creative writing want to be a discipline, so long as positions are plentiful and programmatic support forthcoming? The relative ease of creative writing contrasts with the path composition took as it struggled to rise from a remedial service to institutional respectability.

However well supported, though, creative writing, perhaps because of its nondisciplinarity, is positioned on the outskirts of academia. Creative writing instructors may have support for their programs, but they may not have respect from their colleagues as scholars. As Dianne Donnelly notes, "Those who teach creative writing complain [...] of perceptions that the area of creative writing is soft and trivial, only a fun activity and 'touchy-feely'" (*Establishing* 148). If composition is anxious about being the women (and men) in the basement, creative writing represents the women (and men) in the attic.

Finally, proponents of a discipline also have to contend with a cultural fear of identity groups. As Ken Hyland (2012) reminds us, "identity and discipline can be

understood only by reference to each other. Each is emergent, mutable and interdependent” (*Identities* 43). For those who hold a strongly independent ethos, conforming to a disciplinary identity may be violently painful. Within creative writing culture, a powerful neoromantic strand still eschews ideas of institutional “progress” and resents subsuming individual identity in the name of unity. If creative writers value individuality, they may not want to be lumped together as a discipline. They may find even the idea of disciplinary standards uncomfortable. Tim Mayers once wrote “creative writers have so frequently resisted such acknowledgment, preferring instead to regard their institutional position as purely incidental to what and who they are” (“One Simple” 60). Creative writers entering a creative writing studies discipline may mirror the response of minority students in Roz Ivanic’s 1998 study who felt torn away from core identities as they were acculturated into academic disciplines. For creative writers who resist community standards, the process of adopting a discipline may be too difficult to be worth any institutional gains.

To sum up, resistance to disciplinary development within creative writing may stem from the potential of doing nondisciplinary work, or from the relative comfort of current institutional arrangements, or from neoromantic traditions of individuality. All of these reasons can combine to make the work of creating a creative writing discipline a little like herding cats. But despite these potential objections, a vanguard still propose the discipline of creative writing studies.

THE VANGAURD

The CWS vanguard has a long tradition that, like all disciplinary traditions, follows an uneven path. Today’s CWS scholars are echoing earlier calls to redefine

creative writing's place in the academy. These calls began in 1993, when *Writing on the Edge* published a short article called "Crossing the Lines," an article that had ripples of influence throughout the fields of creative writing and composition. The author, Wendy Bishop, a poet turned compositionist, was academically defined by her project to connect composition and creative writing. She believed that creative writing and composition both contribute to a more thorough understanding of writing. However, she says, "students are confused about the relationship between composition and creative writing because English studies, as a profession, is confused" (187). Because the profession is confused, artificially distinct lines have been drawn between creative writers and compositionists. In order for both branches of writing studies to prosper, Bishop prescribes a "move into both territories from this disturbing no-person's land where we reside" (194).

But the territorial move is not equidistant. Creative writing becomes a subset of composition when Bishop asserts that "creative writing *as a composition research area*, ... is generally ignored" (190, my emphasis). Additionally, Bishop claims that creative writers should adopt methods of composition including "the results of writing research" in addition to "the [traditional creative writing evidence of] testimonial of expert (and/or famous) writers" (193). Bishop argues that not only should creative writers join composition research, but also that creative writing should be incorporated as part of the composition curriculum: "we should teach 'creative' writing in the first year program" (193), and "prospective [composition] teachers should be trained as writers" (193). Here Bishop's early work foretells the research/teaching/institution triad that will later define creative writing's struggles to find its place within English studies, but that place no longer is as an element of composition, but rather its own discipline.

In the twenty years since “Crossing the Lines,” creative writing scholars still argue that the profession is “confused” about the relationship between composition and creative writing, but since Bishop, the proposed solution has changed dramatically. The vanguard want to strike out on their own, declaring independence of both composition and traditional creative writing. Although the CWS vanguard still admire Bishop’s work in defending creative writing’s potential as teachable, researchable, and institutionally influential, they aspire to make CWS more than just a handmaiden of either creative writing or composition; they propose that CWS is, or should be, or can be, a *discipline*.

This vanguard includes scholars such as Stephanie Vanderslice, Kelly Ritter, and Graeme Harper as well manifesto authors Dianne Donnelly and Tim Mayers. These proponents all come from English studies, although they have different areas of emphasis. These different self-representations are indicated on their departmental websites. As Ken Hyland points out, the departmental listing page is a site of identity for academics, a place to position themselves both within their discipline as well as individually (*Identities*). A summary of these identities can be found in Table 2.1.

Name	Institution	Department	Country	Disciplinary Background
Graeme Harper	Oakland University	N/A (Honors)	U.K./ Australia	Creative writing
Stephanie Vanderslice	University of Central Arkansas	Writing	U. S.	MFA Creative writing
Diane Donnelly	University of Southern Florida	English	U. S.	PhD English (Composition)
Tim Mayer	Millersville University	English	U. S.	M.A. Creative Writing PhD English (Composition)

Table 2.1: Affiliations of Select Members of the CWS Vanguard

Perhaps more than in other disciplines, creative writing scholars must identify as both practitioners and academics. Tim Mayers' website lists creative writing as one of his specialties and references teaching creative writing, but he doesn't highlight his own creative work. Instead he puts his manifesto (*Re)Writing Craft: Composition, Creative Writing, and the Future of English Studies*, along with another monograph about literacy theory, under the section, "Sample Publications" ("Dr. Timothy Mayers"). (*Re)Writing Craft*, too, demonstrates Mayers' identity as primarily a scholar of creative writing. Published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 2005, Mayers' jacket copy features reviews from *JAC* and *Choice*, indicating a scholarly orientation to the text. Mayers emphasizes his scholarly work in his academic identity and in his manifesto.

This is not the case for all members of the vanguard. For instance, Graeme Harper's department profile includes not just his academic writing, but also his creative writing. His selected publications page doesn't discriminate between his academic and creative writing, sandwiching works of fiction among his scholarly texts ("Dean Graeme Harper"). Some members of the vanguard, like Harper, are comfortable including creative activities alongside their scholarly work while others focus more consciously on theory.

Similar to how the vanguard members must consciously decide the degree to which they want to be seen as practitioners, the vanguard also choose departmental identities that associate them with creative writing, composition or both. Stephanie Vanderslice and Kelly Ritter, co-editors of *Can it Really be Taught? Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy*, emphasize different disciplinary allegiances on their websites. Stephanie Vanderslice narrates how she began her career with an MFA and lists her teaching specialties as fiction, creative nonfiction and creative writing pedagogy

(“Stephanie Vanderslice, MFA, PhD”). Vanderslice’s emphasis seems to be on her creative writing identity.

Although Vanderslice’s frequent collaborator, Kelly Ritter also holds an MFA, she lists her research interests as “Archival Studies and Historiography; Writing Program Administration; Composition Theory; Pedagogical Theory; Digital Rhetorics and Online Discourse,” focusing on her rhetoric identity (“Kelly Ritter”). Vanderslice’s identity seems to be more patently in the creative writing camp, while Ritter’s website emphasizes rhetoric and composition.

Dianne Donnelly, author of *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline*, however, highlights both her creative writing research and her administration of a composition program at the University of South Florida. Her webpage points out that she presents frequently at the Conference on College Composition and Communication and at the creative writing conference called the Association of Writing Programs⁷ (“Dianne Donnelly”). If Vanderslice identifies primarily in creative writing and Ritter identifies primarily in composition, Donnelly consciously brands herself in both fields.

Donnelly’s manifesto book, published seven years after Mayers’ *(Re)Writing Craft*, reemphasizes this double identity. The jacket copy on her book declares her intention to advance “creative writing studies as a *developing field* of inquiry, scholarship and research,” and describes the “goals and future direction of the *discipline* within the

⁷ The name of this conference is both appropriate and ironic. It demonstrates that when creative writing was beginning to become more institutionally situated, it was seen exclusively in the context of the university administration. There was initially no sense that independently operating writers (or, indeed, writers in a non-administrative capacity) would want to meet in a conference. Now, however, the AWP draws writers of all sorts, regardless of their institutional affiliation. In fact, while the organization still calls itself AWP, now their official information spells that out as the Association of Writers and Writing Programs, the silent *w* acknowledging writers who don’t administer a program. The AWP is firmly a creative writing conference, not to be confused with the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA), which is a composition organization.

academy,” including “authority in *its own* scholarship” (emphasis added). Instead of seeking endorsements from composition or English studies publications, Donnelly’s book is endorsed by other members of the CWS vanguard, like Joseph Moxley and Patrick Bizzaro, and is published by Multilingual Matters as part of the New Views on Writing series that publishes many key CWS texts.

Whether creative writing or composition, scholar-practitioner or more strictly academic, these vanguard identities reflect a diverse group of creative writing insiders and outsiders, scholars and practitioners. Various arguments for the relevance of creative writing studies have been published in the vanguard’s own journal, *New Writing*, and for broader audiences in special issues of *College English* (2001, 2009) as well as in articles in *College Composition and Communication* such as Mary Ann Cain’s 1999 “Problematizing Formalism: A Double-Cross of Genre Boundaries.” While these shorter pieces support claims for disciplinarity, this chapter will focus primarily on Donnelly and Mayers and their respective book-length manifesto texts. The next section will describe why I chose to focus on these texts since, as in all would-be disciplines, there are a chorus of voices declaring disciplinary aims and objectives.

A SELECTION OF MANIFESTOS

Donnelly and Mayers are prime examples of CWS manifesto writers, but they are not the only authors. Over the last twenty years, there has been a slew of disciplinary writing in creative writing as the vanguard writes manifesto pieces. In addition to her text “Crossing the Lines,” Wendy Bishop co-edited a collection of short manifesto pieces on creative writing with Hans Ostrom in 1994. More recently, edited collections began to appear on the scene like *Creative writing studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy*

(2008) by Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll, *Key Issues in Creative Writing* (2013) edited by Dianne Donnelly, and Patrick Bizzaro's (2011) collection in honor of Wendy Bishop. These and other, shorter manifesto pieces are evidence of disciplinary aspirations,⁸ but the single-authored manifesto text especially gives the vanguard sufficient space to explicitly set forth research and teaching objectives.

Mayers' *(Re)Writing Craft: Composition, Creative Writing and the Future of English Studies* (2005) and Donnelly's *Establishing Creative Writing as an Academic Discipline* (2011) are prime examples of American creative writing studies manifestos. I want to turn my focus on how these manifestos create their arguments for a separate creative writing studies discipline. First I will describe how Mayers and Donnelly position their would-be discipline in opposition to existing fields, creating exigence to separate from literary studies, composition and traditional creative writing. I believe this negative definition is a typical move for nascent disciplines striking out on their own. Then I will describe how Mayers and Donnelly set out the *positive* characteristics for creative writing studies —what they want the discipline to be. These characteristics include advancing that now-familiar trifecta of research, teaching and institutional recognition.

⁸ Not all discussions about the role of creative writing are manifestos. Some texts explore the creative writing problem without making an explicit disciplinary claim, like Graeme Harper's 2010 *On Creative Writing* and others, like Paul Dawson's *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* (2005), are comfortable imagining creative writing as part of a broader field rather than its own discipline. I've excluded these texts in my analysis because they are not explicitly committed to the idea of creative writing studies. Similarly, I've omitted in-depth consideration of Michelene Wandor's *The Author is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else* (2008), because, despite being a powerful manifesto positioning creative writing as a vital perspective in poststructural theory, its discussion of creative writing and theory hasn't been integrated with these other members of the vanguard as much.

DEFINING A DISCIPLINE PART 1: WHAT CWS ISN'T

When Mayers and Donnelly define their visions of creative writing studies by describing what it *isn't*, they aren't lost for words, or hesitant in their enterprise. Defining what a discipline isn't, to use the geographical metaphor, defines its territorial neighbors. Borders define separation, but they also imply similarity. To use a metaphor, to say that Texas and Mexico have established a border means that there will be significant political differences between the two states and that Texas asserts its sovereignty (as it perennially does) in some way, but it also means that Texas and Mexico share similarities in climate, landscape and culture. Borders articulate differences because similarities are obvious.

But to continue the metaphor, once Texas and Mexico define a border in 1850, they continually assert that border, underlining the territory through reprinted maps. Some boundaries, like the border with Oklahoma, are politically more permeable, but they are always distinct: what Texas is continues to be defined by the borders around it, giving it a distinct shape with which Texans seem to be preoccupied. Similarly, when CWS scholars define their discipline by what it is not, they create a shape for their endeavor out of boundaries with surrounding disciplines. In defining the border of their discipline, Mayers and Donnelly aren't just creating a space for CWS right now, but establishing the disciplinary boundaries that will be asserted over and over again in the future.

A discipline defining itself through its borders should look familiar—it is the same practice that English itself used to emerge as a discipline around a hundred years ago. As David Russell describes in *Disciplining English*, English—especially literary studies—has had to define itself against superpowers like modern languages (47-48) and forensics (51-54), as well as so-called weaker disciplines like journalism, oratory, English

for foreign students, business writing, technical writing and drama (54-55). Some of these borders have been enveloped into the larger project of English, while others have been excluded on the other side of a boundary. In the words of disciplinary scholar Andrew Abbott, these “emerg[ing] specialties” coalesce, and, over time, “make common cause and consider forming a new profession, enclosing their common work as a single jurisdiction independent of their parents” (95) as English did against Classics and philology. Continuing the geographic metaphor, Graeme Harper points to the “turf wars” in the “emergence of the subject of English itself followed a history in which the subject of Classics has a key, antecedent role, alongside other subjects such as Philology ... The growth of formal study of Creative Writing in academia has seen analogous debates, tensions and developments” (“Introduction” 4). In creating a CWS border with English, Harper points out that English had to create borders itself. Not only does the border connect creative writing to its disciplinary neighbor, but the *process* of creating borders similarly unites them.

But no border is more fiercely defended than against English’s superpower—literary studies. Mayers’ and Donnelly’s arguments against literary studies’ supremacy in English departments read like the Declaration of Independence’s litany of complaints against King George. Both Mayers and Donnelly make literary studies the villain in their disciplinary narratives. “The issue,” says Mayers “is territory” (106).

Mayers, especially, claims that both creative writing and composition have had to assert their independence against the tyranny of literary studies, but that composition has been more successful in arguing for equal sovereignty. Mayers points out that when early twentieth-century creative writers joined college faculties, they “fought for prestige mainly by capitalizing on notions of the mystical, special and rare nature of creativity”—

something beyond disciplinary boundaries— while compositionists positioned their field “as a scholarly discipline much like any other,” and equal in legitimacy to literary studies (xiii). Both disciplines defined themselves against literary studies, but while creative writing “attempted to distinguish itself as something *different from* an academic discipline [like literary studies], composition attempted to distinguish itself as a *new kind of academic discipline*” (xiii, emphasis in original).

The result, according to Mayers, is that composition occupies an integral role in the university, while creative writing suffers from what he calls “privileged marginality” where creative writing scholars remain “insulated largely from the turmoil of English studies, not drawing much attention from outside their coteries of students and like-minded colleagues” (21). Mayers sees composition as precedent to creative writing studies in declaring itself an independent discipline. The first step of such independence is to break away from literary studies.

Definition against Literary Studies

Just as Abbott describes a coalition of smaller groups against powerful parent disciplines, the manifestos cite a common cause between composition and creative writing against literary studies. The key issue is an interpretation/production binary that has relegated creative writing, like composition, into an inferior position in English departments. If interpretation is always privileged in scholarship and education, then production-based fields like composition and creative writing will always be denied sovereignty and relegated to vassalage. In order to break that inferior position, Mayers and Donnelly assert that wrongs have been done and that separation from literary studies is the only answer.

Mayers' manifesto in particular positions itself as a revolutionary declaration against the alleged stranglehold of literary studies within the English department. In his preface, Mayers declares the "basic facts" that "literature dominates the curriculum" in American English departments (x). His entire manifesto is just this side of a diatribe against "the notion that literary study is the center and primary reason-for-being" (4) in English departments. His opinions are long-standing and deep-rooted. As a graduate student, Mayers was shocked to discover the "deep antagonism" between students and faculty in creative writing and those in literary studies: he saw that literary scholars displayed a "dismissive and even at times contemptuous attitude" towards creative writing (x). The supposedly dismissive attitude towards creative writing extended to the methods of research and conceptualization. Literary scholars who believed that a "certain kind of theorizing should be acceptable for 'creative writers' but not 'critics'" (106), imply that critics function at a higher level of intellectual work.

Mayers' manifesto also asserts the tyranny of literary studies over pedagogical attitudes. Mayers bemoans the idea that reluctant interpretation-trained literary scholars assume that teaching production-focused classes like first-year composition will be rudimentary, rather than requiring its own set of special skills. "What if, for instance," Mayers muses, "orthodontists were performing root canals or automobile mechanics were repairing jet engines on commercial airliners?" (6). His analogous comparisons challenge "the purported 'naturalness' of the relationship between literary interpretation and composition" (6) and seeks instead to underline the distinctions which may not seem evident: to reinforce, in other words, the borders between neighboring literary studies and writing disciplines.

Donnelly, too, is dismayed with the vassalage status of fields that focus on production rather than interpretation. Like Mayers, she voices similar complaints about English department politics. Also embracing the language of nation-states to discuss disciplinarity, Donnelly cites Eve Shelnutz's perception of being "second-class citizens in English departments" (qtd. Donnelly 148). Donnelly also uses the geographic metaphor to describe a "mostly hegemonic English department in which literary studies has occupied the terrain, and thus the power" (133). The result is that "some literature professors continue to perceive [creative writing programs] as anti-intellectual" (134), a claim that echoes Mayers' description of hierarchized theoretical approaches.

Literary studies isn't the only offender to creative writing, but it is the most egregious. Another creative writing scholar Donnelly cites describes creative writing instructors as "scorned by those in 'literature' and challenged by those in composition and cultural studies" (qtd. Donnelly 148). All borders are important, but some, like the border between Mexico and Texas, are more contentious than others.

The border with literary studies gets highlighted again and again because of a persistent binary that divides English. Some fields (notably literary studies, but also rhetoric and cultural studies) emphasize interpretation of texts while other fields (like creative writing and composition) emphasize production. The manifestos not only point to the presence of such a division, but also to the privileging of interpretation over production. For Mayers, having "literary study and/or interpretation at the top of the pecking order" (107) in English studies can consciously or unconsciously create a culture where composition and creative writing are seen as secondary, derivative and inconsequential.

Literary studies dominate other fields, according to Mayers, because English departments are stuck in a hierarchy that values interpretation over production (xv). Instead, Mayers proposes a complete inversion of priorities, making literary studies “at best, a peripheral part of the discipline” whose focus is on production (xv). “In other words,” he writes, “the goal must be to move English studies away from a structural model in which textual production tends to be valued primarily as a vehicle for textual interpretation and towards a structural model where the opposite is true” (110).

Mayers finds insecurity about the value of production-focused fields, even among insiders. Anxiety about studying “only” text production leads to feelings of inferiority among composition and creative writing faculty. Mayers’ manifesto contains a clear indictment against literary studies, which

manifested through administrative incarnations, ... tends to install literary study so ‘naturally’ at the center of the discipline that most professionals (and certainly most students) in English never question it, and many compositionists and creative writers (consciously or unconsciously) understand their own fields as mere branches of literary study. (4)

Later, Mayers reiterates the words of his manifesto text about insecurity of those in production-based fields. He describes how in the first stages of their independence “creative writing and composition were both [...] regarded by many of their own practitioners as peripheral fields: mere satellites of literary studies” (“Emergence of Creative writing studies” 158).

For Donnelly, too, the denigration of creative writing stems from a production/interpretation binary. Her words echo Mayers, who writes, “Literary studies centers on the ideological or historical analysis of a text while creative writing approaches the text [...] from the inside” (128), describing the distinction between production and interpretation. Elsewhere, she similarly ascribes a hierarchy to these positions when she claims, “the hegemonic status of literary study and its interpretative function ... keeps both [composition and creative writing] on the outskirts (more creative writing than composition) of the English department that houses them” (107). Donnelly, along with other members of the CWS vanguard, seeks to bring creative writing in from the outskirts to which, allegedly, literary studies has consigned them.

Identifying against literary studies, especially with the implication that literary studies has oppressed creative writing and composition, sets the discipline in a sort of David-and-Goliath frame, nobly struggling against a tyrannical disciplinary juggernaut. But even if creative writing and composition must contend as a coalition against literary studies, the manifestos also draw a border between the two production-based fields. Creative writing studies is not just composition.

Definition against Composition

Creative writing studies is friendly towards composition, but the vanguard of the early 21st century is not content to be a vassal to composition either. Unlike Bishop’s “Crossing the Lines,” the CWS vanguard seek to make creative writing not just a subset of composition, but more independent. Mayers’ manifesto is more modest in this independence, seeing composition as an institutional ally, while Donnelly takes a more extreme stance, declaring complete sovereignty. Mayers, though, was writing at an early stage in the CWS movement and might have been more deferential towards composition

because creative writing had not achieved as much independence as it had when Donnelly was writing eight years later.

In upending the hegemony of literary interpretation, Mayers sees composition as a natural ally, not only because of a similar focus on production, but also because of being similarly dismissed by literary studies. Mayers suggests that composition is “a much more natural fit [than literary studies] with creative writing” (xi). Both composition and creative writing must define themselves against dominant literary studies, and are shackled by departmental expectations that filter everything through a literary studies lens.

There is a sense in Mayers’ text that composition is the only other discipline that can understand creative writing’s institutional isolation. In a section evocatively titled “In the Shadows,” Mayers claims that both compositionists and academic creative writers are primed to “understand their own fields either in complete isolation from the rest of English studies or only in relation to the dominant presence at the center” (2). Composition, much like creative writing, exists “at the periphery of English studies [...] Perhaps this is the most important thing composition has in common with creative writing, though,” he admits, “the two fields have arrived at and frequently dealt with their peripheral status in different ways” (3). These different ways began to have increasing significance for Mayers as his ideas developed during the 2000s.

In the years since *(Re)Writing* was published, Mayers has rejected a Bishop-like nesting of creative writing as part of composition. Mayers explicitly defines his break in a collection of essays celebrating Wendy Bishop’s legacy to creative writing studies. In an article provocatively titled “Revolution Number Three,” Mayers somewhat sheepishly admits that while he admires Bishop’s legacy, it isn’t sufficient for the developing field.

He himself says, “I just used [Bishop’s] work as a jumping-off point because I saw a different path” (159).

Donnelly also embraces a different path for creative writing. Because “Creative writing shares with composition studies a communal history of subordination by literary studies along with a shared interest in writing” (139), there may be natural connections, but those connections can work against the aims of CWS. CWS somehow must negotiate not only “the voices of contention from literary critics [but also] the concerns of compositionists who identify with our ‘underdog’ status” (132). Donnelly doesn’t believe that being a co-underdog with composition is reason enough to be subsumed into another discipline.

While she acknowledges that she “endorse[s] the blurring of lines” and finds it “difficult *not* to consider overlapping properties” (144), she ultimately rejects a strong alignment with composition because of suspicion on both sides (145-6). Were the disciplinary histories different and the attitudes different, it might be easier to connect, but Donnelly feels “A merger remains abstract because the fields stay entrenched” in their own traditions and organizations (144). Because of departmental realities, CWS cannot be brought in line with composition.

As Mayers does, Donnelly has a complex relationship with the discipline-bridging theories of Wendy Bishop. In the same volume honoring Wendy Bishop in which Mayers describes his break from Bishop’s theories, Donnelly writes an essay called “Creative Writing and Composition: Rewriting the Lines” that doesn’t advocate combining or “crossing” the lines, but suggests something stronger. Donnelly sounds sympathetic towards Bishop’s suggestion that composition and creative writing could learn much from each other, but she also highlights misunderstandings endemic in the relationship,

including those over the overall worth of creative writing. She cites Harris' claim that "the predominant view of many composition teachers holds that creative writing is 'useless' to composition teachers" ("Creative Writing" 107), as well as that "some compositionists believe [...] that creativity is all creative writing entails" (108), and that even "composition training, as a rule, deemphasizes creativity" (111). Donnelly believes that composition and creative writing studies can inform each other, but as independent entities, in a cross-disciplinary way, rather than in a blurring of the lines.

Connecting with composition does two things for the CWS manifestos. First it creates an ally, one that has more scholarly clout as a discipline. If creative writing and composition are similar to each other because of their focus on text production, CWS can seek composition's aid in advancing the research and institutional support of text production. Additionally, by connecting with composition, the CWS scholars argue an analogy: if one text-production field can overcome the criticisms of traditionalist practitioners and interpretative snobs to become a discipline, then surely the trail is already laid for CWS to follow. Despite these connections, creative writing is not composition and these scholars point out that CWS is going to have to separate from composition as much as from literary studies. But CWS scholars don't just define themselves against composition and literary studies—they also define themselves against creative writing itself.

Self-marginalization in Creative Writing

In his criticism of creative writing's role in the academy, Mayers doesn't place the blame exclusively on outsiders; in his eyes, creative writing, too, is to blame for this isolation. Mayers points to an article written by long-time director of the AWP, D. W. Fenza as an example of those who resist reform. Fenza's "Creative Writing and Its

Discontents” exemplifies what Mayers calls “a bid to preserve and protect creative writing’s isolation from the rest of English studies” as an “anti-academic field” that defies disciplinarity (20). If the leader of the creative writing program conference thinks there is something mystical and anti-disciplinary about creative writing, then the attitude, Mayers suggests, is very prevalent indeed.

Donnelly also confesses that much of the problem may stem from other creative writers. She admits that her project, “means some heel digging from our own creative writing teachers, many of whom dislike much delving into their practices” because they “want to keep the mystery [and] resist reform” (132). The philosophical opposition is matched by the “self-marginalization” that comes from lazy or stubborn instructors who “resist inquiry and research into their pedagogies, who retreat from theories that underpin their classroom planning and practices, and who replicate the basic workshop model and other methods that idle” (149-150). Whether from some theoretical opposition or sheer inertia, even practitioners can undermine efforts for CWS to become a discipline.

Donnelly and Mayers are not the only ones frustrated with creative writing’s resistance to disciplinarity. Not all instructors in creative writing are united in making creative writing a discipline: creative writing has been wary of over-analysis in either practice or pedagogy ever since Wordsworth declared,

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:

Come, hear the woodland linnet,

How sweet his music! on my life,

There's more of wisdom in it. (“Tables Turned”)

If books are inferior to lived experience, the key thing is to be the right sort of person to hear the birds—the one in the poem doing the urging, rather than the one being urged.

This attitude has, according to CWS scholars, outlived its usefulness. The post-Romantic view of creative writing long associated with the innate genius of muse-kissed writers or the eccentric mentorship of famous personalities seems incongruous with academic rigor and best practices pedagogy.

Whether good creative writing is a native skill or emerges from apprenticeship, there is little room in the traditional creative writing paradigm for research into methods of practicing writers or the best modes of pedagogy for developing writers. Patrick Bizzaro has repeatedly voiced his frustration with this endemic anti-intellectualism. In one article, he suggests that creative writing's failure to become a discipline is because "the standard view seems to have been that *academic inquiry* into creative writing, specifically of the sort that typifies investigation in fields that have long been sanctioned in English studies [like composition], is an evil to be avoided" and claims that "the mere mention of *theory* or *praxis* sets off alarms in the brains of most creative writers" ("Research" 295, emphasis in original).

Kelly Ritter, too, despairs at the "collective anti-academic identity" of creative writing that hampers pedagogy ("Professional" 210).). "Perhaps most evident," Vanderslice writes, "is that the teaching and learning of Creative Writing, like that of most disciplines, is not well served by black-and-white generalizations that Creative Writing can't be taught, that attempts to focus on teaching and reflect up on its institutions and practices only distract from the sacred process of composition" (72). Elsewhere, Ritter complains that the "false dichotomy of creative writing versus composition has served writing faculty well, allowing creative writing teachers to self-marginalize" ("How the Old Man Does It" 92). When practitioners don't buy in to critical inquiry, it is almost impossible for creative writing studies to take a place in

English studies alongside literature and composition. Resistance to academic examination certainly owes a lot to Romantic notions of genius and inspiration, but composition and literature, like creative writing, also went through a period of strong resistance against academic inquiry, as described by some of the classic authors of our discipline, like Berlin, Kitzhaber and Graff.

It's not unusual that a vanguard would have claims against the traditional strands of a field. This tension may be even higher in those disciplines that include a practical as well as theoretical branch. Some practitioners resist the idea of quantifying, reproducing or even examining pedagogical praxis. Deriding the resistant traditionalists can accomplish three major tasks for a nascent discipline. First, it justifies the formation of a new discipline. The old guard simply has different priorities than the vanguard, compelling the creation of a new group. Additionally, describing the opposition sets the terms of the division: the "anti-intellectual" old guard is classified as stuck in the past and for creative writing this also means that the old guard is associated with the flighty, neoromantic stereotype from which CWS wishes to distance itself. Finally, claims of resistance within the ranks can create group cohesion among those who do prioritize research. Expressing frustration with traditionalists creates a boundary separating out the in-group of researchers and uniting them against their "anti-intellectual" colleagues. These complaints often focus on the deficits of traditional creative writing in the already-familiar triad of research, pedagogy and institutional involvement.

In creating complaints against the traditional attitude in these three areas, the vanguard are creating their "anti-discipline," identifying the specific reasons why their work is incompatible with the previous way of doing things and creating a foil against which their own claims for research, teaching and institutionality will shine.

Research

Saying that creative writers are not very interested in performing research isn't a particularly controversial claim, but Mayers and Donnelly argue that traditional creative writers don't just avoid conducting research themselves, but actively resist the idea of anyone researching their practices. Mayers despairs at the "anti-intellectual extremes of some creative writers" resisting research (x). He can only come up with the word "mystification" to describe the "act of shrouding a writing process in calculated uncertainty" in traditional creative writing (117). The words he uses highlights the fear that "explanation is *counterproductive* and *dangerous* to the generative process itself and should therefore not even be attempted" (117, my emphasis). If traditionalists see research as counterproductive and dangerous, then they will not only refuse to do research themselves, but hamper the research of others. In doing so, traditional creative writers have been "backing themselves into an intellectual corner" when they insist that creative writing is "beyond the realm of analysis" effectively closing off "the possibility that creative writing can be a field of intellectual inquiry rather than simply an activity or trade" (95). Traditional creative writing doesn't just refrain from research, according to Mayers, but it actively sabotages the research attempts of others by creating a culture toxic to critical inquiry.

Donnelly also castigates traditional creative writers for their extreme opposition to research. Donnelly finds this especially true in cases of pedagogical research. Donnelly suggests "the lack of empirical data and investigative studies into creative writing's teaching praxis leaves much of what goes on in the creative writing classroom unexamined, untheorized" (17) so that "studies in teaching theories [are] limited" (15) because "creative writers and writer-teachers seem to talk *around* the subject of research"

(16). The kind of research that Donnelly would like to see, such as empirical data and investigative studies of composition, would have a direct influence on education, but the traditionalists still avoid thinking about research into best practices. “This discipline” she seems to sigh, “does not produce outcome data” (16).

Partially, Donnelly can blame a lack of graduate and continual training for traditional creative writing’s antipathy to research. “The majority of [creative writing] faculty,” she writes, “do not know their history or theories that underpin their pedagogy” (133). Without an understanding of history and theory, they can’t make thoughtful changes to their pedagogy and they can’t expand research in meaningful ways, developing the uncultivated field. Donnelly identifies creative writing instructors as “less likely to inquire or research or publish scholarship on topics related to their field” than other members of the university (133).

Not only is there little research being done among creative writing faculty, but those who try to do research sometimes find the same active resistance that Bizaaro, Ritter and Mayers describe. Donnelly reports that one of her respondents “resisted sharing her workshop practices, noting ‘I’m not about to reveal my secrets’” to a researcher (50). Donnelly paints a picture of a field that, far from actively researching, disparages and resists research.

Frustration with the “mystification” of creative writing is a common complaint among the CWS vanguard. In his introduction to the textbook *Teaching Creative Writing*, Graeme Harper notes that creative writing has not developed clear standards for creating or defending knowledge. Without standards for what counts as knowledge in creative writing “the chances of having a ‘justified true belief’ are considerably diminished” (3). Patrick Bizarro meanwhile complains that “creative writers tend to be skeptical about

research that intrudes into their writing processes” (123) and blames the research gap on the “many creative writers—traditionalists—[who] would not accept it” (“Writer’s Self Reports” 124). Kelly Ritter unfavorably contrasts creative writing pedagogy with composition’s trajectory because the latter “evolved far past pedagogy-as-correction” while creative writing has “continued to shun such theoretical and, by extension, professional growth” (“How the Old Man” 87). Ritter criticizes the traditional views in creative writing while implying the composition may have an answer to disciplinary development.

All of these CWS scholars emphasize the importance of research without strictly defining what research in the field will resemble most. There is a sense that something is wrong with the lack of research, but none of them set out explicit practices or theories to define correct creative writing research. To be fair, composition and literary studies haven’t, either. Still, the pull of competing theories creates within their fields a rich debate, strengthening the legitimacy of those fields. When scholars in composition or literary studies contentiously debate particulars of theory and method, they emphasizes that knowledge creation is important enough to fight over.

Pedagogy

As Kelly Ritter points out, pedagogy and research are inextricably intertwined. For both creative writing and composition, research naturally starts in the classroom, and for CWS, unexamined teaching is a sticking point. Mayers, Donnelly and other CWS scholars reject traditional creative writing courses that purport only to discover talented writers and let their individuality shine. If creative writing pedagogy exclusively focuses on identifying great minds, then creative writing can’t be taught, and pedagogical research becomes irrelevant— creative writing can’t be taught in better or worse ways.

There can be no research into creative writing pedagogy if teaching creative writing means only identifying a lucky few and encouraging them to remain lucky.

Mayers calls the traditional perspective “institutional-conventional wisdom”: “conventional wisdom” because it is unchallenged by practitioners and “institutional” because it is integral to creative writing institutions (13). Such a perspective maintains that “writing ability is fundamentally ‘interior’ or ‘psychological’ in nature and thus the province only of special or gifted individuals and is fundamentally unteachable” (14). Faced with an unteachable subject, the task of the creative writing teacher in the “institutional conventional wisdom” becomes “to identify and encourage ‘real writers’ when and if they show up in creative writing classrooms” (15). Once the talented student shows up, the teacher needs only to facilitate self-expression. Too often, Mayers believes, creative writing instructors focus exclusively on helping “students find, through writing, their true, individual and unique selves” (115) instead of teaching them to improve.

Like Mayers, Donnelly finds fault with traditional creative writing instruction. She traces the academic stigma to “The lore of ... casual classrooms and clustered conversations, of easy ‘A’s’ and cool, eccentric teachers” (150). If such a classroom seems like a product of contemporary grade inflation, Donnelly points out that even in the twenties creative writing instructors trumpeted self-expression, claiming “all honest writing ... is the expression of the nature of the student” (qtd. 43) and that “each poet here has his own individual song” (qtd 43). Self-expression and sincerity became the only criteria for success in a traditional creative writing class, much to Donnelly’s dismay. Such conventional wisdom precludes a systematic pedagogy.

Other CWS scholars likewise look askance at traditional creative writing classes. The problem is not with administrators or students, they claim, but with the fear and

ignorance of the instructors themselves, especially regarding the workshop. Stephanie Vanderslice reports talking with a teacher-author at an unnamed “well-known undergraduate Creative Writing program” who listened to her pedagogical research with interest and then “admitted, rather ingenuously, that he had never heard of any ‘alternatives’ [sic] to the workshop ... that there might be an emerging field concerning the teaching of Creative Writing was a revelation to him—a teacher of creative writing (“Sleeping with Proust” 71). Even if “many, if not most” instructors have reservations about the workshop, they may still “they cling to its conventions” as Katharine Coles explains (8).

Institutional Structures

While research and pedagogy of traditional creative writing provide plenty of fodder for criticism among the CWS scholars, these issues commingle with institutional structures—departments and deans, promotions and points—within the university. In these matters, too, the CWS vanguard blames creative writers themselves for their marginalization. Creative writing’s attitudes towards research and pedagogy may isolate them from the rest of the university, the vanguard argues, but if individual faculty members also eschew involvement in meetings and committees, then they lose whatever flimsy visibility they might gain.

Mayers believes that creative writing itself is partially to blame for their departmental isolation because programs become “fenced-in private preserves where they can retreat from the rest of the university and do as they please” (32). This self-isolation from the university even extends to those in CWS. As creative writing research becomes more academically robust, Mayers believes “creative writers guard their territories assiduously not only against incursions by literary studies but also against incursions by

other forms of writing studies” like CWS (110). This pattern of isolation has a powerful hold on academic creative writers. Territorialism cuts off potential cross-disciplinary work and institutional visibility, Mayers argues. In many ways, creative writing isolates itself institutionally, positioning itself as “an anti-academic field existing within academic institutions” (20-21).

Donnelly’s manifesto similarly points to the way that creative writing nests within the university without integrating fully. She writes, “Creative writing in the United States, situated within a research facility, remains estranged from other disciplines [becoming] the angelic community on university and college campuses” (121). Benign neglect keeps departments from making demands on creative writing, but also creative writing doesn’t engage the department with its own needs. Separate from the rest of the department and the university, creative writing doesn’t seek to receive recognition for their own practices and priorities:

Creative writers are not necessarily compliant with the department’s mission or held to the same scholarly standards that dominate the profession as a whole. In fact, creative writers often make further distinctions between the department profession and *their* profession. (94)

From claims of “anti-intellectualism” to criticism of unexamined self-expression to charges of self-marginalization, there are many ways that the CWS distinguishes itself from traditional creative writing just as vigorously as it has from literary studies and composition. By defining their would-be discipline against these existing fields, creative writing studies seeks to distinguish itself. But the vanguard not only points out what isn’t

working currently, but also describes suggestions for future developments and specific criteria for those developments.

DEFINING A DISCIPLINE PART 2: WHAT CWS WOULD BE

Defining CWS against the foils of literary studies, composition and traditional creative writing is only part of articulating the movement's aims. The second part positively describes a vision and sets out a plan for developing the areas of research, teaching and institutional sanction. First, I will glean from the prophets of CWS what the ideal of the new field would look like and then I will describe the specific research, teaching and institutional criteria they set.

One of the key objectives for the future of CWS is its independence. When Mayers criticizes attitudes he finds in literary studies and creative writing, he consciously chooses to reject reform: reconciliation with literary studies is not an option. Attempts to assert CWS within the current structure will fail, he says, because "the ability of literary scholars to preserve their institutional authority by assimilating (and effectively rendering powerless) oppositional discourses" will eventually subsume the objectives of CWS (26). "Ultimately," says Mayers,

I believe compositionists and creative writers currently interested in reforming English studies ought to be very wary of the temptation to reconcile their fields with literary studies, given the probability that such reconciliation is only likely to reinforce the dominance of interpretation as the central methodological focus of the discipline. (114)

The literary studies hegemony, for Mayers, so pervades English departments that literary scholars will never concede power to production-based disciplines like composition and creative writing.

Literary studies' seemingly unrelenting gravity even draws in efforts to create independent writing studies departments. Mayers cites Chris Anson's description of a "highly regarded and successful independent writing program" which was "taken back (or reterritorialized) by an English department while its director was away on sabbatical" (131). Such situations, Mayers suggests, are typical of the literary studies hegemony that must be resisted through constantly patrolling the disciplinary borders to keep literature from "reterritorializing" independent programs.

Donnelly also emphasizes that creative writing studies must exist as its own separate discipline and protect its independence from other disciplines. She declares that "creative writing studies is an emergent field" (131) "still in its budding phase of development" (6), "an emerging field of scholarly inquiry" and "an academic discipline" (1). Although she recognizes that CWS may not look like well-developed fields, her assumption is that CWS will continue to assert its independence. Her declared purpose for *Establishing Creative writing studies as an Academic Discipline* is just that, a call "to advance creative writing studies as an academic discipline" (11).

Part of establishing creative writing studies, for Donnelly, is to decide whether that discipline fits in any existing departments or disciplines. She imagines that the movement will change the field of English studies in general, causing "a restructure, sophisticated in its understanding that the various disciplines within the English department have been rivals at times, partners at times" (10). In the final section of her manifesto, "The Academic Home of Creative writing studies," Donnelly examines and

rejects alliances with the various disciplines that relate to CWS, envisioning the consequences of uniting with literature, cultural studies, and composition. Even an alignment with composition fails her ideal for CWS. Instead she argues that CWS deserves “more equal-but-separate standing with its colleagues in literary studies and composition studies” (133). In the future, the new, independent discipline will “as an academic curricular entity,” develop to become “more expansive, flexible, collaborative and independent [and] it will soon receive the attention it deserves” (151). Independence for CWS will “not eliminate interdepartmental tensions,” but it may decrease bickering across the branches of English studies and it may “create more positive movement in redefining the structure of English studies” as a whole (150).

Ultimately, Mayers will come to agree with Donnelly’s rejection of even composition as an ally. In “One Simple Word: from Creative Writing to Creative Writing Studies”—published in the landmark 2009 *College English* special issue on creative writing and its discontents—Mayers argues for a new discipline, distinct from traditional creative writing’s “*de facto* employment program for writers” (218). Mayers doesn’t object to the patronage model of creative writing itself, but creative writing includes what Mayers defines as creative writing studies, a difference of “one simple word,” as his title suggests. Mayers’ essay in *College English* in 2009 shows development of his ideas since his earlier book *(Re)writing Craft* (2005).

The call for an independent discipline has been echoed by other members of the vanguard. Memorably, Patrick Bizzaro opens one article by declaring: “By now it is a truth readily observable: Creative writing has become a discipline in English studies” (“Writer’s Self Reports” 119). Such declarations argue against folding into other disciplines, suggesting that their differences are irreconcilable with other branches of

English studies. But it's not enough just to declare a trajectory for disciplinarity. The vanguard must set up expectations for the discipline's practice.

Independence as a discipline will depend on the triad of disciplinary characteristics. Mayers argues early in *(Re)Writing Craft* for "extensive and systematic" reform "of theory, pedagogy, and institutional/disciplinary structures" (xi) for creative writing studies to successfully emerge. In other words, he outlines a definition for creative writing studies in terms of research, teaching and institutional support. Donnelly also foresees the day when CWS "will stand on equal ground with literary studies and composition studies because its academic degrees will be conferred upon *academically-trained* candidates, because its rigorous programs exist *within* the community, and because it can locate its authority in its *own* scholarship" (10-11). She makes the same trifold claim for research, teaching and institutional support, and stresses the goals for creative writing studies—not reform, but revolution.

Research

Traditional creative writing, as described by its critics, struggles against research objectives. But against this backdrop, Mayers points to "a type of writing that is just now beginning to emerge" in creative writing—"the scholarly analysis of creative production" which "differs significantly from most literary scholarship" for focusing on production instead of interpretation (12). Not only should creative writing studies be a research field, but it will be scholarly in ways distinctive from other disciplines. Its knowledge making will be of a different sort than other disciplines. Mayers calls this type of research "craft criticism," which he defines as "critical prose written by self- or institutionally identified 'creative writers'" (34).

In Mayers' definition, craft criticism is "glued" together "by the tendency to challenge or question the institutional-conventional wisdom of creative writing" (47). Craft criticism, Mayers declares, may be "variously referred to as research, scholarship or publication" (35). However it is termed, craft criticism should be "regarded as an emergent theoretical scholarship of creative writing" (63). The critical feature of craft criticism is "a concern with textual production" though "Interpretation is not necessarily primary" for exemplary craft critics like Donald Revell (37), who instead want "to explore how certain conditions surrounding the act of writing poetry make the composition ... a viable (indeed, sometimes the only) option for poets" (38). Another craft critic Mayers identifies is Michael Heller, who, in the journal *American Poetry Review*, articulates "a rhetorical perspective on poetic production" that would "align creative writers much more clearly with their colleagues in composition" (122). In that article, Mayers sees Heller move the poet out of the purely "literary" space into the "entire language production of the available culture. ... Indeed, a more complete understanding of rhetoric seems now to be essential to poesis" (qtd 121). Mayers finds some scholarly creative writers unwitting doing precisely the sort of work that he would classify as craft criticism.

Mayers' examples don't just come from the world of creative writing; some thinkers who are traditionally considered compositionists fit into his description of craft critics. He taps Anis Barwashi's studies in genre and creativity theory since creative writing "could be well positioned to work toward such a theory" and because "such a theory would be helpful to the academic enterprise of creative writing" (116). Mayers even theorizes that "Emig's early process theory was actually a theory of creative writing developed outside the institutional parameters of creative writing" (102).

The example of Emig fits into Mayers's belief that teaching is one of the more fertile areas for craft criticism. He cites Wendy Bishop's "pioneering work" and the work of Mary Ann Cain, Patrick Bizzaro and Kelly Ritter as exploring "the realm of pedagogy" for "connections... between composition and creative writing" through "employing techniques and theories hitherto reserved for composition scholarship" (xi). Additionally "basic questions like whether and/or how creative writing should be taught in academic settings" drives Mayers' craft critics (42). Research especially includes "a pedagogical element ... an evaluative element [or] attempts to situate the writing of poetry and fiction, and the teaching of poetry and fiction writing, within institutional, political, social and economic context" (34). The setting of the classroom and the process of learning to write can keep research grounded in text production rather than interpretation.

Donnelly also sees research in creative writing as important in defining creative writing studies as dependent on "scholarly inquiry and research" (1). Donnelly brings in fellow prophet Bizzaro to second her vision of "a discipline that is characterized by what it construes as proof of evidence" (6). She quotes Jeri Kroll who points out that writers "must understand—as scientists must—what else is being done" in CWS (qtd. 125). Although Mayers' early work sees craft criticism as a *mode* of research within composition, Donnelly believes that creative writing research demonstrates a need for an entirely new discipline. Eventually, Mayers' later work agrees with Donnelly's survey of the field: "These days, academic creative writers [...] are far more likely to produce scholarship that relates specifically to the field of creative writing" ("Revolution Number Three" 156).

Even with a perceived increase of creative writing scholarship, Donnelly admits “we don’t know how to articulate these methods [of creative writing research] quite yet as we’ve not yet begun to explore them in any significant context” (126), and that creative writing “remains divergent from the scholarly norm within English studies” (132), but still proposes “more of this wider practice-based research (125). She knows that creative writing research will be different from other disciplines. She references the need for “full control of its own research methods ... rather than to have these conditions awkwardly shaped by traditional university research standards” (126).

Donnelly envisions institutional space for creative writing studies’ research work, a space “that articulates [creative writing studies’] research agenda and academic forums and that permits its practitioners to claim creative writing studies as a research area” (134-5). Creative writing studies, for Donnelly, depends on “collecting, compiling, and presenting data” (6); in other words, creative writing studies is to be a knowledge-producing field.

Just as Mayers does, Donnelly embraces research into pedagogy. “As a developing field of inquiry, scholarship and research” writes Donnelly, creative writing studies “implements a more intelligent and practical curricular design” (10). An important part of scholarship of creative writing studies “explores and challenges the pedagogy of creative writing” (1). Donnelly sees pedagogical research as key since “the development of our pedagogy has not kept pace” with recent increased enrollment (133). In some cases, “teachers are unaware of their practices,” necessitating research into existing practices as well as new interventions (21).

Composition is also, for Donnelly, a source for creative writing studies research. “How might we integrate composition and literary studies theory?” she asks other

creative writers (64). Donnelly, with her background in both composition and creative writing, makes an analogy with composition research: “in order for creative writing to advance as an academic discipline in its own right, it must undergo an inquiry into its field, much as composition studies did in the middle to late 20th century (78).

What shape CWS research would take is not clearly defined in Donnelly’s work, but it might look like the work that takes up the bulk of *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline*: study of the pedagogical methods and ideologies of creative writing programs and classrooms. *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline* proceeds through pedagogical theories of creative writing and also incorporates composition studies methods like surveys and interviews. While Donnelly never has a “methods” section in her book, she first outlines existing pedagogies and then uses the surveys she conducted of creative writing instructors to describe those perspectives in more detail. There aren’t any charts or tables in *Establishing Creative writing studies as an Academic Discipline*, but she quotes practitioners she contacted via a survey, sometimes with their names and institutions, and sometimes—if the responses are used in an unfavorable way—anonously. Donnelly’s manifesto is largely an example of the kind of research that she would like to see other creative writers doing: “I wish to join that discussion and debate by continuing the field’s inquiry and offering ... a more enlightened view” of the creative writing pedagogy (79).

Donnelly’s research into teaching practices of instructors models one such method of inquiry, but she likewise identifies a “well-developed pedagogical strand of inquiry” in the works of Patrick Bizzaro (2004), Kelly Ritter (2001), Joseph Moxley (1989), Anna Leahy (2005), Katherine Haake (2000)—and Tim Mayers’ (2005) *ReWriting Craft* (7). These works all approach creative writing from a pedagogical framework of

investigation; however, they are radically disparate in methods and rigor. Leahy and Haake look at creative writing workshops through the lens of social criticisms of power and gender, while Ritter and Bizzaro draw more on educational psychology. Moxley's compilation, as an early entry to the field, fails to evince the academic rigor to which Donnelly aspires for the field. Still, she is heartened to observe that "More and more we're ... sharing our pedagogy with others in a more visible and concrete way" in "articles, collections, interviews and public addresses" (50). The methods may vary, she says, but the energy is there.

Other creative writing scholars urge serious scholarship, but are similarly hazy on exact methods. Nigel McLoughin, for instance, highlights the need to use "practice-led research to inform teaching and transferring the skills [...] to students in the most efficient and writerly manner possible" (88). Not surprisingly, English studies are frequently invoked as a space to discover research methods for creative writing. Composition and literary studies are seen as a corrective to so-called mystification in creative writing. Patrick Bizzaro suggests picking up Wendy Bishop's research method of ethnography, including "develop[ing] new methodologies" that will "include epistemologies that inform AWP, STC, MLA and other influential gathering places for teachers in English studies" ("Writers Wanted" 267). Another scholar in creative writing also makes the comparison with composition in combining teaching and research: "As composition came to disciplinarity, few compositionists wanted to leave behind their identities as teachers while they continued to grow as scholarly writers," and so creative writing faculty must expand their identities as researchers and scholars (Cook 138). Wendy Bishop herself, at the end of her life, saw changes in creative writing scholarship and encouraged embracing literary-studies theory. In a presentation given at the AWP conference in 2003,

Wendy Bishop told creative writers, “theory is for all of us [because] it’s democratic if we make it so” and to demonstrate, she gives a list of creative writing controversies, including the use of workshops and the role of the PhD, where research could “help us return to and reconsider [these] long-standing claims more systematically” (246). “Theory,” she argues, “is practical *and* performative” for all writers and, moreover, she adds, it is “the *lingua franca* of [English] departments” (244).

According to these manifestos, for CWS to be an autonomous discipline, it must create a community with knowledge-making expectations and cohesive methods. Instead of positing that creative writing is exclusively about creating an aesthetic product, creative writing studies proponents argue that there is an emerging community committed to creating disciplinary standards for writing and publishing. These proponents underline CWS’s potential for research in a variety of ways.

Teaching

CWS, like composition, is a teaching subject. As Ann Penrose suggests, “composition experts are identified not by the possession of a finite body of knowledge but by a rhetorical understanding that motivates them [...] to meet teaching challenges in varied contexts” (“Professional Identity” 121). Similarly, teaching in a certain way, rather than just researching in a certain way, becomes what holds the body of practitioners together. Mayers and Donnelly likewise promote conscious teaching methods to define their developing field. In short, establishing creative writing as an academic discipline means establishing it as a teachable one.

CWS scholars suggest that traditional creative writing’s emphasis on talent leads to sloppy pedagogy and classes and courses that are at best indulgent and at worst defeatist. The creative writing workshop, especially, is seen as emblematic of an

uninterrogated tradition, and is exposed by several CWS scholars. However, just as with CWS research, CWS pedagogy focuses more on identifying the problems rather than how, exactly, creative writing should be taught.

Responding to the presumed-common lore that writing is unteachable becomes the first goal of the creative writing pedagogy study. As Graeme Harper once declared, the “primary epistemological ammunition ... for Creative Writing in the academy *must* be the declaration of a viable and systemic pedagogy” (qtd. Vanderslice “Sleeping with Proust” 66). Anna Leahy cites the necessity of “field-specific teaching mentors, pedagogy guidebooks [and] shared bodies of knowledge about what it means to lead a creative writing course” (xii). But, sadly, “the stronger teachers’ sense of themselves as writers, the less visible they will be in the field of writing pedagogy,” but actually “writing and the teaching of writing are mutually enriching activities” (Bizzaro and Culhane xii). The vanguard stresses the need for a teachable creative writing, one that embraces a hyphenated writer-teacher existence among its practioners.

In *(Re)Writing Craft*, Mayers repudiates the traditional perspective that “writing ability [...] is the province only of special or gifted individuals and is fundamentally unteachable” (14). “I do not mean that things like ‘talent’ and ‘inspiration’ and ‘voice’ don’t exist,” he clarifies, but the approach must change: “Talent, for instance, might be viewed not as something a few lucky people are born with, but rather as something that develops” (120). Traditional views on pedagogy are insufficient, but they might be the starting point for meaningful transformations. Old structures of pedagogy, Donnelly declares, must change as writers “question how we might re-envision and revise existing course work” (8). Ironically, “Creative writing students may be ahead of educators in the discipline in terms of ‘thinking out of the box.’” Donnelly suggests, “if teachers consider

that as part of an institutionalized field, they generally continue to think of themselves as still ‘inside the box’” (94). Donnelly finds traditional creative writing provincial: “creative writing as a field and as a prospering university entity, continues to be invested in principles of self-expression and the sentiments of Romanticism” (45). Generally, she derides the myth that “the artist ... is seen as gifted, imbued with creativity; writing comes easily” because these myths “suggest to students that the writing process does not require much work, practice or revision” (48). This attitude transfers down to the students themselves, who, in workshops “tend to comment on more surface issues” instead of the kind of work-intense revision that characterizes other writing projects (64). For Mayers and Donnelly, attitudes that emphasize only talent and discovery are toxic to teachers and students.

Other creative writing scholars have misgivings about traditional creative writing instruction and how the received wisdom of pedagogy comes to be received. Nigel McLoughlin writes, “Since most Creative Writing teachers learn to teach through watching their predecessors teach them, most pedagogical practices are passed on in a rather unstructured, piecemeal and almost osmotic or subliminal fashion” (90). Kelly Ritter’s 2001 study in *College English* surveyed the somewhat abysmal state of creative writing training—most instructors she found never were required to study creative writing pedagogy. CWS scholars argue that this does not have to be the case.

Teachability is a quality that many disciplines take for granted, but in the arts and humanities, teachability flies against ideas of inborn ability and supernatural inspiration. Issues of teachability may come up in production-based disciplines, but it isn’t unheard of in interpretive fields either. In some ways, the traditional perspectives of pedagogy give CWS scholars a different starting point from compositionists, with different assumptions

to counter. Literary studies, too, was once subject to the criticisms of “taste,” a concept that was alternatively described as unteachable, or else only cultivated in those who were already endowed with native talent. The latter proposition led the way for literary studies to develop as a scholarly field, and the methods of training those born with the capacity to appreciate art—exposure and guidance by an advanced mentor—are prevalent in creative writing, especially in the pedagogical method of the workshop.

The Workshop and Other Options

The creative writing workshop is the scapegoat of traditional creative writing for many CWS scholars. The manifesto writers believe that workshops encourage less rigorous approaches to writing. For instance, Mayers finds traditional workshops emblematic of traditional creative writing pedagogy: “the workshop format itself, with its near-constant direct focus on the student text, works against the consideration of” more rhetorical issues of audience and purpose (148). Most modestly he suggests that creative writing workshops should incorporate other activities that will relate “to larger social, political and rhetorical trends” (148). Because of its prevalence in creative writing pedagogy, the workshop becomes the litmus test of an unhealthy attitude towards pedagogy and research.

Traditional philosophies lead to traditional methods. These methods downplay rhetoricality and audience in favor of sentence-level word choice. In Mayers’ mind, the workshop “primarily focuses on the text’s formal and aesthetic qualities, letting social and political considerations into classroom discourse infrequently, intermittently, and usually only with the implication that such considerations are of a lower order than formal and aesthetic ones” (139). To illustrate, Mayers relates his own workshop experience. When he presented a poem to a class, students and instructor alike focused on

changing words or cutting out short sections, but then, in the last minutes of the workshop, the professor made an off-the-cuff remark about how the poem reminded him of a “way to sell wine coolers” (140-1). This cursory comment, while made only in transition to the next piece of student writing was the only reference to genre and purpose that Mayers had received during the workshop and, over time, it radically transformed how he composed his poem. The comment “hinted at concerns that venture beyond the sphere of mere technique and into the wider sphere of rhetoric” (142). The workshop at its worst, for Mayers, is an exercise in collective navel-gazing without the recourse a rhetorical perspective would bring.

Donnelly is similarly unimpressed with traditional workshop methods of pedagogy. In fact, challenging the workshop becomes vital to the project of making CWS a discipline. “If creative writers are to transform their discipline,” Donnelly declares, “then they will want to rethink their workshop components, inquire as to the model’s effectiveness, revise segments that constitute its rigor and purpose, define how the ways they teach their students to read, write, respond and revise are different than those function in literary studies and composition studies” (108). She even alludes to the superficial workshopping revisions from Mayers’ experience, before accusing that such practices, “do not help creative writers to distinguish markers of professional difference in the ways creative writing students respond to written work differently than composition studies and literary studies” (118). The discipline must grapple with the workshop in order to assert itself.

Donnelly invokes other members of the CWS vanguard like Ostrom, Ritter, Vanderslice, Bizzaro and Mayers, important scholars whose work challenges the creative writing workshop tradition (73). The CWS movement must redefine the workshop, but

they are not alone in this perspective. Practicing instructors themselves aren't pleased with some aspects of the workshop, as Donnelly quotes one teacher: "Our judgments are probably worth a tenth of what students give us credit for" (qtd. 40). Even though the workshop model is prevalent among practitioners, Donnelly finds that many of her respondents recognize it as a flawed pedagogical system, but aren't familiar with other options (115-118). One purpose of the manifestos is to open up some of the options for creative writing instruction beyond the workshop.

Mayers primarily focuses on the introductory creative writing course as a site of reform. The time has come, he declares, to "where creative writing pedagogy needs to be reexamined and refigured, not in order to eliminate the emphasis on technique but in order to imagine technique as only one among many concerns" (144). He complains that "nearly all the creative writing courses I have taken have focused so sharply on the student text" to the exclusion of "any rhetorical relationship to the world in which it presumably must operate" (139). For instance, Mayers wonders what might happen if, instead, students might be taught things like the way "writers of fiction consider the way fictional expectations [of the audience] are formed, even though these expectations are complex and always changing" (62). Similarly important is "a relinquishing—by the teacher—of the will to control students' textual experiences" (88).

Donnelly evaluates each pedagogy in her taxonomy to suggest alternatives to the workshop that provide "refreshing opportunities for the discipline to shift the workshop tenor from its current default mode of finding fault to addressing the writerly process of what choices a writer makes and *how* those choices affect the reading of the work" (119). Like Mayers, she recommends a rhetorical perspective for creative writing: "the workshop at the PhD level might be more variable than the tired 'shopping' of 'works' to

include more critical exigency” (104), like whether a poem seems like a commercial for wine coolers. Donnelly also recommends imitation and modeling. A pedagogy of modeling “allows our creative writing students some basis of risk-free practice as well as incremental steps towards knowledge acquisition, experimentation and empowerment” (57). She suggests “a scaffolding of writerly-reading courses that supplement the workshop model” (112). Imitation also “is effectual in the sense that students practice a particular style or learn techniques by mimicry” (58).

Other scholars also seek new pedagogical methods. Vanderslice lists Bishop, and Mayers along with Hans Ostrum, Katherine Haake, Patrick Bizarro and Mary Ann Cain “to name a few” as some of the vanguard who “promote reflective teaching in the creative writing classroom, to suggest alternatives to the traditional ‘workshop’ and to unpack its aims and intentions” (“Sleeping with Proust” 71). Additionally, Coles sees good reason to be skeptical of the traditional pedagogy of the workshop. She herself objects to the knee-jerk reactions of readers in workshops who “like” and “dislike” their way through a piece (9), instead of thinking about larger questions of audience and purpose. Like Donnelly, Coles recommends mimesis as a potential practice that expands students beyond simple approval or word-level changes (15) and, like Mayers, she suggests more rhetorical savvy as a class begins to “see how many possibilities for interpretation they have built into their works,” asking “not *Does it work?* but *How does it work?*” (emphasis in original, 14). These voices within CWS identify the creative writing workshop as a lightning rod of the problems with traditional pedagogy. Ideas of genius and native talent lead students to think that their responsibilities are either to wholesale approve or disapprove a piece, or simply to change minor parts of the work—not to consider deeper rhetorical questions of genre, audience or purpose. It’s not

coincidental that rhetoric and composition are the ideals for reform in creative writing pedagogy.

Composition Pedagogy

Both Mayers and Donnelly look to composition pedagogy as an example of how to develop a robust discipline from a production-driven perspective. Mayers offers suggestions of how to improve creative writing pedagogy and even incorporate it into composition. These range from encouraging writing as both “writing-as-discovery and writing-as-instrument” in all classes (135) to offering writing courses that defy disciplinary categorization where students may “choose to write in whatever genres seem most appropriate to them in dealing with the issue” (156). Donnelly also compares creative writing teaching standards to Sharon Crowley’s description of a composition classroom (39). CWS scholars point to methods of composition pedagogy for creative writing to emulate in the classroom.

It’s not just composition’s methods of teaching that CWS wants to incorporate, but the actual attention to the issue: Donnelly connects creative writing to the questions of teachability “which have been asked long before the new compositionists embodied a constructive view that ‘genius’, ‘imagination’ and ‘power’ were not given but obtainable” (82). Later, Donnelly emphasizes the training that composition affords in “Creative Writing and Composition” when she observes that “I was trained to teach composition, but I received no formal education for the teaching of creative writing” (106).

Creative writing scholars call for a well-developed pedagogy and frequently seek to replace the neoromanic traditions of creative writing with composition attitudes and practices. This is no small task in light of pervasive and historic suspicions of pedagogy in traditional creative writing. For a presentation at the 2003 AWP meeting, Wendy

Bishop writes “because pedagogy implicates us in evaluation, we have additional strong responses to the term” but creative writing scholars must “turn pedagogy from a linguistic sleight-of-hand [...] into a useful term” (“The More Things Change” 241). The anxiety that pedagogy doesn’t *do* anything for creative writing is something that CWS scholars must contend with, especially when arguing against as deeply held a tradition as the workshop course or when trying to emulate composition’s methods and focus.

The vanguard challenges the methods and purposes of traditional creative writing instruction as well as the roles it espouses for students and teachers. In the forthcoming chapter on creative writing pedagogy, I will describe in more detail the ways that traditional creative writing embraces a “neoromantic” view of writing and how the CWS vanguard opposes that perspective on method, purpose, students and teachers. I will also summarize the results of a survey and series of interviews which I conducted with practicing creative writing instructors to determine if the neotraditional perspective is losing ground to the principles the vanguard promotes.

Institutional support

Mayers and Donnelly both are concerned about research and pedagogy in creative writing, but their biggest interests are the institutional support structures for research and pedagogy, especially within the university. All of the theoretical “convergence between composition and creative writing may turn out to matter little if composition and creative writing continue to be marked off as separate territories within most English departments,” says Mayers (97). Later he underlines the idea again: “Theoretical change may look radical on the surface, but if it leaves existing structures untouched, it has been effectively neutralized” (106). Institutional support is critical for CWS scholars to prop

up new expectations for research and teaching. “The question of institutionality,” Mayers concludes, is “one of the key questions” of creative writing (88).

The institutions that most easily come to mind in questions of disciplinarity are universities. Creative writing’s position in universities has been fraught since colleges first began to sponsor writers. Mayer challenges “the position that institutionalization within creative writing programs is harmful to the enterprise of poetry writing” and agrees with Joe Wenderoth that “poetry-writing *belongs* in the university” (55). Donnelly admits that, although she has sympathy to R. V. Cassill’s suggestion that creative writers leave the university (76), the university is still a decent place for creative writing to remain. The question remains—where in the university?

(Re)Writing gradually builds towards the proposal of “either the creation of stand-alone writing departments or a dramatic restructuring of English departments” (167). New classes might not be enough because, according to Mayer, the “cafeteria counter” of classes “exert no fundamental influence on the over-arching disciplinary structure” (132). While creative writing classes continue to fill and may house many, or even the majority of students taking an English course, student-facing institutional structures may be invisible to the power structure of the university as a whole.

Like Mayers, Donnelly sees institutional structures as necessary for creative writing studies. From the beginning, Donnelly emphasizes institutionality: “The advancement of creative writing studies in the academy depends on institutional advocacies to include the support of creative writing faculty” (6). This shift justifies her desire for a separate discipline.

The institutional structure within the university must be strong enough to support itself. Preparatory to separate writing departments may be separate minors and majors for

serious students of creative writing. Ideally, Mayers envisions “independent departments” for writing studies (130), but would be satisfied also with “a minor or major ‘track’ ... *within* an English department” (131). Donnelly, too, frets that there is a dearth of majors in creative writing. She says “there are more colleges and institutions that offer creative writing classes without a major or minor” than otherwise (98). A general requirement isn’t enough: those in Donnelly’s survey are cited as displeased that creative writing is used to fulfill humanities or intensive writing requirements (99). The key problem seems to be that there are two different motives for those taking creative writing. For one group of students, the creative writing class is part of a liberal arts education, an exploration of self-expression, or a mode of interpreting literature through production. For other students, creative writing classes are apprenticeships in learning a trade or else a step in an academic trajectory comparable to a literature course, with rigorous analysis and institutional standards.

In order to accommodate the different educational needs of the creative writing students, Donnelly imagines two tracks, one for an “appreciation of literature through writing and one that centers on a degree program situated for the advancement of a writing (and reading) for its own sake” (100). She recommends the same division for the MFA: split it between a craft program for practicing writers and a track that focuses on “the pedagogy of creative writing, creative writing studies, composition” (103).

Graduate degrees for creative writing also must be reformed, Donnelly says. Donnelly celebrates the rise of the creative writing PhD. She points to the “significant rise in creative writing programs,” especially the number of PhD programs (78), but insists such PhDs should have a critical element, or at very least should “complement the discipline’s current scholarship and pedagogy in small measure to include more training

of creative writing students in the history and practice of the field” (125). Pedagogy, also, must not be neglected, although currently “the majority of graduate creative writing programs do not include coursework related to the pedagogy of creative writing” (16). Over all, Donnelly claims, “There is an urgent need for such training not only to better position creative writing graduates in the marketplace, but as a way to also best prepare instructors who can teach the new skills formulated through the field’s inquiries, research and discoveries” (150).

Several CWS scholars point to the inroads being made in developing such dedicated programs. The separate departments, separate minors, majors and PhD programs often represent institutional sanction for a discipline. Several creative writing scholars (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007; Bizzaro, 2011; and Andrews, 2009; Thebo 2013, for example) have pointed out the growth of the creative writing PhD and increasingly autonomous departments of creative writing in universities as important evidence for disciplinary autonomy. For Thebo, an explosion of students taking creative writing has led to “More creative writing departments [who have] seceded from English Studies [...] and more stand-alone degrees were offered” while “Creative Writing BA and MA degree courses in American, Australia, Canada and Britain rapidly proliferated” (36). Thebo argues that with so many students and so many teachers, creative writing will have increased authority in the university to define its own standards and expectations.

While composition’s professionalization came in response to “dealing with” the scores of underprepared writers, CWS’s professionalization comes in response to undercommitted writers. Scholarly standards for a PhD program, a major or minor track or other program point to institutional reform. The manifestos argue for increased rigor among the scores of creative writers at all levels of the university. This institutional rigor

would apply not just to creative writing students, but also to those who would teach the increasingly popular courses.

Hiring

Because classrooms and program requirements aren't the only sites of institutional change, Mayers declares "attendant changes are also necessary in current hiring practices and professional organizations" (130). In fact, "Perhaps one of the surest paths toward meaningful change," argues Mayers, "will be in the creative reimagining of criteria for new hires" (157). Specifically he suggests that instead of hiring a literary studies scholar who can "tack on" teaching composition, colleges consider hiring a hypothetical "novelist or poet who also had training in composition studies and a keen, demonstrated interest in eighteenth-century Britain" who "might be more capable than either the 'straight' composition or literature specialist of integrating various aspects of this faculty position" (162).

Donnelly also notes how a traditional creative writing department "maintains—even today—the mysterious element of creativity and hires successful writers on the assumption that they make the best teachers" (1). What Donnelly calls the "great writers' approach" frequently includes, "star system adulations" that only "cycle the university perception... that only notable writers who are well-published with prestigious presses can teach creative writing" (83). This star system in the sixties and forward led to a cycle where "universities ... received endowments in part because of their teachers' writing prestige, which in turn, drew student interest, increased enrollment and opportunities for further expansion" (86). Donnelly fears that graduate programs don't teach pedagogy in part because the AWP "disregards an endorsement of graduate training in the preparation of teaching" (144). Her proposal for more rigorous PhD programs could reverse this

trajectory. “Today,” she says “creative writing graduates compete for many of the same jobs as their rhetoric and composition and literary studies counterparts” and “mixed course loads are the norm” so “theory-based PhD creative writing” candidates... present with more multi-faceted attractiveness” (133).

Kelly Ritter has probably studied what she calls the “star system” of creative writing more than any other CWS scholar. The professional writers who enter the academy “are ‘glamorous’--and certainly thus serve as celebrities for their home departments and institutions,” Ritter says, noting “creative writing star faculty are pulled into academia by means of the light teaching/ high salary model, and they frequently make a living doing visiting stints rather than tenure-track committed appointments” (“How the Old Man Does It” 85). She cites Rick Moody’s *Atlantic Monthly* article that “the more desirable a creative writing instructor is, the less likely he or she is to want a tenure-track position” (qtd 89). This practice of hiring “perpetuated the real separation that already existing between creative writing faculty and the rest of the university” (89).

Hiring practices have enormous sway in a discipline’s self-perception, in part because even the most famous writer in residence will be expected to teach a workshop or seminar. These “star writers” will pass their pedagogies, along with the legacy of their status, to the aspiring writers in their classes. Additionally, the hiring models will drive young PhD and MFA students to prepare accordingly; if only star authors get jobs, they will pursue nondisciplinary work. If scholars-slash-writers are wanted instead, then they will prepare academic publications instead. And as the supply of scholarship on creative writing increases, so, too, must the publication outlets for that research.

Journals and Conferences

Journals and conferences in English studies always have provided some scholarly space for creative writing. Even landmark composition journals like *College Composition and Communication* once included issues of poetics. Mayers gives the February 1964 issue on “Composition as Art” as a prime example (101-2) and Donnelly appreciates the “increasingly generous space in journals like *College Composition and Communication* (CCC) and *College English*... to essays on creative writing [as well as] the rise of creative writing sessions at the College Composition and Communication Conventions since 1996” (143). Although, she notes, the NCTE didn’t “roll out a whole series of texts on creative writing pedagogies” after Moxley’s 1989 compilation (142). Despite these accommodations, both Mayers and Donnelly see a need for publication outlets for the scholar work of creative writing studies.

Practitioners might not be clamoring for outlets for publication. Mayers points out that creative writers “do not consider their work ‘scholarship’” and have not “engendered the development of scholarly journals where research finding can be published” but instead have “spawned the development of numerous journals and magazines where poets and fiction writers can publish their work” (11). Part of the perceived lack of creative writing studies outlets comes from a perception of how the university values those publications. Donnelly mentions as an example that Moxley’s “groundbreaking” 1989 anthology *Creative Writing in America: Theory and Pedagogy* wasn’t eligible in his tenure review (121). The manifestos cite both internal and external pressures as limiting publication of creative writing scholarship.

While other CWS scholars may be frustrated at the lack of institutional support for their research, they still point to an increase in publications. Graeme Harper and Jeri

Kroll in “Creative Writing in the University” celebrate the “number of books published in recent years” and the “research-led debates” published in “independent specialist journals” (1) and even Mayers mentions an increase in published research in book and article forms (“One Simple Word”). A critical mass of publications in a discipline requires not just the work of individual scholars, but also the institutional structures to support and reward such publications.

Because conferences and journals are often closely related, both Mayers and Donnelly see some hope in the conferences that often spawn publications. Mayers suggests that the CCCC and AWP could merge, and take some institutional power from the MLA, “a dominance that is the tangible, lingering effect of English studies’ institutional history in America” (164). He suggests that this “might be a reasonable goal” for those few who attend both the composition and creative writing conferences (164). With presentations leading to publications, the conferences could tilt the balance in favor of text-production research. Donnelly, too, sees potential in conferences: “If the attendance at the 2011 AWP pedagogy session is any indication of the interest many writers now have in practice-based creative writing research, then we can hope for more opportunities to shape creative writing as knowledge” (125). The AWP and other institutions such as “print and online publications” will “advance new theories and practice to create an intellectual global community that learns from the research of the field” (125).

Publications and conferences support the academic work of creative writers who do more than write at a university, those who also build up meaningful upper-division and graduate programs, research and teach. CWS scholars claim that universities can also create a more robust creative writing discipline through not exclusively hiring star

authors. In these recommendations, Mayers and Donnelly emphasize the way that institutions from universities to journals are integral to the development of a creative writing studies discipline.

CONCLUSIONS

Donnelly and Mayers were writing at different times, for different publishers and from different backgrounds, but they overlap in their concerns and aspirations for creative writing. The members of the vanguard are not necessarily going to walk in lock-step as they progress their views of the discipline, but they will run through similar issues. Just as the previous chapter demonstrated, disciplinarity develops gradually, in starts and fits, as a discussion within the vanguard and against the perceived complaints of traditionalists. The spotty development of a discipline, though, belies the rich similarities among its promoters. Although Donnelly, Mayers and other members of the vanguard may not agree on all of the specifics of how the discipline will develop, they make similar claims about the importance of research, teaching and institutional support.

Donnelly, Mayers, and their colleagues describe a rich research culture, where investigation methods and practices are more in line with composition and literary studies' use of theory and study than neoromantic ideas about inspiration. Both manifestos similarly reject traditional views of teaching creative writing, including the unexamined workshop, in favor of more rhetorical approaches, including mimesis. To support these changes in research and teaching, the manifestos propose institutional supports in university structure and hiring, as well as in journals and conferences to publish pedagogical research.

The vanguard may envision ideals, from rigorous research standards to a process-based pedagogy to independent programs, but if the vanguard is only creating blueprints

that practitioners aren't willing to build, the discipline will not develop. In CWS the Mayers, Donnellys, Harpers, Vanderslices and Ritters can set up what they see as standards, but the teachers, researchers, publishers and students must move towards those ideals to cement a discipline.

My next three chapters will investigate the relationship between the vanguard ideal and practitioner reality. The next chapter will look at the publication of research and the editorial decisions of *New Writing*, a journal for CWS, to see if the research goals espoused by Mayer, Donnelly and others are being fulfilled. In the following chapter, I seek evidence of Vanderslice's "reflective teaching in the creative writing classroom," through surveys of creative writing instructors at American universities; Finally, to discover if there might be Mayers' "dramatic restructuring" within English institutions, I interviewed actual creative writing program directors. I'll use these surveys and interviews to uncover whether instructors and administrators in American universities begin to realize pedagogical and institutional ideals. The manifestos look towards an ideal; investigation and assessment look to reality.

Chapter Three: Research and the Promise of a Manifesto Journal

Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beautiful forms of things:--
We murder to dissect.

—William Wordsworth, “The Tables Turned”

In 1798, when Wordsworth wrote the poem excerpted above, Romanticism was just beginning to show signs of becoming an aesthetic juggernaut, eventually setting the tone for many Western assumptions about creative production. With a studied scorn of over-analysis and emphasis on the spontaneous, the legacy of Romanticism continues to influence traditional creative writers, who would, along with Wordsworth, implore the young poet to “quit your books” (1) and insist “Books! Tis a dull and endless strife” (9). Traditional, neoromantic creative writing finds no need for scholarly analysis of creative production and pedagogy. But, for proponents of creative writing studies, the “meddling intellect” leads to the meaningful scholarly research essential to establish a discipline.

In the last chapter, the manifestos of the CWS identified disciplinary goals in the research-pedagogy-institution triad. The first part of that triad is important to the CWS vanguard—the production, regulation and dissemination of scholarly research in creative writing. Mayers, for one, directly contradicts Wordsworth when he urges young MFAs to produce scholarly writing (*(Re)writing* 144). Instead of avoiding research, CWS embraces it as part of their disciplinary claims of independence from other disciplines. In this argument, they have good company: Toulmin’s requirements for disciplinarity rely heavily on knowledge production, going so far as to say that disciplines primarily differentiate themselves from parent disciplines through new sites and modes of inquiry

(400). Knowledge production justifies the existence of a discipline, and it also highlights its assumptions for valid subjects, sources, and methods.

This chapter explores the disciplinizing influence of one particular site of knowledge production, namely specialized academic journals. Journals of academic creative writing scholarship are a relatively recent development that may point to knowledge creation within CWS. Mayers heralds a surge of “creative writing-related scholarship” being published “by academic presses and journals” (“Revolution” 156-7). If scholarship in creative writing is taking place, these journals may contain the lion’s share of it.

All journals form an important part of disciplinizing, but this chapter focuses especially on what Robert Connors calls a “manifesto founding” of journals that “by their very existence argue for the worth of their individual specialties” (“Journals” 350). A dedicated specialty journal invents an academic community of authors, editors and readers who can begin to coalesce around similar questions and methods. It’s not enough, though, just to stake a disciplinary claim by establishing a journal. Someone has to publish in it and someone has to read it and someone has to stand between, as a gatekeeper of editorial standards. All parties of a journal contribute to the formation of distinct research standards. The difference between theory and practice can be striking. These manifesto-founding journals may set up a space for research to be published and read, but they are no guarantee of a clear research agenda or trajectory; published articles, determined as much by the contributors as the editors, may lack coherent patterns in subject or method.

This is just what my research on the first nine years of the manifesto founding journal *New Writing* indicates: the journal does publish scholarship, but such articles

appear only irregularly, and are so diverse that there is no clear pattern of genres, methods and style. *New Writing* does contain articles that do what might be called scholarship, but not exclusively and not consistently. Still, some articles demonstrate a commitment to scholarly discussion through their subjects, methods, citation practices and even sentence-level construction. *New Writing* is still in its infancy, but it evinces some of the characteristics of a manifesto founding journal, one that can—however inconsistently—house scholarly work of a new discipline.

JOURNALS AS LITMUS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

While disciplinary knowledge-production can take many shapes including monographs (Williams et al. 2009), textbooks (Zebroski 1999, Hyland 2004), and conference presentations (Barton 1999), the academic journal and its articles are often critical in shaping the discipline. Many disciplinary and writing-in-the-disciplines specialists (among others, Goggin, Hyland, and Becher) have turned their attention to journals, especially the early years of journals, as evidence of the formative power of disciplinary knowledge-making.

Academic journals develop a consensus of knowledge-building practices as potential authors “negotiate” with editorial staff and the journal’s imagined audience (MacDonald, 9; Hyland 1). This isn’t to say that knowledge building can only take place in dedicated, specialized journals. Some of the traditional creative writing journals invite scholarly articles alongside creative works. CWS scholars such as Tim Mayers (*(Re)Writing Craft*) and Michelene Wandor (*The Author is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else*) assert that such traditional venues of creative writing can, and do, support knowledge-producing articles, but, still, the mission of these literary journals is to publish

creative writing, not scholarship. Alternatively, journals in English studies like *College English* and *College Composition and Communication (CCC)* will sometimes include articles on creative writing in the academy, including a special issue of *College English* on creative writing in 2009. These inclusions increase CWS's visibility within the wider field of creative writing and establish its articles as scholarship placed literally alongside work in composition and literary studies. But because these journals don't focus exclusively on CWS, they can't build consensus about what CWS should look like; neither the editorial staff nor the intended audience can serve as exclusive gatekeepers of CWS knowledge.

For coalescing the research aims and methods of CWS, a dedicated journal is most attractive. Robert Connors, in his survey of composition journals, declared that "Most obviously, journals are founded because some particular group of academics wishes to proclaim and formalize its existence as a discipline" ("Journals" 350). The presence of the journal, itself, serves as an enterprising benchmark, a sort of knowledge-production "room of one's own" to affirm the validity of potential submissions and assert editorial sovereignty according to the emerging discipline's own standards and expectations. The journal would be a declaration of the knowledge-building capacities of CWS as well as a space to disseminate such research. The existence of a new academic journal proclaims that there are enough scholars interested in that area to make a quorum, including editors, readers, submitters and reviewers. Shumway and Dionne locate the importance of publications like journals in the way a publication "makes possible the anonymous surveillance and judgment of practitioners, since the discipline, rather than individuals, is perceived to be the source of such judgments" ("Introduction" 3). A

journal, more than several single-authored works, invokes an audience, a full discourse community.

The power of an academic journal is not just symbolic, but also pragmatic. If the discipline is judging the quality of work done in the journal, then the discipline has power. Journals aid disciplinarity at all levels, from editors down. “If there is a single crucial point in the process of academic professionalization, it would be the formation of a ... central journal,” writes Roger L. Geiger. “Competent and advanced figures in the field assumed positions of leadership, so that their influence became more widespread in the evaluation of scholars and scholarship. Channels of scholarly communication were also enhanced, thus bringing local networks of scholars into wider, quicker, and more regular contact” (Geiger 22). As editors and contributors are rewarded for their contributions, as the networks of scholarship strengthen, the discipline becomes more codified and prestigious and more people wish to participate as editors and contributors. Journals are the mechanism by which scholars are made.

Additionally, a dedicated journal not only provides space for a continuing conversation across a critical mass of researchers and theorists, but also can define a given field’s particular research agenda as editorial staff, potential submitting authors, and the intended audience “negotiate” the requirements for acceptance. The discourse community represented in an academic journal is one that constantly shifts and evolves with the discipline. Academic journals are poised between the disciplinary intentions of the editor and editorial staff, and the changing interests in the discipline, represented by the quality and types of submission. Said one editor, “while we welcome change and even call for change, we must work with the material that is sent to us” (qtd. in Herrington 118). Whether from articles submitted or articles accepted, journals present

the current interests of field as well as innovations that change the field. As Maureen Daly Goggin put it “Academic journals stand in a dialectical relation with a discipline [...] shaping a discipline even as they are shaped by it” (“Composing” 324). If CWS is to develop as a scholarly enterprise, it must define its modes and methods of research. This can be done a variety of ways, but for many disciplines, journals have been integral; if CWS is going to distinguish itself as a knowledge-producing field, journals will lead the way.

CREATIVE WRITING STUDIES AND THE CASE FOR CREATIVE WRITING KNOWLEDGE

Creative writing studies has long distanced itself from much of what the modern research university values in terms of knowledge-building and progress. If, as MacDonald claims, literary studies values originality (47), then traditional creative writing values the utterly unique. Each creative writing work emphasizes its creativity, even when consciously drawing on collaboration and allusion. Creative writing, as an artistic aim, doesn’t draw on a community of scholars. Additionally, creative writing doesn’t put much stock in “progress;” Shakespeare and Austen aren’t considered obsolete writers and their works still continue to draw admiration.

On the other hand, CWS does make an argument for progress. In fact, one of the primary claims for distinguishing creative writing studies from creative writing is that CWS seeks to build knowledge. Diane Donnelly, in *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline*, insists that “Creative writing studies is differentiated from creative writing by its emphasis on collecting, compiling and presenting data. This new research area with its depth of inquiry, research and scholarship will better define its professional body of knowledge in an even more useful way” (6). In his *College English* article, Mayers defines CWS as “a field of scholarly inquiry and research” (“One Simple”

218). These creative writing studies scholars see their emerging field as critically connected to the work of knowledge production and research, but they may not know, how, exactly, that research should look.

The CWS vanguard disagree about what methods constitute valid research. Donnelly's description of research in creative writing emphasizes the empirical work similar to composition, while Michelene Wandor suggests a literary theory basis for creative writing studies (*The Author is Not Dead*). Mayers uses the term "craft criticism," which initially sounds more like Wandor's research, but in later articles he comes in line with Donnelly. Patrick Bizzaro, meanwhile, suggests picking up Wendy Bishop's research method of ethnography, including "develop[ing] new methodologies" that will "include epistemologies that inform AWP, STC, MLA and other influential gathering places for teachers in English studies" ("Writers Wanted" 267). All of these CWS scholars highlight the importance of research without strictly defining what this research in the field will resemble, what the topics, methods and scope of CWS will be.

FORM AND CHARACTERISTICS OF *NEW WRITING*

For CWS to create a strong community coalescing around common problems, sites and methods of inquiry, the field needs a dedicated journal to unify pre-disciplinary practitioners. CWS's manifesto founding journal came in 2004 with the establishment of the online journal *New Writing: An International Journal of the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*. As an international journal, *New Writing* could potentially unite the developing community of creative writing scholars across the world the same way that Goggin describes CCC uniting composition instructors nationally (*Authoring*). But as an online journal, *New Writing* is not bound by the physical restrictions of page limits and mailing costs that plagued early publications of CCC (Phillips, Greenberg and Gibson)

and *Writing Lab Newsletter* (Pemberton), but is available to anyone who has access to a subscription. *New Writing* is well poised to reach a seemingly unbounded number of scholars interested in reading and writing about creative writing studies.

There are and have been creative writing journals that publish scholarly articles about creative writing, but *New Writing's* mission is different from that of these other creative writing journals. *New Writing* emphasizes knowledge-producing articles in its purpose:

New Writing **investigates** the nature of Creative Writing practice and **practice-led research** in Creative Writing. It publishes key **articles** about Creative Writing, specifically relating to Creative Writing activities **in universities and colleges**, articles on the processes of creative writers, and about the "footprints" left by Creative Writing practice throughout history, and in various cultures. And it bridges the gap between **Creative Writing in the university** and Creative Writing in the wider world. It links **Creative Writing pedagogy** with key **investigations** in **Creative Writing knowledge**. [...] *New Writing* offers an international forum for Creative Writing of the highest quality and a platform for debates about Creative Writing **teaching and practice in universities and colleges**. ("About This Journal," my emphasis)

New Writing has a clear mandate to promote scholarly research about creative writing rather than simply the products of creative writing. Just as different journals in the humanities, such as *Research in the Teaching of English* and *Writing Lab Newsletter*

created a space for their special interests and methods, when *New Writing* says that they are “The first independent journal of its kind in the world” (“About This Journal”), they assert their intentions to break away from creative writing journals in general, but still connect to the larger community of creative writing because “the journal has attracted great support from a wide range of those involved in Creative Writing throughout the world” (“About this Journal”). In this, it is distinct from literary creative writing journals, and it is uniquely an international journal for creative writing studies.

Other journals have tried to address CWS scholarship, but not with the same scope and influence as *New Writing*. For instance, although *TEXT* describes itself as an international journal, it is published by the Australasian Association of Writing Programs and focuses mostly on that region. *Creative Writing Teaching*, “dedicated to research and scholarship in the pedagogy of Creative Writing” (“Welcome”), is now defunct, demonstrating the role funding and institutional obligations can play in a journal’s history. According to its journal description, *Creative Writing Teaching* was a peer-reviewed journal. Its editor, Nigel McLoughlin, formed the online journal after receiving a grant from the U.K.’s English Subject Centre. The first year, *Creative Writing Teaching* published one issue, and expanded to two issues a year in their second year. There have been no publications since then, despite an anticipated July 2011 issue. While these other journals have and are doing important work in creative writing studies, neither of them has the lasting scope and disciplinary ambitions of *New Writing*.

New Writing establishes itself clearly as a manifesto founding journal, with a clear statement of purpose. In this, *New Writing* is very conscious of its role. Not only did *New Writing* establish a clear mission statement early in its existence, but the journal’s editor is dedicated to the development of CWS. *New Writing* is helmed by Greame Harper, a

major voice in the developing field of Creative Writing Studies. He has been the author, editor or co-editor of most of the key texts in creative writing pedagogy and theory, including *Teaching Creative Writing* (2006), *Creative Writing Studies: Practice, Research and Pedagogy* (2007), *Research Methods in Creative Writing* (2012), and *Key Issues in Creative Writing* (2012). As editor of *New Writing*, Graeme Harper writes an editorial in almost every issue that often focuses on questions of disciplinarity and institutional support for creative writing studies. Far from apologizing for creating another academic journal, Harper sees *New Writing* as inhabiting a critical position in the developing field of creative writing studies.

The founding editor has an enormous role in the shape of a new journal, including the generic characteristics. As “manifesto founding,” the professionalism of a new journal reflects the professionalism of the emerging field. When a nascent journal carefully curates its form to imitate knowledge-producing genres in other fields, it argues for the scholarship of its content. These journals imitate the genres that “define and organize [the] kinds of social interactions” (Bawarshi 335) associated with privileged academic disciplines. To align with the conventional structures of other scholarly journals is to identify with established disciplines’ methods and priorities. Organizing a journal around certain genres (e.g. scholarly article, editor’s note, book review, etc.) with certain features (e.g. abstracts, bibliographies, key words, etc.) can be aspirational, invoking audiences with a scholarly expectation.

Since its founding in 2004, *New Writing* includes ever more generic features that closely correspond with other scholarly journals. For instance, beginning in 2009, all entries (even the creative writing pieces *New Writing* publishes) began to sport abstracts. Additionally, the inclusion of keywords not only imitates other academic journals, but

implies that common issues and questions interest contributors and readers. Keywords make entries easy to search, and bundle in ways that encourage research in *New Writing*, and not just casual browsing: topics-based reading builds common sites for research. Scholarly genre features create an argument for the scholarly focus of the journal. The form of *New Writing* elicits a scholarly way of reading, implying scholarly purpose for the things that it publishes.

A journal that both explicitly and implicitly embraces academic creative writing research is a crucial resource for CWS scholars claiming disciplinaryity. A journal creates an expectation of scholarly production while shaping the requirements for successful inquiry. The “manifesto founding” of a journal is a big first step, but it is not sufficient if contributors and editors can’t negotiate clear disciplinary expectations. This study will look at *New Writing*’s capacity to coalesce its contributors towards clear sites and modes of scholarly production. The CWS community may still be fractured and uncertain in its production of knowledge, despite its best intentions.

METHODS

This study surveyed over 2100 pages of more than 270 entries throughout the entire nine-year history of *New Writing*, 2004-2012, inclusive. During this period, *New Writing* increased its publication from two to three issues a year, under the continuous direction of editor Graeme Harper. The articles were categorized into six major categories (see Table 3.1). In CWS, pedagogy and administration of creative writing programs articles focus on the pragmatic questions for practicing creative writing instructors and administrators. Program administration articles include suggestions for developing university-wide programs as well as national/international organizations. Pedagogy articles focus on classroom instruction best practices, often culled from

individual instructor's workshop practice. Both administrative and pedagogical articles focus on the teachability of the subject and the possibility that there are better and worse methods of instruction that can be replicated by practitioners operating under varying circumstances and institutions.

Articles that focus less on instruction and more on the process of writing are categorized as either practice or theory and criticism. Articles that focus on practice are concerned with how writers outside of the classroom write. These articles might discuss an individual professional writer's practices or discuss the way that practicing writers within a certain sub-group (e.g. business writers, or experimental poets) create pieces of writing. Articles that focus on theory and criticism, meanwhile, are not interested in the process of practicing writers, but in applying critical theory to those practices. These articles are more similar to what CWS scholar Tim Mayers calls "craft criticism," and are less pedagogically motivated. These categories focus on the practice of writing.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sample Title</i>
Teaching-focused		
Program Administration	Focuses on program-wide or wider pedagogical projects. Includes program development and how the course fits into a larger educational agenda.	“Teaching Creative Writing Online”
Pedagogy	Focuses on the classroom as the basis of instruction. Includes best practices.	“Rethinking the Unconscious in Creative Writing Pedagogy”
Process-focused		
Practice	How writers write: their priorities, structures and methods.	“Worlds Not Realised: The Writing of The Different”
Theory & Criticism	Focuses on theories of writing. In the case of <i>NW</i> , typically an application of theory. In the case of <i>CCC</i> , often a description of theory.	“Repulsion and Day-dreaming: Freud Writing Freud”
Product-focused		
Creative Writing	Poems, short stories, personal narratives, and other imaginative writing.	“Still Life with a Blade of Grass”

Table 3.1: Categories of articles in *New Writing*, 2004-2012

In addition to classifying articles in *New Writing* according to these major categories, articles were noted when they conformed to Richard H. Haswell’s 2005 classification of RAD (replicable, aggregatable, and data-supported) research, or whether they were attempting to do so.

RESULTS

Does creative writing studies produce and publish meaningful knowledge-creating scholarship? In a word, yes. But they do so inconsistently, with a great deal of internal variability at all levels of analysis. There is no significant RAD-style scholarly work

taking place (only 10 out of 273 entries), but many articles published in *New Writing* demonstrate hallmarks of scholarly writing: they are about scholarly topics, they include citations of other scholarship, and even down to the sentence level these articles indicate a scholarly conversation within CWS. That being said, the conversation is not robust. From acceptance rates and requirements, to the types of publications, to average citations, down to sentence subjects, *New Writing* suffers not from a complete *lack* of scholarly work, so much as a difficulty maintaining uniform scholarly standards, perhaps because of editorial decisions or because of what sort of work is being submitted to the journal. While a certain degree of unpredictability is to be expected in a developing discipline, my study of *New Writing* demonstrates that there is not yet a critical mass of CWS research. There is scholarly work being published in *New Writing*, however inconsistently.

They Say: Quantity of Publication

New Writing is getting bigger. Originally published twice yearly, in 2007 *New Writing* began publishing three issues a year. Correspondingly, there has been an increase in the total pages per year, as indicated in Figure 4. Note that total published pages have more than doubled over the nine-year span—from 147 to 426. The steepest increase in published pages occurs in the last year of the study, when there was a jump up of a hundred pages of published material. As an electronic journal, the limit on how much can be published is tied much more closely on submissions and subscribers than on material constraints. Increasing publication demonstrates interest in *New Writing* as a venue for publishing and reading creative writing scholarship.

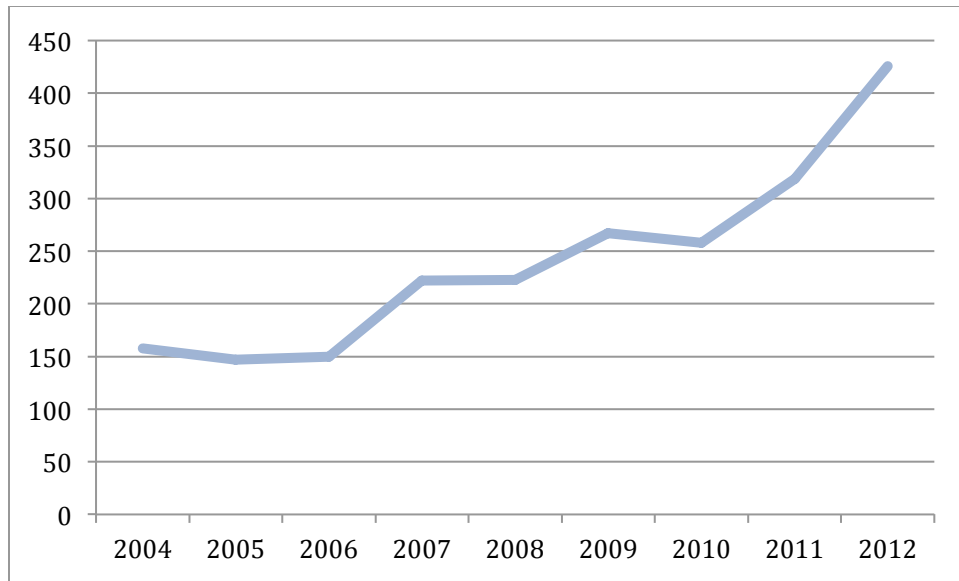


Figure 3.1: Total yearly *New Writing* published pages 2004-2012

There are more pages being published in *New Writing*, but the average length of a scholarly article is not getting much longer. In the first four years of publication, the average scholarly article was 9.6 pages long. The last five years have seen the average length increase, but not dramatically so: the total the scholarly average is 10.98. It seems that the force behind this increase in published pages is not even more scholarly articles—these have actually decreased. For the first four years, *New Writing* published an average of 84 scholarly articles, but by the last five years the average had dropped to 78.6. Instead, the driver of this increase is an increase in creative publications: from an average of 16.5 to an average of 19 a year, and each, on average, longer. Creative writing pieces increased from an average of 3.2 pages long each in the first four years to 5.6 in the last four years.

And so, quickly, the excitement over increasing publication in the flagship and founding journal of creative writing studies deflates. *New Writing*'s mission to publish CWS scholarship is still in force and there are still many scholarly articles being

published, but if an increase in publication pages is being driven by an increase in the length and number of creative works, then it may not be the case that CWS is thriving as much as an initial look at the numbers may suggest. The misplaced optimism from looking merely at one indicator of *New Writing*'s trajectory—the total pages published—belies a deeper problem. *New Writing* suffers from an inconsistency in what it publishes.

The inconsistency in *New Writing* starts at the most basic level: what is accepted and how much of it? Unlike many other journals, like *College English* and *College Composition and Communication*, *New Writing* doesn't publicize its acceptance rates. When I contacted Harper, the only editor to have helmed the journal, he gave me some insight on the journal's publication practices. Answering my question about the rates of acceptance, for both scholarly and creative pieces, he responded, "It's varied over the years on acceptance rates., [sic] from quite low to quite high (sorry that's vague!). Depends on what's submitted of course. So some periods have been different to others. Maybe anywhere from 25 - 75 %! So fairly varied over the years, depending on the month, year, period. . . ." ("acceptance rate" Graeme Harper). It's true that other journal editors must depend on what's submitted, too. The process of publishing requires that good work be submitted, or at least work that is in line with what the editors are hoping to publish. In Anne Herrington's study of *Research in the Teaching of English*, one editor sighs plaintively, "We must work with the material that is sent to us" (118). A similar case may be true for *New Writing*; however the wide range of acceptance rates also reflects indecision about what kind of work gets published.

In another email, Harper explained that *New Writing* has no particular quota for publishing creative or critical work, but rather that they "aim to provide an independent avenue for these kinds of discussions [about creative writing], to offer this

internationally, and to encourage contributions across a wide range of practices, ideas, pedagogies, and so on” in addition to creating “avenues for disseminating wonderful creative work, sharing creative work-in-process, [and] exploring new modes of presentation and exchange” (Harper, “New Writing Questions”). It’s a wide mission, indeed. Other journals have had a difficult time narrowing down what they publish—even *College Composition and Communication*, in its early years, published creative work and breakroom chat (Goggin *Authoring* 60-61) and the *Writing Lab Newsletter* used to include “birth announcements and brief requests for help” (Pemberton 24). But when editors create a clear call for papers, they define what the standards are for the discipline, what they see as the aim of the journal. According to Maureen Daly Goggin, until 1965 *College Composition and Communication* had no editorial policy and no submission guidelines (*Authoring* 44), but when such policies were published, they cemented expectations for editors, submitters and readers. With so little editorial direction, it doesn’t come as a surprise that what *New Writing* does publish is persistently diverse, both creative and scholarly works, at all levels of rigor and whimsy.

What They Say: Publishing Focus

A new discipline’s journal must, as gatekeeper, set the stage for what types of inquiry are discipline-appropriate; however, *New Writing* has been eclectic since its initial issue. Some genres are less scholarly (creative writing, business), and some are more (education, method, theory), but looking at nine years of publication history in Figure 3.1 reveals two troubling conclusions for CWS articles. The first is that *New Writing* doesn’t seem to consistently prioritize scholarly work over non-scholarly. On average across the entire history of *New Writing*, one out of every five published pieces is

non-scholarly. Creative writing can account for up to thirty percent of total pages in a given year. Additionally, over the past nine years, the proportion of space devoted to creative writing hasn't shrunk—at least, not consistently. *New Writing* displays no regular commitment to scholarly inquiry and no trend towards doing so.

In making this observation, I'm not casting aspersion. Publishing creative work may be a conscious choice to connect with traditional creative writing instructors. It's possible that creative writing pieces increase *New Writing's* visibility and expand the audience for CWS scholarship. Creative writers with no interest in CWS may come for the literary works, but stay for the scholarly articles. Still, rather than emphasizing the practice-led research of the journal's mission statement, in publishing creative work, *New Writing* looks less like a CWS founding journal and more like a conventional creative writing journal.

Even among scholarly categories, *New Writing* has yet to clearly prioritize a particular type of article. Is the focus of CWS articles to be primarily pedagogical and institutional, and therefore yielding a preponderance of education and administration articles? Articles in the education category fluctuate from as low as 10% of pages per year up to as much as 40% per year. Again, as with non-scholarly publications, there is no trend clearly demonstrating that educational articles are becoming more or less preferred. Or is the focus on theory? One year, theory comprises more than thirty percent of all articles and another year goes by without a single theory article published. Administrative articles, which some years account for 30% of all published pages, dips down to single digit percentages—all the way down to 1% in 2008. There is little consistency in what kind of articles are getting published in *New Writing*.

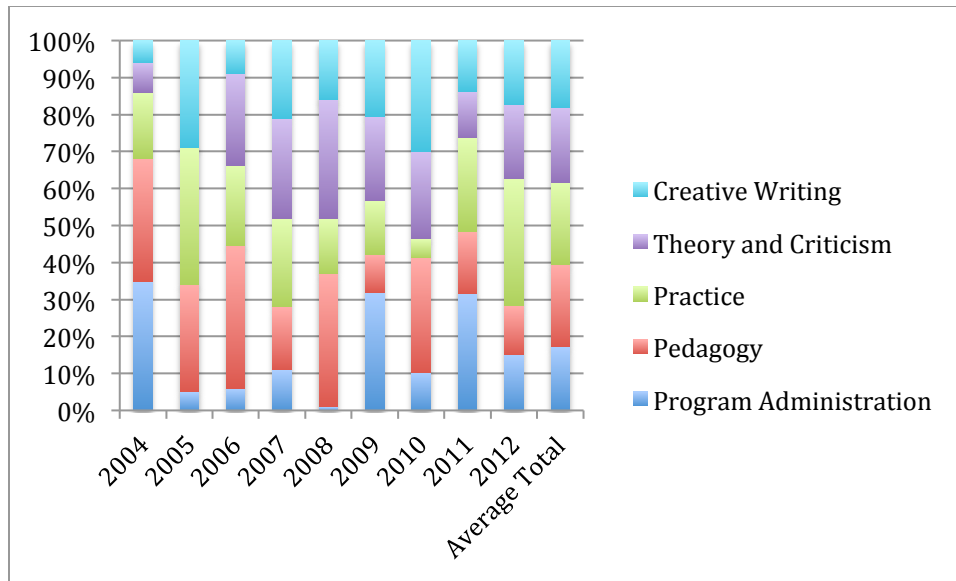


Figure 3.2: Percentage (Total Pages) Article Type by year 2004-2012

Since the editorial staff has not undergone radical changes throughout the nine years of *New Writing*, this flux may represent Harper’s own desire to “encourage contributions across a wide range of practices, ideas, pedagogies” (Harper, “New Writing Questions”) year-to-year, publishing good work that is submitted, regardless of its focus. As with the overall eclecticism, this yearly fluctuation makes it difficult for potential submitting authors to cluster their research around similar modes and sites of inquiry; what sort of articles were mostly published last year doesn’t give any indication of what sort of articles will be published this year. *New Writing* isn’t moving towards or away from any one type of article.

The variety of “practices, ideas, pedagogies” decrease the likelihood that authors will congregate around similar issues. Articles about classroom practices are less likely to speak to the issues discussed in articles discussing critical theory. There is less of what MacDonald calls “compacting” when the field’s premier journal is seemingly hopelessly

diverse. No one is reading and writing about the same topics, and each research area is represented by only a handful of articles. By accepting all types of articles, there is less opportunity for compacting around similar issues and it is difficult to articulate a clear research agenda for the nascent discipline. Research subjects exist separately, an archipelago prone to erosion.

But in a glass-half-full perspective, *New Writing* is publishing scholarly work, not a little of it, and not only occasionally. On average over nine years, 80% of its pages are scholarly articles of one sort or another. And those articles do present a wide range of options for what creative writing studies may look like, and how the field's scholarship approaches disciplinarity. For instance, there are two different kinds of scholarly argument being made in the articles of *New Writing*. One type argues inductively and the other deductively. Inductive articles extrapolate common goals or conclusions from particular experiences; deductive articles draw on cross-disciplinary methods or theories to apply in the specific case of creative writing. Both types of arguments make an implicit argument for disciplinarity, the former from scratch and the latter by connecting with a pre-established discipline.

Putting it simply, many of these articles present a "what I do in my class/program" educational or administrative solution to improve creative writing's institutional clout. Most of the inductive articles are educational or administrative by nature, drawing on a single experience in a program or classroom. It's a similar pattern to what Goggin (*Authoring*) and MacDonald ("Problem Defining") observed in early composition articles. These articles primarily reach out, invoking an audience of peers dealing with similar problems, and imply that what works at one institution can transfer to other situations. Some articles make procedural suggestions for the entire field, or a

large group of practitioners (Jeri Kroll's "Targeting an International Audience: Can Creative Writing Texts Cross the World Without Jet Lag?"), while other articles focus more explicitly on a single classroom activity (e.g. Ian Pople and Levi Michael's "Establishing a Metanarrative in Creative/Academic Writing: An Exercise to Help Students with Writing"). These articles create an inductive argument for improving creative writing pedagogy and scholarship through accumulation of individual experiences: a constellation of data points creating the new shape of creative writing studies.

Other articles are more deductive, appropriating previously accepted theories to the field of creative writing. This kind of intellectual borrowing is a feature in other emerging disciplines. Elsewhere I have noted the professionalizing impact of linguistics on early *CCC* articles like such as "Using Semantic Concepts in the Teaching of Composition" (1954.4) and the 1956 *CCCC* panel "Applying Structural Linguistics to Specific Teaching Problems" (1956.3) (Hedengren "Scaffolding"). Creative writing studies articles in *New Writing* similarly apply other theories to the practice of creative writing. Anna Leahy's "Who Wants To Be a Nerd? Or How Cognitive Science Changed My Teaching" or Amanda Boulter's "Assessing the Criteria, An Argument for Creative Writing Theory" both draw on other disciplines for informing a scholarly rigorous academic article.

Both inductive (typically pedagogical and administrative) and deductive (typically theory) articles often begin by asserting the need for disciplinary reform. Some articles make both the inductive and deductive argument for disciplinarity. One such article is Moy McCrory's "Among Barbarians: Ovid, the Classics and the Creative Writer" (2010.3). McCrory's article is a representative of how CWS make arguments for

disciplinarity from both individual experience as well as through connecting with a larger disciplinary tradition. In this article McCrory's primary purpose is to show the pedagogical benefit of reading *The Metamorphosis* in creative writing classrooms; however, McCrory begins his abstract, "Despite still being viewed as a non-legitimate subject, Creative Writing has injected life into many areas once considered essential to an education, but now under threat in many universities" (192). In this introduction, McCrory makes two moves to contextualize his argument within the larger issue of creative writing's academic disciplinarity. First, he appeals to the commonplace of *New Writing* that creative writing is marginalized, somehow "non-legitimate" in the eyes of the institution. This is perhaps a phatic move within the pages of *New Writing*; McCrory's audience is unlikely to dispute either that creative writing is pilloried on campuses or that it deserves better.

The next disciplinary move that McCrory makes is to argue for *how* creative writing can contribute to the academic atmosphere of a university—it does so by piggybacking off of the accepted disciplinarity of other fields. If the field is disrespected, then instructors and scholars must show how their project "inject[s] life" into other, more traditionally accepted, branches of the university. In this short abstract, McCrory creates solidarity with other creative writing instructors and invokes borrowed disciplinarity.

Additionally, McCrory's article implies the general benefit of sharing individual teacher research through research forums. Despite being persistently local, McCrory is implying ramifications for "many universities." Through theorizing, researching and publishing a scholarly article, McCrory engages a wider audience for his classroom practice, asserting the worth of such scholarship while he practices it. This type of scholarship might not boast clear, RAD-style methodology or indicate clear, specific

application, but even if it doesn't resemble what might be published in a composition journal today, it does demonstrate a kind of stretching towards question definition for the discipline, drawing on individual experience and pre-established disciplines to do so. In a sense, he is defending the enterprise of *New Writing* itself and creative writing studies in general.

Regardless of the lack of consistency in *New Writing*'s publication expectations, it is publishing scholarly work that connects instructors and practitioners from over fifteen different countries and such diverse home departments as comparative literature, psychology, rhetoric, history and art. While there is no clear way to end a sentence that begins "*New Writing* publishes mostly..." sharing individual experiences and linking research with other disciplines does argue for the value of research generally. As with the manifestos, *New Writing* seems to be in favor of a research-based discipline of creative writing without setting clear guidelines of what that research actually is.

Who They Say It With: Citation

Scholarly articles in *New Writing* testify to an interest in creating knowledge in CWS. If part of scholarly discourse is to actually make a claim, those claims are never made in isolation. In the famous passage from *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Burke states the importance of first "listen[ing] for a while, [to catch] the tenor of the argument" (110-111). For a scholarly article to demonstrate that the author has indeed caught the current tenor of the argument, its author will include references to other arguments on the same topic. These references are most formally included as citations. Any sort of citation indicates involvement in a scholarly conversation, one where scholars are responsible to their readers and their sources in demonstrating the development of arguments. Especially interesting to me are those citations, though, when authors within an emerging

discipline begin to cite each other. When a discipline begins to take form, it shapes into a conversation between and among participants. Each citation threads scholars together into a common project

One sign of how *New Writing*'s contributors value academic conversation can be found in the citation practices of the journal as a whole. It's not surprising that a founding journal may be slow to include citations. Both Goggin (45-47) and Pemberton (31) point out that scholarly citations were late in coming and inconsistent in early issues of composition periodicals. New journals in new fields may not have much of a scholarly discussion to build on. Without a discussion in existence, there's nothing to cite. *New Writing* is no exception to this pattern, but it speaks to a growing disciplinarity that citations are on the increase, as indicated in Figure 3.2.

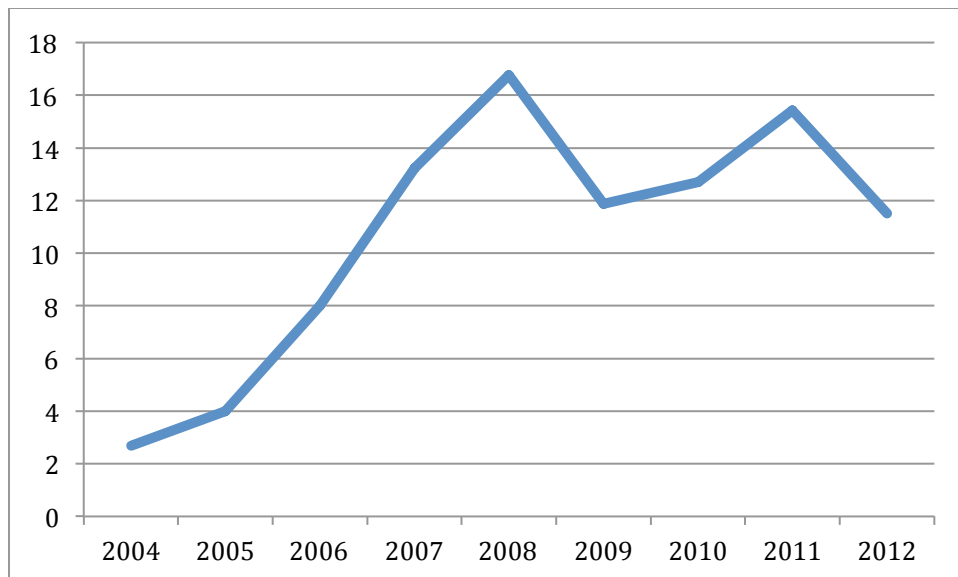


Figure 3.3: Average citations per article 2004-2012, *New Writing*

Over all, citation is definitely increasing; citations per year have increased threefold from the first year of publication. The lower line indicates that there may also be an increase

of citing other scholars in the would-be discipline, but the last two years could be an aberration in the data.

In the first issue of *New Writing*, fewer than half (4 of 9 total) the scholarly pieces included a works cited section at all. The other scholarly pieces simply made assertions or described practices without including cited sources. Of the four articles that did include references to other research, three relied mostly on sources from philosophy or literary studies, but Stephanie Vanderslice's article "The Power to Choose: The Case for the Concept-based Multigenre Creative Writing Course" drew on other creative writing scholars such as Wendy Bishop and Michelene Wandor. The average articles cited 3.9 sources, a number that increases to 8.7 if citationless articles were excluded. By 2012, things had changed dramatically. Seven out of nine scholarly articles in a single issue include a works cited section— even an interview with a prominent writer and the inaugural *New Writing* Annual Creative Writing Address included scholarly citation. The only exceptions in issue 2012.2 were two short pieces by Graeme Harper. Average citation per article in the issue was 13.1, including the two citation-less articles, and 16.9, excluding them. Both the number of articles including a works cited and the average number of citations per article had increased markedly.

These articles are remarkable for doing so, and Fiona Doloughan's "Transforming Texts: Learning to Become a (Creative) Writer Through Reading" is no exception. Doloughan not only cites well-known CWS scholar Graeme Harper, but also Neil McCaw's article in a previous issue of *New Writing*. Her article opens, in fact, by reviewing McCaw's article and extensively quoting McCaw. When Doloughan cites McCaw, she implies that articles published in *New Writing* are authoritative best sources, and reinforces the importance of being a reader of *New Writing*'s articles. This

movement towards citing other CWS scholars shows a level of compacting not just within CWS, but within *New Writing*—authors are beginning to speak to each other.

The key thing for this investigation is to note that CWS scholars are citing other scholarship, and they are doing so increasingly frequently. The change in the number of citations per article between the first four years and the last five indicates that for creative writing studies, the scholarly convention of citation is becoming de rigueur. CWS scholars in *New Writing* are citing other scholars and each other in articles, but they are also foregrounding the importance of research even in the structure of their sentences.

What They Say It About: Sentence Subjects

Looking broadly at the articles published in *New Writing*, we find evidence of scholarly writing. Roughly 70% of each issue consists of scholarly articles, and the scholarly convention of citation is on the rise. Looking at *New Writing* over all, it seems like some knowledge-making research does seem to be happening, even if it is uneven, incomplete, and inconsistent from year to year. A broad survey of the entire nine-year history of *New Writing*, though, provides only one perspective. In this section, I turn from the entire landscape of *New Writing* to a few representative samples of the flora, by selecting four articles that are among the most scholarly and coding each sentence to determine its subject. This investigation will determine whether the articles that are scholarly are referencing a scholarly conversation through epistemic sentence subjects. In other words, do the most scholarly representatives of *New Writing* articles resemble other types of scholarly writing that focus on scholarly debates? The answer, as with the larger question of whether CWS scholarly writing exists, is yes—but not always and not completely.

In doing so, I'll be following the lead of Susan Peck MacDonald, whose work I have discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation. Amid the mid-nineties boom in disciplinary anxiety, MacDonald asked the question of whether sciences and the humanities might have sentence-level characteristics specific to them only. She characterizes the disciplines across a spectrum. Humanities, represented by the literary method of New Historicism, anchored one end of the spectrum, and the other extreme, science, was represented by psychology's Infant Attachment theory. Between them hovered history, as something not quite science and not quite the humanities. In order to tease out those sentence-level characteristics of the disciplines, she created the following table, which I've reproduced below. I've formatted it a little differently than she has in *Professional Academic Writing* and included my own examples in brackets.

Group	Name	Description	Examples
Phenomenal			
1	Particulars	nouns referring to specifics people, places, objects	[my student, I, Germany]
2	Groups	generalized or grouped nouns	farms, Shakespeare's plays
3	Attributes	nouns referring to the attributes, properties, action, behavior, or motivations and thoughts of the nouns	Queen Elizabeth's desires [Their sequestering, poets' inspiration, our work]
Epistemic			
4	Reasons	all purpose abstractions and words used in reasoning	reasons, argument, evidence, significance, findings
5	Research	reference to scholars in the field, generalized or named	historians, researchers, Barber writes
6	-Isms	contains "isms," nouns referring to schools of thought	Marxism, New Historicism
7	Audience	words for either implying agreement of the community or guiding readers through the text	we, you, one

Table 3.2: Adapted from MacDonald *Professional Academic Writing*, 158-9, examples in brackets are my own.

As indicated in the table above, MacDonald separates her groups into two main sub-categories: phenomenal and epistemic. The phenomenal deals more with concrete people, places, and things and their attributes and actions. Things as they are in the world. The epistemic category, meanwhile, deals with the more abstract, usually in relation to descriptions of knowledge and knowledge communities. In other words, epistemic subjects indicate a mass of inquiry among scholars. This coding scheme can be useful for assessing the degree to which a field responds to its own knowledge-making practices.

MacDonald used this coding scheme in order to investigate different disciplines that she suspected might be “rural” or “urban.” These terms were defined in the introduction, but now might be a good time for a refresher. Disciplines that are what Tony Becher calls “urban,” meaning dense, with researchers clustering tightly, building knowledge up in a small area like a skyscraper, exhibit more epistemic language. Possibly this is because the reasons and the research have been done by other scholars and building on that research quickly takes priority in the discipline. Conversely, a “rural” discipline like New Historicism deals primarily in the phenomenal, as homesteading scholars describe the particulars of their unique subfields of research—the texts, the individuals, the historical circumstances. From this research MacDonald was able to conclude that disciplinary characteristics reflect themselves down the sentence level, distinguishing the urban from the rural.

My own work in CWS extends the inquiry: does creative writing studies scholarship invoke a research tradition, as indicated by epistemic sentence subjects? If it does so, does it resemble the other disciplines that MacDonald has surveyed? Can it be, in other words, clearly identified as urban or rural?

I focused my sentence-level analysis on four best-representative articles published in *New Writing*. I say “best-representative” because these articles aren’t what we could call statistically typical or characteristic of the kinds of articles published in the journal; as I’ve just demonstrated, articles in *New Writing* are an eclectic lot, only rarely diving into such novelties as poetry, fictocriticism—and research-driven articles. I’ve chosen four articles that appear to be among the most grounded in generalizable knowledge-making. These four articles come from different time periods within *New Writing* and represent different research interests within the original coding scheme described in the previous section: two are pedagogical, one is administrative and one is theoretical. The articles, along with citation count and sections from their abstracts, are summarized in the table below (Table 3.3).

That these articles contain abstracts speaks to what Hyland (2011) called “proximity” of the authors to a community—the authors consciously decided to invoke the hallmark genre of academic writing. The abstracts also make clear that the articles are advancing a claim for knowledge making. They describe a gap in the scholarship, the methods on which they will draw and how they will move to fill that gap, very much in the same way Swales found academic articles in other disciplines proceeding (*Research Genres*).

- **Wise, Peter. "Writing, creativity and the world: Possibilities of articulation." *New writing*. 1.2 (2004): 124-132.**

Type: Theory and Criticism **Citations:** 5

Selection from Abstract: “Following on from Giorgio Agamben's situating of ideas about melancholy in the development of a western understanding of the imagination, this paper explores the psychoanalytic writings of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, who pursue Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia towards a suggestive theory of language practices.”

- **Blythe, Hal, and Charlie Sweet. "Creative writing and an overlooked population." *New Writing*. 2.2 (2005): 116-127.**

Type: Pedagogy **Citations:** 16

Selection from Abstract: “a recent survey of teachers responsible for guiding students revealed 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. We suggested that this lack of teacher training was one reason the majority of K-12 student portfolios had plateaued at the lowest ‘Novice’ level, unable to move to ‘Apprentice,’ ‘Proficient’ or ‘Distinguished.’ To address the problem, we created and team-taught a graduate course in creative writing pedagogy”

- **Lively, Robert L. “Rhetoric's Stepchildren: Ancient Rhetoric and Modern Creative Writing” *New Writing*. 7.1 (2010): 35-44.**

Type: Pedagogy **Citations:** 22

Selection from abstract: “This article attempts to connect modern issues in creative writing pedagogy with the ancient theories of rhetoric. Specifically, I engage the ideas of *tribe* (natural ability), *techne* (art or

craft), and empeiria (learning by doing) in relation to creative writing theory.”

- **Banagan, Robert, Dominique M. Hecq, and Stephen Theiler.** "Dancing the Tango within a Triangle: Framing Agendas in Postgraduate Pedagogies." *New Writing*. 9.1 (2012): 42-52.

Type: Program Administration **Citations:** 21

Selection from Abstract: “Through analysing two distinct relationships; one being the candidate’s attachment to his work and the other being the candidate-supervisor relationship, we draw on a model of super-vision inspired by a psychoanalytical interpretation of discourse and use our first-hand experience to introduce a new, experiential methodology of supervision that takes into account the shifting positions of candidate and supervisors throughout the journey to submission”

Table 3.3: Selected scholarly CWS articles in *New Writing*

Coding these articles as MacDonald did her scholarly samples, I was able to determine the percent of sentence subjects from the articles that fall into each subcategory. Below I’ve recreated MacDonald’s table, adding two original elements: a category sum of phenomenal and epistemic, and a final column that summarizes my own limited results from creative writing studies (Figure 9). Figure 9 clearly demonstrates epistemic sentence subjects are present in scholarly CWS writing. Not only is the

epistemic category present, but epistemic sentence subjects occur frequently, indicating that this sample of CWS scholarship is drawing on a body of research and theory, instead of exclusively describing phenomena of writing. Nearly a third of all the coded sentences focus on one of the epistemic categories, a higher percentage than either history or literature.

Indeed, in several ways, the selection of creative writing studies articles do not appear to be very similar to literary studies. Although CWS and literature share an interest in speaking to the audience's preconceived unity and expectations, that is one of their only similarities. Literature articles, according to MacDonald's survey, are likely phenomenal, with 84 % of sentence subjects relating to particulars, groups or attitudes. This sample of creative writing articles, meanwhile, feature phenomenal subjects only 62% of the time—less than even history and far less than literature. Even within the category of phenomenal subjects, creative writing shows marked differences. For instance, these creative writing articles are far more invested in groups than in particulars, unlike literature, and inverts the relative weight of groups and particulars. The increase in epistemic subjects in these creative writing texts appears to be driven by more use of research as the subject of the sentence than found in literary studies. So it appears that these scholarly CWS articles do not overall resemble literature on the sentence level.

Despite this distinction from literature, there's much about these CWS articles that is exactly as expected. Although it does so less than literature, collectively, the sample of CWS articles does weigh heavily towards the phenomenal. Particulars and groups dominated as the subjects of more than half of all sentence subjects and taken as a whole, phenomenological sentence subjects comprised more than half of all sentences

(see Table 3.4). Epistemic classes were less common, as a whole, mostly because research and reasons were less common.

	Psychology	History	Literature	Selection of Creative Writing Studies Articles
1. Particulars	0.1	6.0	30.0	18.0
2. Groups	27.0	44.0	10.0	34.0
3. Attributes	11.0	26.0	44.0	20.0
Total Phenomenal	38.1	76.0	84.0	62.0
4. Reasons	49.0	15.0	7.0	9.0
5. Research	12.0	6.0	5.0	14.0
6. Isms	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0
7. Audience	1.0	3.0	4.0	5.0
Total Epistemic	62.1	24.0	16.2	28.0

Table 3.4: Percentages of sentence subjects in MacDonald's original three research areas from *Professional Academic Writing* and original coding of four articles from *New Writing*.

However tempting it may be to see these articles as generalizable about creative writing's academic writing, recall that one of my key points from the last section is that CWS articles are strikingly diverse, representing wildly different expectations for

scholarly work. The dissimilarity between articles is evident in the subjects of their sentences as well. I've illustrated the differences in Table 3.5 below and it might be worthwhile to point out a few of the differences between these articles.

	Wise	Blythe and Sweet	Lively	Banagan, Hecq and Theiler
1. Particulars	8.0	15.1	11.1	33.1
2. Groups	7.0	61.8	30.6	27.3
3. Attributes	30.0	2.0	20.6	26.2
Total Phenomenal	45.0	78.9	71.3	86.6
4. Reasons	32.0	5.3	1.1	7.6
5. Research	8.0	9.9	35.6	4.7
6. Isms	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0
7. Audience	15.0	5.3	1.1	1.2
Total Epistemic	55.0	21.2	37.8	13.5

Table 3.5: Individual sample articles sentence subjects by percentage.

Some of the extraordinary variety comes out when disaggregating the percentages. The aggregate percentages, for instance, point out that these CWS articles are invested in the audience as a subject, frequently appealing to the discourse community, but that does not occur uniformly. All of the articles mentioned the audience in some way, but one article, Wise's, especially appealed to the supposedly unified community of creative writing: fifteen percent of his sentences were helmed by an

imagined audience, the third-highest of all MacDonald categories found in his article, and notably higher than the other three articles in the group. Note also, that Wise's is the earliest article from the sample; typical articles in *New Writing* 2005 have low numbers of citation and Wise is no exception—he only cites five sources in his article. Yet despite low numbers of citations, Wise's article is the most epistemic of the sample. This seeming contradiction demonstrates that it's not just *having* research in an article that matters, but how the research is used. Such illuminating conclusions are found in the other articles as well.

Blythe and Sweet's article and Lively's demonstrate that the focus of the article as a whole may drive the focus of individual sentences. An article like Lively's application of Classical rhetorical theory to contemporary creative writing places research as the subject of the sentence again and again, summarizing what rhetoricians have said on the topic of pedagogy for an audience that might be unfamiliar with their names or their theories. Blythe and Sweet, on the other hand, have written an article that primarily narrates the development of a course at their own institution. Not only did particulars dominate this article, but the subjects of the sentences were nearly always Blythe and Sweet themselves, describing the steps they took to develop their course, how it was received by students, what they decided to change afterwards. While both articles are concerned with ameliorating a common classroom concern, they use very different methods to address it and, accordingly, different sentence structures. Lively's sentences focus again and again on "Isocrates" while Blythe and Sweet favor "students" and "we" in reference to themselves. Sentence subject diversity strains against the already tenuous proposition that there is a type of article that can be characterized as creative writing studies.

There are writers within CWS who are employing the language of scholarship in their writing. These articles aren't, perhaps, typical, but they are scholarly. Even if *New Writing* includes poetry and other forms of creative writing, even if some of the scholarly articles neglect to include citations, there are exemplary scholarly articles in CWS that demonstrate scholarly research even down to the sentence level.

Admittedly, if a sentence-subject analysis calls attention to unstable characteristics of CWS, it also demonstrates some of the methodological difficulties of this sort of research. Immediately while coding, I began to discover how inadequate MacDonald's categories were for the work that "counts" as creative writing research—for instance, are the Romantics a group of people, an artifact for study, like the literary studies scholars think and categorized as Group 2, or are they theorists, a school of thought and better categorized under Group 5 for research? MacDonald's coding scheme may be a useful tool for capturing the relative weight of epistemic and phenomenal subjects, but it may not be sensitive to differences in what CWS sees as valid research and reasons. As I have argued earlier, it may not be appropriate to apply an instrument developed for one discipline to another discipline with different disciplinary definitions.

Additionally, MacDonald's categories failed to capture some of the possible similarities at more macro levels. Lively's article may look very different from Blythe and Sweet's or Banagan, Hecq and Theiler's in terms of sentence subjects, but the coding doesn't necessarily reveal the similarities between them: these articles are primarily summative, describing preexisting theories or practices for an uninformed audience. With an aim to inform, these articles follow a similar structure. They begin with identifying what John Swales might call a research gap, but more specifically, an anxiety of creative writing in the institution—in the case of Lively, is creative writing teachable? How so?;

in the case of Banagan, Hecq and Theiler, does mentorship impair graduate students' ability to separate their work from their relationships?; in the case of Blythe and Sweet, why is assessment of creative writing competence so low among k-12 portfolios? These practical questions are then followed by a lengthy description of the particular solution (either at the institution or historically), and end with a suggestion that similar practices could be adopted in other contexts. The pattern of overall article structure may be more unified than the sentence subject analysis would suggest. But this is a tentative similarity, and one that ignores the methods used to accomplish these steps.

Although these articles all appear to be making a claim on being “research,” at the sentence level, much as in the journal’s trajectory as a whole, they are extremely diverse. Sentence coding these articles using MacDonald’s methodology yielded results that again demonstrate the wide range of variety within creative writing studies articles. There were huge variances among the four articles. Although not a surprising result given the variety in the overall landscape of *New Writing*, this variety nonetheless yields some tentative conclusions about what sort of academic writing CWS may engender.

Conclusions

New Writing's influence on creative writing studies is not merely potential; it has already had impact on the knowledge-making processes of CWS scholars. As a manifesto founding, it provides a space for scholars to share their insights and build the questions of the fledgling discipline. Its format, imitating other knowledge-building disciplines with abstracts and keywords and bibliographic information, encourages the compacting that MacDonald suggests is so important to knowledge production. Local practices in a classroom or in a program are exposed to an international audience. Much like *WLN*, *New Writing* is seeking to “be willing to flex their professional credentials” (Pemberton 28) in

the academy, in part through the existence of their journal. *New Writing* is a critical site for CWS scholars to begin to formulate a common project.

The longer issues of *New Writing*, the high level of concern for the question of disciplinarity and the cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary contributors demonstrate that there is an interest in participating in the conversations the journal promotes. However, there is a lack of direction in terms of methodological boundary making. Unlike what I found elsewhere in the early years of *CCC*, there is no clear trend in what types of articles should be published in *New Writing* (Hedengren “Scaffolding”). In the past nine years, *New Writing*’s publications haven’t shown a clear cohesive focus on pedagogy, practice or even creative works. There is no clear trend that articles in *New Writing* that focus on disciplinarity are becoming less descriptive and more procedural. In this academic Wild West, everything interesting to the editors is getting published, without a clear agenda for what should be published. If a developing discipline requires journals that serve as “gatekeepers” for the modes and methods of inquiry, *New Writing* doesn’t appear to be doing that work in terms of the categories of articles being published.

In its first nine years *CCC* had an overwhelming emphasis on pedagogy, and that focus on pedagogy led to clearly defined problems for the discipline to address. As authors began to respond to each other’s work, including through the fierce agonism demonstrated in the Knickerbocker debates, they articulated the issues that were of greatest importance to their project. *New Writing*, however, has not yet coalesced around a core purpose and core problems.

When *New Writing* represents a modern nascent discipline, it has several advantages over the early composition journals. First off, being an electronic journal, *New Writing* is less constrained by page length and individual subscription costs. Not

only is *New Writing* flexible in how the journal itself looks, but being electronic allows for a more geographically diverse readership (and potential submissions from that readership). Additionally, becoming a discipline in the 21st century includes the awareness that a discipline is worth being. *New Writing* has more than a hundred years' worth of examples of how sub-disciplines can break away from English studies, and is very self-aware of becoming a discipline. When authors like Graeme Harper are persistently describing the importance of improving the discipline's status, or developing priorities, they are comparing the current state of CWS with an imagined, but obtainable, idea of what it could be. *New Writing* and its contributors are aware of the importance of becoming a discipline, and recognize how an active publishing culture in a "manifesto founding" journal can create a discipline.

Looking at academic journals can yield insights about a developing discipline, its perceived differences from the parent discipline and its aims for the future. But academic journal articles have their limits, too. Some of the material sent in to a journal will reflect trends and interests in the developing discipline, but sometimes submissions will dwindle or skew because potential submitters are overwhelmed with teaching, administrating or other publishing expectations, as Pemberton described in his history of the *Writing Lab Newsletter*. Sometimes a new journal hasn't yet developed the cache necessary to attract submissions or it doesn't "count" enough in hiring and tenure decisions. There are many factors that might influence how many and what kind of articles are ultimately submitted. But academic journals are critical for nascent disciplines to define both their sites and methods of inquiry. Creative writing studies' future as a discipline will depend on how well *New Writing* and other publications do in establishing and maintaining common problems, methods and subjects around which to theorize and research. The first nine

years has shown a lack of unity, but encouraging signs of interest. The next nine years and beyond will determine if CWS can become a discipline, and if, so, what sort of discipline it will be.

Chapter Four: Teaching the Unteachable in Creative Writing

“How many creative writers have we produced? How often does the student with creative promise even turn up in our classrooms? If we discover a creative genius in our class, let us by all means give him free rein.”
Edward P. J. Corbett, “The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric”

When the 20th century and the English department both were just beginning, C. S. Lewis half-facetiously opined that “A school without pupils would cease to be school; a college without undergraduates would be as much a college as ever, would perhaps be more a college” (85). By this he meant that research and scholarship can continue without teaching and research is the object of the university. In more recent times, physicist Ed Nather has echoed the sentiment, allegedly saying that a university without students was like “ointment without a fly.” Imagining a university without students is, for some fields, a relaxing thought experiment. Faculty members would have more time for their own work, certainly, if they were undistracted by teaching and mentoring students. In some disciplines, like Nather’s physics or Lewis’ medieval studies, pedagogy is sometimes seen as a necessary evil, diverting time and energy from the real work of research.

This sentiment, however, is antithetical to those fields in which pedagogy is integral to research. As one example, as Jeffrey Walker has argued, rhetoric and composition depends on pedagogy to justify itself as a discipline (*Genuine Teachers*). Creative writing studies has made a similar claim. In *College English*, Tim Mayers points out that, much like composition’s early history, creative writing studies’ “earliest scholarly works directly address problems experienced by professors attempting to teach

writing (of various sorts) to college undergraduates” (“One Simple Word”). For both rhetoric and creative writing to be disciplines, they must abandon reliance on genius, talent and muse and instead emphasize the teachable, replicable and sustainable. It must be taught. Rhetoric and composition had to develop a pedagogy to counter all those who, as Richard Young describes, believed “creative ability cannot be taught” (342). To apply Young’s terms to creative writing, reproduction is a key argument that makes writing a *techne* and not merely a knack, and that reproduction formally occurs in classrooms in universities where best practices inform a systematic way of learning how to write better.

The last chapter analyzed CWS calls for research into the process and propagation of creative writing, and how, despite the difficulty of uniting a coherent research agenda in its founding journal, scholarly research on creative writing does occur. This chapter moves from the research that surrounds creative writing to the teaching that could—and the teaching that does—take place in creative writing classrooms. Pedagogy is a major category for such scholarly research in CWS, and fittingly so, because of its apparent controversy in traditional neoromantic creative writing. For creative writing pedagogy to be analyzed, hierarchized and improved, scholars of creative writing studies must argue first that creative writing is *teachable*.

The earlier review of the CWS manifestos reveals intense dissatisfaction with traditional, neoromantic methods of creative writing pedagogies. To contest these traditions, CWS scholars seek out new philosophies and new practices for creative writing instructors. However, much as with the research aims set up by these same scholars, pedagogical reform is more difficult to achieve among actual practitioners than it is to formulate. To understand the difficulty of the task confronting creative writing educational reform, it’s necessary to begin with some background of creative writing in

the university. This chapter describes the unique context for creative writing's fraught relationship with pedagogy and then will summarize the results of surveys and interviews that I conducted with practicing creative writing instructors to determine whether the claims of the CWS vanguard are, in fact, being practiced. Current traditional and expressivist⁹ pedagogies demonstrate that what I am calling creative writing neoromanticism continues to hold sway for creative writing instructors.

NEOROMANTIC CHARGES AGAINST PEDAGOGY

Perhaps one reason why pedagogy has been such a contentious issue in creative writing is because of its unique relationship with the university. The history of creative writing at universities is longer than the history of creative writing classes. Barrett Wendell, considered a father of both composition and creative writing (see Veysey, Graff, Kitzhaber, and D. G. Myers), was as eccentric a figure as any creative writing stereotype today, but his method of teaching was standard for the late 19th century. Students like W. R. Castle appreciated that "he never dissected a piece of literature, because he knew that to dissect is too often to kill" (qtd. Veysey 222), but instead of providing analysis, Wendell would read a poem aloud, and afterwards "would sit silently for a moment and then cry out: 'Isn't it beautiful?'" (222). This enthusiastic approach to literature and writing recalls the 18th century educational objective of cultivating "taste," which was the objective of literature and composition alike. Instead of just exclaiming

⁹ Creative writing sometimes uses the term *neoromantic* to describe the perspective most often described as *expressive* in composition. My conflation of the composition's bugbear term *expressivism* with creative writing's *neoromanticism* is supported by scholars like Mary Ann Cain, who defines both as privileging individual control over social context ("Introduction" 70). My use of the term *neoromantic*, however, expands beyond what might be described as expressivism to include any practice or philosophy that deemphasizes the social and rhetorical elements of communication.

“Isn’t that beautiful,” creative writing, like composition, had to discover what exactly was beautiful and how it could be reproduced.

When composition gained headway as a discipline, it, like creative writing, had to prove that writing was teachable. In the 1970s and 80s, composition studies defined itself negatively against two historic bugbears of writing pedagogy, one of which said that writing instruction could be reduced to clear forms and rules and there was no need to challenge the received wisdom, while the other that the best way to learn to write was to avoid explicit instruction altogether and just write freely without inhibition. As composition scholars challenged these perspectives, they were able to more clearly articulate these two concerns into two pejoratives: current traditionalism and expressivism.

The relationship between current traditional and expressivist pedagogies isn’t as diametric as it might seem on first glance. Although current traditional pedagogy is associated with grammar-obsessed, grey-suited schoolmarms and -masters and the expressivist pedagogue is typified as a Birkenstock-shod hippie, sitting cross-legged on the desk encouraging students to write what feels good, both pedagogies are very similar in their concern with what is (or isn’t) teachable in writing. Current traditional pedagogy, in its simplest sense, says that grammar, punctuation and style are teachable, meaning that they can be universally applied to all students, in all genres of writing and can be measured in standardized evaluations, and because they are so clearly teachable, they should be the primary focus of writing instruction. Expressivist pedagogy, in its simplest sense, says that because the important parts of writing, such as invention and expression, can’t be taught, the writing instructor should focus on giving students a safe place to invent and express freely, working through trial and error to what the students

themselves, not the instructor, are able to discover. These may sound like shocking blanket assumptions to my readers, especially those in composition studies, but within this chapter, I will give a cloud of evidence from important creative writers and creative writing texts that echo these assertions in varying degrees and combinations.

Even the current-traditional emphasis on technique fit into the traditional expressionist perspective, because if only craft can be taught, then there is a large part of writing that is simply unteachable. As Berlin and Inkster have argued in “Current-Traditional Rhetoric: Paradigm and Practice,” the debate between current-traditional and expressivist philosophies have been “within the paradigm” rather than suggesting alternate, competing paradigms; whether the focus is on the side of “stylistic correctness” or the side of “act of genius” (13). Berlin and Inkster have in mind that both of these perspectives ignore questions of epistemology, but I argue that both the current-traditional and expressivist perspectives emphasize the limits of pedagogy; in current traditional philosophy, style and form must be taught because that is all that can be, while expressivist philosophies give up on explicit instruction and instead emphasize consistent practice. I will use the term *neoromantic* here to describe the combination of current-traditional and expressivist tendencies in traditional creative writing instruction, not because it always means the exactly same thing as either expressivism and current-traditionalism, but because both of them serve as an intellectual (or anti-intellectual) counterpoint which challenges the assumption that writing can be taught. Creative writing neoromanticism is characterized by unfiltered expression, lack of instructor intrusion, and an exclusive emphasis on forms and structure. Neoromanticism in creative writing, as well as in composition, promotes limits on what is teachable, and suggests that craft can be taught in only the most basic levels of identifying forms and terms, and suggesting

correct genre and mechanics. Neoromanticism describes the philosophical underpinnings of both expressivist and current traditional pedagogy.

W. Ross Winterowd has also argued the similarities of expressivism and current traditionalism. In *The English Department: A Personal and Institutional History*, he suggests that “current-traditional rhetoric results from Romantic solipsism” (43). When the audience wanes in importance, teachers have little to contribute. Winterowd explains the relationship in greater depth:

If there is no audience, the teacher has no access to the student [and] rhetoric tends to become expression. In fact, the writing teacher can ask the student to be original, to develop ideas, and to give examples, but can offer no help in the techniques whereby a writer finds subject matter. [...] One can help students with their styles, they must discover their own voices (182).

And, under such assumption, students truly “discover,” because the neoromantic perspective doesn’t seek to develop a style, but to find expression for already innate capacities. As Winterowd points out, because “Neo-Romantic [sic] rhetoric places the 'true' 'natural' voice of the writer above all other values,” the goal of the instructor in teaching an *art* (artifice) leads to natural paradoxes, for example, “if the goal of instruction is to help students discover or regain their 'natural' voices, the teacher can do little more than help them regularize their texts (i.e., correct grammar, punctuation and spelling)” (111)—in other words, expressivist philosophies wind back to current traditional practices. When the emphasis is on uninstructed, “discovered” expression, then what *can* be taught is mere mechanics.

Current traditionalism and expressivism share a common neoromantic philosophy that has decoupled invention from style and removed rhetorical consideration of an audience. The results have been, in creative writing, to limit what is teachable to mechanics and forms and to conduct classes almost exclusively through workshops that encourage consistent self-expression.

THE LIVING SPIRIT: NEOROMANTIC PEDAGOGY IN CREATIVE WRITING

In creative writing, neoromantic and traditional pedagogy are synonyms. Traditional creative writing instruction has long been resistant to a systematic pedagogy, probably due to neoromantic notions of writing itself and neoromantic philosophies of writing have contributed to the lore of creative writing pedagogy. Traditional creative writing instruction reflects neoromanticism and its underpinnings of both expressivism and current traditionalism in its methods, purported purpose, and in its prescribed roles for teachers and students. In its time, composition had to respond to claims about what is teachable in defining their discipline, and CWS scholars, too, first answer claims that writing simply can't be taught.

James Zebroski has argued that expressivism was never actually a serious threat to composition's development, while what he calls "the spectre of expressivism" (106-9) nevertheless played a crucial role in rallying compositionists to professionalize within the academy. For creative writing studies scholars, however, expressivism is not just a spectre, but a driving—sometimes even defining—force within mainstream traditional creative writing. Expressivism stands in opposition to the "functionalist" philosophy generally adopted in social-constructionist composition. As defined by compositionist C. H. Knoblauch, functionalist rhetoric emphasizes social rhetorical construction, in which discourse communities tacitly determine what counts as effective communication, while

expressivist rhetoric emphasizes individual expression without recourse to a community of common conventions (“Rhetorical Constructions”). Neoromantic perspectives describe writing as unteachable self-expression, rather than a series of rhetorically constructed and rhetorically taught principles and consequences. The writer, not the audience, stands supreme.

Without appealing to an audience, so-called successful or effective writing comes from a combination of cultivated taste and, in Wordsworth’s famous description, “the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions” (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*). Much of this success depends on who the author is. Wallace Stegner has said, “in order to write a great poem one should be, in some sense or other, a great poet” with particular “personality” and “character” (37). Historically, neoromantic creative writing has placed a good deal of stock in the personal traits of the creative writer. Winterowd invokes the long tradition of the “great poet” from Akenside’s definition of poets as “men whose imagination is endowed with powers” (qtd. 54) to Coleridge, to Wordsworth, and to Shelley, who believed that “the poet is simply nobler and more sensitive than the rest of humanity” (138). In all of these Romantic poets was a strong belief that there was something inherently blessed about the poet. As Winterowd glosses the Romantic critics, “poets are either gods, geniuses, sages or imitators” (52). But the ideas of these critics and poets remained in force into the early 20th century, as creative writing began to take root in the university.

The success of Barrett Wendell’s creative writing courses at Harvard demonstrates the desire for 20th century would-be poets to receive formal acknowledgement that they were, indeed, gods and geniuses. The creative writing course became popular, spreading to other universities and other programs, first in women’s

colleges¹⁰ and then to mainstream institutes of higher education (Adams 74), fueled by textbooks written by its early instructors. These texts often demonstrated the twin neoromantic perspectives of expressivism and current traditionalism. Robert Neal claims his 1914 text “is not written with the belief that short story writing, or any other form of literary composition, can be taught. It cannot. Literature is art and art is not communicable. Theories of its methods and success can be inferred and explained; its practical technique can frequently be explained and acquired, but neither theory nor technique makes art; the living spirit is not in them” (qtd. Adams 77-8). Esenwein and Roberts’ textbook, written in 1920, claim, “This little treatise does not aim to create poets—Heaven must do that; but it does furnish those who have poetic inspirations with the knowledge of how to master the forms of expression” (qtd. Adams 78). At the risk of stating the obvious, these texts for creative writing classes suggest that instructors would teach their students anything—except invention. As Winterowd argues in the case of composition, removing invention from instruction leads to a model in which teachers can only “manage” the available content (87). For traditional creative writing, invention is beyond the scope of the class.

To look at one section of Jacob Tressler’s 1935 college textbook *English in Action* highlights several key features of neoromanticism:

In modern times scientists have perfected gigantic incandescent lights which [sic] dispel the blackness of night; for centuries the poet has been able to dispel not

¹⁰ Gerald Graff notes a similar trajectory in the study of literature and the belles lettres—women’s colleges are often at the vanguard of poetic education (*Professing* 37-8).

only darkness but the commonplace realities of everyday life with one flash of insight, and reveal a clear, gleaming world of beauty. (qtd. in Winterowd 40)

Tressler here implies that scientists have been building on each other's work, cumulating a process "in modern times" that began earlier, while the poet has been able to conduct his or her work—more or less unchangingly—"for centuries." The poet doesn't necessarily draw on previous artists' work or responding to the milieu of that specific cultural moment, but timelessly provides flashes of insight. Additionally, Tressler, consciously or otherwise, contrasts the work of collective "scientists" with "the [solitary] poet." In other words, the poet writes alone, insulated from both historical and social cultural pressures. Finally, while scientists have to "perfect" their inventions, the poet is blessed with "one flash of insight" that can instantly "reveal" a completed, perfected vision for art. Tressler's contrast between the work done by scientists and that done by poets illustrates the solitary and exceptional theory of creative writing.

The branch of neoromanticism that derives from expressivism emphasizes solitary strokes of inspiration, but the branch of neoromanticism that derives from current traditionalism may actually resemble the work of Tressler's scientists: rule-bound and perfectible through revision. Though it seems antithetical to the expressivist branch, current traditionalism is also embraced by creative writing instruction.

In the absence of the ability to teach invention, knowledge of forms and even grammar becomes central. Stephen King's extremely popular *On Writing* suggests that aspiring writers focus on the "toolbox" of grammatical rules rather than hunting for inspiration. Not only popular authors do so: Ron McFarland's oft-cited 1993 "Apologia for Creative Writing," the only creative writing article published in *College English* in the

1990s, argues that of all of the necessary components for writers “only craft can be taught” (34). His article then describes how he has worked with individual students to develop craft, encouraging a student poet to lead her lines off with “ ‘power words’ such as *screaming*, *clamoring* and *easy* as opposed to pronouns and ‘function words’ such as *in*, *as*, and *where*”(41). McFarland’s claim that “only craft can be taught” echoes Richard Young’s summary of Genung’s current-traditional textbook: “the discipline of rhetoric is, necessarily, concerned only with craft since only that is teachable” (342). If invention is unteachable, what remains are very teachable rules and structures, tips and tricks.

CWS scholars are disappointed in both the expressivist and current traditional aspects of neoromantic philosophy. The neoromantic perspective is not just an innocuous philosophy, but has very real implications for pedagogy. If invention is absent and something called “craft” remains the only thing to be taught, then it will have portentous impact on the roles of students and teachers as well as the methods and purposes of teaching creative writing.

NEOROMANTICISM IN ACTION: METHOD, PURPOSE, STUDENT AND TEACHER

Breaking down traditional creative writing pedagogy into constituent elements exposes some of its commonplaces about students and instructors, methods and ultimate purposes of teaching creative writing. All academic pedagogies will include these four elements, but they are especially critical for creative writing. The best method of teaching and the purpose of teaching, especially, are difficult questions in neoromantic creative writing; if the muse dominates production, then what can the instructor *do* come Monday morning? Some unique methods—most notably the creative writing workshop—need to

be contextualized through the lens of neoromantic philosophies of writing to explain how they have become so deeply engrained in creative writing teaching.

Teaching Method

There are two models of neoromantic creative writing instruction: in the one, the student doesn't need to be taught at all because either she "has it" or she doesn't, while in the other, the student benefits through creative osmosis, simply by observing the writing habits and opinions of a great creative writer. Neither of these two perspectives allows for much in the way of best practices, learning outcomes or value-added learning. Both models, though, fit nicely into the workshop method of instruction.

The writing workshop is a lightning rod of traditional neoromantic creative writing pedagogy that draws the ire of a variety of creative writing studies scholars. The workshop has been criticized for being too social (Mimpriss "Extramural"), too standardizing (Praitis), and even susceptible to hostility and mistrust analogous to the famous Milgram experiments because of their reliance on community norms and powerful authority figures (Mimpriss "Writing"). Dissatisfaction with workshop methodology is paramount in Ritter and Vanderslice's *Resisting Lore* as well as in Vanderslice's *Rethinking Creative Writing in Higher Education*. Additionally Dianne Donnelly's 2010 monograph is titled, provocatively, *Does the Writing Workshop Still Work?*

Criticisms of the workshop center on its role in neoromantic philosophy. Donnelly disdains the "lore of the lonely writer in the garret; of long, unbroken passages of inspired writing" (*Discipline* 150). Donnelly finds neoromantic lore in the highest ranks of creative writing institutions, such as the Iowa workshop and other top-ranked institutions

that emphasize the inspirational scenery of their location that “cater to the artistic centering, the quiet serene settings and the atmospheres which might inspire beauty, creativity and inspiration rather than rigor and hard work” (*Discipline* 106). Even Kevin Brophy, who generally endorses the workshop, is concerned that

the workshop dominates a Creative Writing semester’s class time, so much so that what a student learns most effectively might be how to cope with the workshop as a ritual, as a contest, a conversation, a group even, a formula. By the end of a semester of Creative Writing it might be that a student has become more a skilled practitioner (or addict?) of the workshop than a committed writer. (“Workshopping the Workshop” 80)

The workshop also embraces current-traditional elements of neoromantic pedagogy. “Everyone knows,” Mayers acerbically cites one creative writing textbook “poets are born and not made in school” (*(Re)Writing* 15). What is made in school, Mayers charges, is a focus on the technical. Since creativity “cannot really be analyzed or explained in any significant way,” creative writing teachers, too often focus on “technical things *about* writing” (16), certain “skills or techniques” (14). There has been too much emphasis, he suggests, on “the one small aspect of creative composition—technique—that these writers believed could be taught” (67).

After such a flood of CWS frustration with the traditional creative writing workshop, perhaps now would be a good time to digress into a short, personal history to describe what a creative writing workshop class looks like in practice. The workshop

method may look unfamiliar to compositionists, especially those who started teaching after the expressivist moment had died down, and it resembles teaching in the arts more than any other university discipline.

When I took my introductory creative writing workshop at the university, our instructor, an MFA student named Mr. Kennington, would require us to write a piece in each of the major genres: poetry, short story, personal essay. For each genre, we had to produce a certain number of pages for workshop. The workshop pieces would be distributed well in advance to all members of the class, so that they could have time to read over it leisurely and make as many written comments as they'd like. When it was "our turn" to have our writing workshopped, we would all sit in a circle, then the author would read his or her work aloud, after which the author was prohibited from speaking. Meanwhile, your classmates pointed out their favorite lines, or offered interpretations about what they thought "it meant." Over the course of the semester, you grew to know who your writing allies and enemies were; some students would consistently offer up suggestions that complemented your objectives in writing, that were insightful responses from sophisticated outside readers—and some would not. During your workshop, the students gave their two cents and the rhythm of the class gradually slowed down to long pauses periodically interrupted by someone pointing out a typo, or just one word that was interesting. Finally, at the end, Mr. Kennington would give his input. Your workshop would end with everyone in the class—including Mr. Kennington— passing up their copies of your work, with all their written comments for you to study and consider in your revisions. Then it would be time for the next workshopped piece. Sometimes we would read a model or have a visit from a well-known writer, but over all, the emphasis was on reading and responding to each other's work.

It turns out that my experience in workshops is actually very similar to the way that workshops have always been, at least since the beginning of the 20th century. When Katherine Adams describes the famous Pierce Baker workshops since the turn of the 20th century, it sounds very similar to the method that I encountered: students gathered around “a large oak table,” listened to work being read aloud and then the class discussed the work, followed by more detailed comments (80). These classes then, as now, were not always “a club of friends” and the process of class discussion often relied on the personal proclivities of classmates. Adams quotes Thomas Wolfe’s description of a 1920s playwriting workshop at length, and so shall I because it demonstrates many of the distinctive interpersonal dynamics of the creative writing workshop with Wolfe’s ineffable charm.

The professor reads the student’s work] *Irene*: Lovers come, lovers go (*She makes an impatient gesture.*) What is that? Nothing! Only love endures—my love is greater than all.

Eugene [Thomas Wolf] would writhe in his seat and clench his hands convulsively. Then he would turn almost prayerfully to the bitter mummified face of [fellow classmate] old Seth Flint for that barbed but cleansing vulgarity that always followed such a scene:

“Well?” Professor Hatcher [Baker] would say, putting down the manuscript he had been reading [...] “Well?” he would say again urbanely, as no one answered. “Is there any comment?”

“What is she?” Seth would break the nervous silence with his rasping snarl.

“Another of these society whores?” [...]

Some of the class smiled faintly, painfully and glanced at each other with slight shrugs of horror; others were grateful, felt pleasure well in them and said under their breath exultantly:

“Good old Seth! Good old Seth!” [...]

For a moment there was a very awkward silence and Professor Hatch smiled a trifle palely. Then, taking off his eyeglasses with a distinguished movement, he looked around and said:

“Is there any other comment?” (qtd. Adams 84-85)

Professor Hatch’s workshops were in line with what was the received wisdom of traditional creative writing pedagogy, which was conscious of its exceptionalism. The creative writing classroom wasn’t like the classrooms down the hall because its subject and its students were fundamentally exempt from typical instruction. William Carruth’s 1917 creative writing textbook could be describing any of my creative writing workshops when he writes

A classroom with straight rows of seats does not afford in any case the most congenial conditions for the enjoyment of poetry. [...] Stiffness and conventionality must be dispelled. So far as may be, the class should be like a

club of friends gathered for common enjoyment and helpful suggestion and criticism. (qtd. in Adams 79)

This “club of friends” mentality contrasts with the typical college course in a way that anticipates the complaints that Donnelly will make nearly a hundred years later of “casual classrooms and clustered conversations, of easy ‘A’s’ and cool, eccentric teachers” (*Discipline* 150). The idea that creative writing classes are fun isn’t reserved for undergraduates in introductory classes. Even university faculty and administrators can get caught up in expectations that, in George Kalamara’s words, “Courses should be ‘fun’ or ‘enriching’—descriptions with which education in general would indeed probably be better off, yet designations reserved for course work which are seen as less academically rigorous,” all of which has the result that “the university simultaneously marginalizes the teaching of creative writing and limits its possibilities” (79). When all parties—students, faculty and administrators see creative writing coursework as “clubs of friends” gathered for “common enjoyment,” it can be hard to teach any other way—in the way other disciplines are taught. Patrick Bizzaro sums it up: “Very little rigor and even less diversity of a pedagogically productive sort will occur in such a poetry-writing class” (*Responding* xvii). Creative writing exceptionalism from the beginning of the 20th century until today insists that teaching and learning creative writing requires a fundamentally different method than pedagogy in any other discipline.

The pattern of the creative writing workshop has remained relatively stable throughout a hundred years, while composition and literature classes today are nearly unrecognizable from the days of recitations and themes. Instead of responding to recent pedagogical research, have methods of creative writing instruction become ossified? CWS scholars think so. One of them claims that “most creative writing teachers at the

undergraduate and graduate levels follow the same studies method established ... over ninety years ago” (Moxley xiii). Similarly disturbing to them, though, is how neoromantic views of creative writing have made the purpose of instruction seem elitist.

Purpose of Teaching

According to Wallace Stegner and other traditional creative writers, the prime purpose for creative writing classes is to identify and apprentice the talented young writers who can develop into published authors (43-6). If those young writers become the rising literary stars of the next generation, then traditional creative writing instruction has done its job. If nothing else, if the traditional creative writing teacher can identify those students who have “got what it takes” and guide them along until, like Stegner, she is privileged to read galleys of former students’ work (43), then she will feel as though she has fulfilled her purpose. But what about those students who receive collateral education as they sit in introductory workshops with the future authors?

As Clarence Major tells Alexander Neubauer, an undergraduate workshop will include people with varying degrees of talent, including those who “will never be writers” (183), and so what will be done with them? The purpose of instructing untalented students is a problem for traditional creative writing pedagogy and responses to this problem exist along a spectrum of exclusivity. One end of the spectrum insists that only the talented elite should write, while the other encourages writing for even the untalented. This spectrum produces radically different pedagogical purposes and practices for traditional creative writing.

At one extreme, creative writing classes only serve as weeders, bringing a large number of students in under the scrutiny of a master-writer, who can identify the ones with any talent and let the others limp along. Those who espouse this belief agree with

John Irving that there is no point in educating the untalented writer, because untalented writers can't be helped—only discouraged (qtd. in Neubauer 150). Mayers characterizes traditional creative writing instruction's task as “to identify and encourage ‘real writers’ when and if they show up in creative writing classrooms” (*(Re)Writing* 15). The neoromantic view would parade novices before the master teacher for validation; “Do you think I have any talent?” they ask tentatively. Those students who will never be writers are simply told as much, so they can stop wasting their—and their teachers’—time.

Even if some students aren't the talented few, a few creative writing instructors will accommodate them in the creative writing course. The middling-exclusive perspective suggests that those who don't become writers, will, at least, have better taste. If some students can't write literary fiction, they can at least learn to appreciate those who do. T. Coraghessan Boyle told Neubauer that he doesn't feel bad about the approximately sixteen hundred students he's taught who never become creative writers, because he's “helping society” in “creating an audience that has a deep appreciation” of sophisticated literary writing (36). Society is improved through training non-writers to develop taste. Making a similar argument, Rosellen Brown relates that one of her proudest moments came when an undergraduate claimed that she could no longer simply enjoy the stories published in magazines at the dentist's office, because Brown's course had taught them to “take literature seriously” (qtd. in Neubauer 56). Teachers can teach non-talented students correct taste, and create a better audience for all generations of the talented ones. Non-talented writers can be inducted into the literary world, not necessarily as participants, but at least as admiring observers.

An even more liberal perspective of teaching untalented students encourages students to pursue writing as an avocation. This perspective suggests that writing is a worthwhile practice to improve in, even if the students aren't talented enough to be professional. Poet Katharine Coles exemplifies this perspective when she suggests that training untalented writers to produce even a competent piece can represent "not failure, but success" for all involved (11). These writers gain personal enjoyment of the act of creation and develop some transferable critical thinking skills. "Everyone," says Rosellen Brown, "can get something out of learning to write better, think better, read better" (qtd. in Neubauer 51). Even those who aren't able to become published authors can develop the literacy skills that will help them in practices besides creative production. This perspective sees creative writing as a liberal art, which can produce pleasure and good habits, even for untalented students.

The majority of students will not be shining stars of the literary scene. Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll question that they need to be: "One relevant observation might be that the majority of graduates of Creative Writing courses do not become full-time creative writers earning their income primarily from the act of writing. Does this mean that those teaching the subject at university level are failing to deliver?" ("Creative Writing" 8). If the purpose of creative writing classes is only to identify future authors, then most students will not succeed. Traditional views of the purpose for instruction, though, are entangled with the idea of native talent. The talented student writer, in this view, brings skills and capacities into the classroom before the first day even begins. Therefore, the student is in many ways the keystone of neoromantic creative writing instruction.

The Student

In traditional views of creative writing the burden for learning rests disproportionately on the students themselves. Before even entering a creative writing classroom, there is an expectation for the student to already evince deep, perhaps untapped, wells of ability. In Ted Lardner's words, "teachers of creative writing are more likely to posit inherent talent as the most important variable for writing students' success or failure" (74). At prestigious programs, like the Iowa Writers Workshop, where admissions received almost a thousand applications for twenty-five fiction positions (Smith), many students enter with several publications, including books, under their belts before they set foot into a classroom. Demonstrating talent before the class even begins is typical of the neoromantic view of education: the student is qualified by her wealth of talent¹¹ to enter a class that refines and expands that talent.

If the student is talented and able to produce publishable work before entering a course, what purpose does education have? Hans Ostrom acerbically answers this question in his introduction to the often-cited *Colors of a Different Horse*: "The author, as defined in Romantic terms, has no particular use for teachers or workshops; 'he' was born with authority, with authorizing talent, with genius, with a potency [...] He is gifted and blessed; he's got what it takes" (xv). Once students have been identified as talented, the implication is that the class has nothing more to offer them other than supplying the time and space to create. The only thing creative writing instructors can do is make the

¹¹ And wealth of wealth. A recent *New York Times* article points out that tuition for a two-year MFA program can cost upwards of \$72,600 (Simon). Additionally, a graduate or undergraduate student who decides to devote attention to creative writing is taking a financial gamble by not focusing on other professions with higher earning potentials; such a gamble might only be staked by those who already have a good deal of financial security. While that issue moves beyond the immediate scope of this project, it demonstrates a perceived difference between composition's and creative writing's purpose: composition teaches students transferable, profitable skills while creative writing distracts them from the same.

talent shine. Mayers can hardly restrain his sarcasm when he claims that many creative writing instructors see as their only task to “help students find, through writing, their true, individual and unique selves” (115). The student who “has what it takes” is less like a blank slate upon which education can be written, but more like a completed marble statue that only needs to be polished a little before display.

If talent is the most important variable for student success, then those who lack it are destined for failure. The talented students find themselves enjoying access to ever more prestigious programs and famous mentors, while untalented students cannot progress forward. Lacking a noteworthy portfolio, untalented students must remain in open-admissions programs and introductory classes taught by PhD students. Once enrolled, they find little or only cursory support for their writing and almost none for their advancing to higher-level creative writing courses. They cannot hope to work with illustrious authors employed by the university and will almost certainly be given soft (or sometimes quite sharp) discouragement from continuing their writing. Wallace Stegner charitably cautions that “even when [students] *must be discouraged from wasting their lives in a hopeless effort*, they must not be dismissed flippantly” (25, my emphasis). Stegner doesn’t necessarily see himself as being cruel; he simply allocates a scarce resource—access to a noted author like himself—in the most efficient way possible. He doesn’t have time for talentless writers. Under the best circumstances, he finds that mentorship can “swallow his whole life” and so he must focus on those students whom he “had the luck to be able to pick [...] for talent [where] an extraordinary number of them are publishing writers” (43). The traditional creative writing instructor hopes to identify and train those talented writers who will become great authors, bypassing rooms full of untalented introductory students who must be sorted out of education. The tedium

of working with untalented students can only be offset by the thrill of working with the talented ones.

Whether the student is talented or untalented, the traditional view of creative writing attributes writing production almost entirely to the individual writer, who stands apart from the writerly milieu of influencing writers, both living and otherwise, as well as all other social and cultural influences. Tim Mayers says this emphasis on the individual who can “somehow stand apart from, or outside of, the social and ideological forces which entrap other people, including other types of writers” is typical of the traditional view of creative writing (*(Re)Writing* 87-88). Lardner seconds the perception, complaining that traditional neoromantic creative writing pedagogy “lacks a social perspective on composing” even while composition has increasingly embraced a social-epistemological perspective (73) and “the teaching of creative writing continues to place an unproblematic notion of an ‘author’ as a unified consciousness at the core of creative production” (75). A student’s talent, or lack thereof, is not seen as stemming from socio-cultural upbringing, training or influence, but from some inborn characteristic, unique and unalterable and fit to be formed and polished.

Even those who agree that talent exists are wary of its emphasis. The neoromantic idea that writers are “somehow gifted, imbued with special talents, or just plain ‘creative’” bothers Chad Davidson and Gregory Fraser, who assert that this “cheapens the act of creation while excluding those who feel they are not especially gifted” (“Poetry” 21). Sandra Gail Teichmann also criticizes the talent worship, even while conceding its existence. “I can’t teach talent, but I can downplay it, even ignore it,” she writes “because I believe it is a most devastating element in the classroom, causing many writers to give up, often before knowing whether they have *it* or not” (218, emphasis in original).

However much she would like to ignore talent in the classroom, even Teichmann assumes that talent is something students may just *have*, rather than something that is developed.

The pressure for the student to be talented is high in neoromantic creative writing instruction. But there is something appealing in the way that creative writing students see themselves as writers in ways composition students often don't. It may certainly be a romantic view of being a writer—Donnelly cites a teacher who remarked that “students are writing because they are called to it” (qtd 107)—but there is something satisfying in students who enjoy writing. “Because students in creative writing courses ... *want* to be in those courses, they differ from many composition students, who are in those course because they have to be,” Mayers notes, adding that they “are far more likely to think of themselves as writers and to enjoy writing” (*(Re)Writing* 115). Creative writing studies advocates recognize that there may be benefits to the neoromantic emphasis on the student as a practicing writer, but over all, they recognize the painful disparity between those who think they have or don't have talent.

This perception may create only frustrated students who may feel that all their work won't matter if they lack talent or inspiration, but it also is problematic for the teachers who have to come up with a syllabus for a semester. What does the teacher have to offer the student who is already a natural writer or, conversely, the student who will never be one?

The Teacher

While the individual student is responsible for bringing native talent to the classroom, the teacher still does hold an important role in traditional creative writing—provided that teacher is the right kind of teacher. The teacher in traditional creative

writing pedagogy is not primarily a teacher, but a practicing writer with a list of publications. And the best kind of teacher for a promising young writer is what Kelly Ritter calls the “star” teacher-writer (“Ethos Interrupted”): a famous author whose ability to produce publishable work is qualification enough for teaching in the classroom. If the ideal creative writing student is already bursting with writing talent untapped, then the ideal creative writing teacher has demonstrated that talent through an impressive list of publications and awards. Just as the creative writing student must have talent to gain access to the highest levels of instruction, the creative writer must have evidence of his ability in order to be granted the most desirable teaching jobs; graduate students and adjuncts can teach introductory classes teeming with untalented novices, but star writers like Wallace Stegner are “able to pick for talent” (43) which protégés to adopt. And the words “protégé” and “adopt” are especially valid in the traditional view of creative writing.

In traditional creative writing pedagogy, two metaphors of teacher-student relationship dominate. The first metaphor focuses on the cozy image of an apprenticeship, what Gail Godwin terms “craftsmen sharing secrets” (qtd. by Neubauer 140), featuring a group of practitioners with one more experienced than the others to lead the way. Nicholas Delbanco, in his interview with Nuebauer, expands the trope:

The model of the medieval guild is a very useful one for me. After a period of learning, the writer receives a kind of walking paper that permits him to pose as a journey-man-laborer and enter the guild; then, ideally, he has the chance of becoming a master craftsman and having people report to *him*. In many ways, that’s a model that pertains to writing programs, where students of the craft come

to learn it at the hands or feet of someone who is reputedly a master craftsman.
(59)

This model of learning focuses on the teacher as the source of information more than texts, institutions, or even best practices. And it is an intimate metaphor that evokes ideas of small classes, exclusive information, and product-based results. The metaphor of the apprenticeship is fairly common among traditional creative writing instructors.

The second common metaphor is even more intimate than the first: the writing instructor is seen not as master-craftsman, but as father to the class. Like the master-teacher metaphor, this relationship is seen as not always healthy for the student. Stegner describes the dangers of what he calls “extended foster-fatherhood” as a tendency for young writers to “think of [their teacher] as the one with experience, connections and answers, [and] they may continue to lean on him—perhaps for life” (42-3). Gordon Lish also uses the metaphor of the father to describe the creative writing instructor, from whom the student constantly seeks approval (qtd. in Neubauer 172). The relationship between a mentor and protégé is so powerful that it comes to be a stand-in for familiar relationships, with a lifelong relationship on both sides.

Whether the “star” teacher-writer is described as a master or a father, they are not often described as a teacher in the same way a composition instructor would be. Strangely, many of the traditional star teacher-writers believe that there is nothing to teach. This lore, although typically reproduced only as received knowledge, finds itself expressed in Nancy Bunge’s 1985 *Finding the Words*. In these collected interviews, popular creative writers (Allen Ginsburg, N. Scott Momaday and Richard Wilbur, among others) explicitly espouse the view that creative writing is unteachable. Bunge writes in

her introduction that although she “set out to interview writer-teachers hoping to collect teaching techniques,” the writers she interviewed overall “do not believe in training people to write” (x) and “stood aside, allowing the students to discover things for themselves or joined the students in their expeditions” (xi). Best practices, in other words, do not apply in the talent-focused world of traditional creative writing. Bunge’s *Finding the Words* demonstrates the standard received wisdom of the creative writing status quo: time spent with great writers, not methods that can be tested and reproduced, leads to literary enlightenment. Bunge’s book emphasizes the success of her interviewees, and their eccentricities highlight the importance of the teacher, but downplay the teaching.

If the teacher’s ethos is the primary qualification, it is also the primary method of instruction. As Ritter says, “pedagogy is indeed a highly private, individuated act reliant upon a situated ethos [...] which creates a ‘fan base’ in the classroom and in the larger institution” (“Ethos Interrupted” 284). Because of this the traditional creative writing instructor isn’t trained in pedagogy, or is trained only through what they learned in attending workshops themselves. Nigel McLoughin points out “Since most Creative Writing teachers learn to teach through watching their predecessors teach them, most pedagogical practices are passed on in a rather unstructured, piecemeal, and almost osmotic or subliminal fashion” (90). Who an instructor is becomes enough qualification for teaching, rather than learning any best practices or pedagogy. In this way, the traditional role of the teacher is inexorably bound up with a perceived apathy towards educational methods and purposes.

The methods, purpose, students and teachers in the traditional creative writing pedagogy all reflect the neoromantic views that creative writing cannot, to some extent or another, be taught. Students must come in with a well of natural talent and teachers must

be writers in the first place and teachers only through circumstance. Teaching is primarily about expression and response and the purpose is to identify the few who can succeed while relegating others to, at best, support roles. If the picture I have painted of traditional creative writing pedagogy seems simplistic and bleak, it's partially because the traditional views of any field come through the haze of so-called common knowledge and accepted wisdom. The lore and practice of traditional creative writing pedagogy is rarely articulated because so few creative writing instructors have felt it necessary to do so. Like the current-traditional or expressivist pedagogy in composition studies, the traditional perspective in creative writing is everywhere and nowhere, practiced in thousands of classrooms across the country, but difficult to census: adherents do not self-identify. But just as it was crucial for composition scholars in the 20th century to build their theories and arguments against bugbears or expressivism and current traditionalism, those in creative writing studies have engaged in criticizing the traditional perspective of their discipline—neoromantic creative writing pedagogy.

CWS RESPONSES TO NEOROMANTICISM

In the face of the neoromantic tradition, contemporary creative writing studies scholars must argue that writing can be teachable and replicable across classrooms. From textbooks by authors like Bell and Magrs (2001), Bishop and Teague (2004), and Harper (2008) to volumes of creative writing research and theory like Donnelly (2010), Haake (2000), Leahy (2005), Monteith and Miles (1992) and Ritter and Vanderslice (2007), texts by CWS scholars indicate a rich research field in creative writing. Meanwhile Grimes (1999), McGurl (2009), Moxley (1989) and D. G. Myers (1996) write disciplinary histories of creative writing within institutions of higher learning. These books build from the question of “can creative writing be taught?” to explore why

practitioners think it *can't* be taught, why it's dangerous to assume it can't be and what it takes to recondition creative writing instructors to accept the proposition that creative writing is a teachable field.

How the work of teaching is perceived influences how future creative writing teachers are taught. The rise of the creative writing pedagogy textbook, that is, a textbook for future creative writing instructors, demonstrates the concern CWS scholars have for breaking away from the traditional neoromantic perspective. CWS scholars embrace the idea of texts that can teach better pedagogy instead of relying on the talent of the student, the success of the instructor or the flow of inspiration. Instead of a purpose of “weeding out” less talented writers or relegating them to consumers of art, CWS scholars insist that anyone can write and learn to write better. For instance, Anna Leahy blames the lack of “field-specific teaching mentors, pedagogy guidebooks [and] shared bodies of knowledge about what it means to lead a creative writing course” for the sorry state of creative writing pedagogy lore among instructors (xii). Ostram, too, criticizes the traditional view that “pedagogy is not considered important enough to conceptualized” (xii) combined with the perception that “the teacher is important, authoritative, powerful; teaching, though, is finally incidental” (xiv).

The perception that creative writing cannot be taught becomes a wedge between creative writing generally and creative writing studies. For Diane Donnelly, that means that creative writing studies must divorce entirely from creative writing, which “maintains—even today—the mysterious element of creativity” (1) and Patrick Bizzaro complains that when he discusses systematic creative writing pedagogy at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) conference—the largest and most prestigious writing conference in America, roughly equivalent to CCCC—the creative

writers and creative writing instructors resist his theories because, to them, creative writing just can't be taught (Interview 2012). Elsewhere he maintains, "Many poets do not want to demystify the process of making a poem, which is not to say that they do not want their students to write well. Rather, they do not trust the language of pedagogy; the use of 'methods' or 'procedures' in helping students write poems might seem to many practicing poets as contradictory at best and dishonest at worst." (Bizzaro, *Responding*). Tim Mayers is more optimistic. He holds out hope that creative writing may someday reconcile itself to the assumption of knowledge transference embraced by creative writing studies and even "locate poetry and fiction writing within the extensive and complex nexus of forces in which composition studies [...] has begun to locate other forms and genres of writing" (148). Whether they embrace a separatist or consolidated future of creative writing studies, these creative writing studies scholars strongly affirm that what they are is radically different from creative writing because of their emphasis on creative writing as a subject that can be learned and taught, whose pedagogy can be assessed, analyzed and improved through research and developing pedagogical theories. Accordingly, creative writing studies inverts the traditional neoromantic views of creative writing.

However, just because the vanguard challenges traditional creative writing pedagogy does not mean that practitioners are changing their attitudes and practices. Methods of teaching, as well as beliefs about students, teachers and the purpose of creative writing education may prove extraordinarily difficult to change. If creative writing studies is making headway among practitioners, we would expect to see a dip in neoromantic pedagogy, especially among those practitioners in progressive programs.

This change in pedagogy would be manifest in fewer workshops, fewer invocations of native student talent and a more professionalized view of the role of the teacher.

A SURVEY OF CREATIVE WRITING INSTRUCTORS' PEDAGOGY

Creative writing pedagogy has been discussed and debated, but it is only seldom surveyed and categorized. Dianne Donnelly reports on the results of a survey of creative writing teachers, but only in qualitative ways, relying exclusively on quotes rather than percentages and ranges of instructor results. *Establishing Creative Writing as an Academic Discipline* doesn't include much by way of methodology— there's no indication of how she found participants and what the aggregates of those participants revealed. Then again, she doesn't aim to be comprehensive, but seeks quotes from participants as supporting anecdotes for her sections. Kelly Ritter's 2001 survey of training programs is more similar to what I have done: she interviewed directors of PhD programs to discover what pedagogical training graduates receive, which pedagogy courses they took and which classes they were prepared to teach upon graduation, but Ritter didn't survey actual instructors. There have even been some studies like Bythe and Sweet's 2008 article that look at student writer experiences. Listening to how instructors of creative writing teach can provide a snapshot of current pedagogy. Whether the pedagogy revealed by these instructors is changing is beyond the scope of this survey, but it can make some conclusions on whether the sample is still teaching in the traditional neoromantic frame or has embraced a more academic view of creative writing.

Methods

To assess the teaching attitudes and practices of creative writing instructors most likely to be familiar with CWS, I surveyed faculty at creative writing PhD programs within the United States. I focused on instructors within the United States, because of the unique institutional history of creative writing in the U.S.. I looked at universities with PhD programs, rather than MFA programs, because they would be the subset most amenable to an academic perspective on creative writing. If, as some CWS scholars have suggested (Ritter 2001; Knoll 2004; Butt, 2009), the PhD is an important step in creative writing studies becoming an academic discipline, the faculty at a PhD-granting institution might be the group most progressive and willing to change. Using department directories, I emailed 124 creative writing instructors at PhD-granting programs in the United States the link to an online survey. Additionally, I encouraged the program directors at these institutions to forward the survey to anyone in their department who teaches creative writing, including graduate students. I received 40 responses, although not all respondents chose to answer every one of the 62 questions on the survey.

The survey sought to capture attitudes and behaviors of practicing creative writing instructors concerning teaching methods and purpose, and perceptions of student and teacher roles. To examine these attitudes and behaviors, the survey included three major types of question. The first type of questions focused on perceptions and beliefs of participants. The bulk of the survey consisted of statements like “All students can become better creative writers,” and asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with that statement along a 4-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *agree* or *strongly agree*. The second type of questions asked respondents to indicate how frequently they engaged in certain practices. These questions would present a statement

like, “I require my students to produce new work for my creative writing classes,” and asked respondents to indicate how frequently they engaged in that practice on a 4-point Likert scale from *never*, *sometimes*, *often* or *always*.

Other, demographic, questions sought to capture a snapshot of my respondents: their seniority, their backgrounds and their familiarity with CWS as a movement and influential individuals within creative writing studies. Again, participants could describe their familiarity on a 4-point Likert scale from *completely unfamiliar*, *somewhat unfamiliar*, *somewhat familiar*, or *very familiar*. This information about the respondents’ lives indicates they are mid-career instructors who are active in their field, while not necessarily aware of the work being done in CWS, even when teaching at the same institution as American CWS scholars.

While the participants that I surveyed include emeritus as well as graduate instructors, most participants are in the middle of their careers. The majority of participants are tenured or tenure-track (58%) creative writing instructors with more than ten years of experience (60%) in the classroom (Table 4.1). These are, generally, experienced instructors.

Position	Respondent Frequency	Respondent Percentage
Graduate student	12	31.6%
Adjunct/lecturer	2	5.3%
Tenure-track assistant	1	2.6%
Tenured faculty	21	55.3%
Emeritus faculty	2	5.3%
Total responses	38	100.10%
Years Teaching Creative Writing	Respondent Frequency	Respondent Percentage
1 to 3	5	13.2%
4 to 6	5	13.2%
7 to 10	4	10.5%
11 to 15	11	29%
16 to 20	2	5.3%
More than 20	10	26.3%
Total responses	38	100

Table 4.1: The seniority of participants, PhD-granting institutions

Additionally, participants were evenly split between male (51%) and female (49%). Most (73%) participants were between 31 and 60 years old, but our demographic

skewed a little older, with only two participants younger than 30 (5%) and eight over 60 years old (21%). Over all, the sample of creative writing instructors at PhD programs represents a mature, mid-career group with years of teaching behind them as well as ahead of them. These participants are neither novices becoming acquainted with their field, nor are they retirees only accustomed to previous traditional methods.

The participants are also actively participating in their field. The vast majority of respondents (87%) report attending at least one conference in creative writing in the last five years and 42% have been to four or more conferences. Also, these instructors of creative writing are publishing their work: 97% of respondents have published a least one creative piece in a creative writing journal in the past five years while 68% have published more than seven pieces during that time. Additionally, respondents report publishing books of poetry, novels, reviews, translations, and chapters of criticism for anthologies.

Overall, the participants are experienced and involved in their field. They are also relatively united. A single-linkage cluster analysis found that there are no clear sub-groups in this sample of the population. Instead of indicating that there are sub-groups that all tend to answer the same questions the same way, the entire sample is both idiosyncratic and unified the roughly same amount. Not only are there not clear sub-groups who all respond similarly, but also there are no persistent outliers from the questions. While there are isolated questions that may have a few responses deviating strongly from the rated average, no one respondent is consistently responsible for a pattern of non-typical answers. In other words, there are no clear “cliques” within the sample and there are no eccentrics. For this reason, I will report responses as indicative of the sample generally rather than breaking down the results by academic rank or

otherwise. While there may be potential for further research in doing so, for this study, the sample was already tightly constricted to instructors at PhD-granting institutions and my purpose focuses on general perceptions and practices of creative writing teaching.

In addition to the more widely administered survey, I conducted phone interviews with the administrative directors of fifteen creative writing PhD programs. Participants for these phone interviews were recruited first through email solicitation and then through phone calls to their departments. I was able to set up phone interviews with ten directors of PhD-granting creative writing programs at American universities. These directors were asked eighteen scripted questions about their programs with the opportunity to provide additional off-script comments. These program directors were very generous with their time, and represent programs as large as the University of Cincinnati's eighty-student program or as small as UNLV's six students where, according to their director, "some years no one [is] let in." These interviews provide additional perspectives on the current state of pedagogy in creative writing as well as more qualitative response to questions about whether, and in what ways, a university can expect to teach creative writing.

Results include percentages of the total respondents who agreed with the statements, or, if indicated, the percentage of total respondents who *often* or *always* engage in the practice. The rating average indicates on a 0 to 3 scale the strength of the agreement, where 0 means every person in the sample strongly disagreed or never participated in the practice and 3 means every person in the sample strongly agreed or always participated in the practice.

Results

Teaching Method

The courses that are designed and run by respondents demonstrate some of the characteristics associated with other writing classrooms. For example, respondents overwhelmingly agreed (98%) that classes are effective in making students better writers and that the elements that lead to success in one creative writing class will transfer to other creative writing classes (Table 4.2). Among respondents, there is overwhelmingly a good deal of faith in the class as a space where teaching impacts students' abilities in predictable ways. This is at clear variance with the neoromantic view of creative writing, which downplays the academic class qua class in favor of proximity to talented writers. These instructors instead believe that there are reproducible best teaching practices for creative writing class, much as in other academic classes.

But while the instructors have a largely academic view of what a creative writing class is able to accomplish, they perceive their own students as being less convinced of the rigor of an academic creative writing course. Only a little over half (55%) agreed that students take their classes seriously, and the average rating was only weakly positive (Table 4.2). This fits what CWS scholars have complained about: Such students may see such classes as unambitiously easy, Donnelly warns, citing Healey, Cole and Hansen and Stevens in providing support that students have “low tolerance for challenge,” “count on high grades” and “avoid difficult work” in creative writing workshops (*Discipline* 91). Donnelly even quotes instructors like Michael Cunningham who confidently tell students, “unless you simply don’t give a shit, you’ll get an A” (qtd 107). Nancy Welshe, too is frustrated with the idea that “such classes don’t really involve work but pleasure and reward, an extra-curricular treat for a special talented few” (qtd Ritter 92). George

Kalamara is concerned with views that “Courses should be ‘fun’ or ‘enriching’... designations reserved for course work which are seen as less academically rigorous” as “romanticizing the role of creative expression, the university simultaneously marginalizes the teaching of creative writing and limits its possibilities” (79).

While it may be an academic universal that teachers complain about apathetic students, these numbers suggest that while instructors accept a class-based creative writing pedagogy as being analogous to other academic courses, they fail to see that attitude reflected among their students.

	Percent <i>agree</i> or <i>strongly agree</i>	Average rating (0-3)
Creative writing classes are effective in helping students become better writers.	98%	2.50
What works in one creative writing class can often be applied to other creative writing classes.	98%	2.33
Generally, students take creative writing classes as seriously as other academic classes.	55%	1.70

Table 4.2: Classroom Attitudes Survey Responses, PhD-Granting Institutions

Once in the classroom, methods of teaching creative writing may seem familiar to those in other academic classes, especially writing classes. Our respondents indicate that they don’t manage their classes exclusively as a forum for polishing up works for publication, but require new production during the semester. It’s true that a few respondents (23%) allow students to bring in older pieces, but only one instructor says he

or she *always* lets students workshop old work while 25% of these instructors say that they *never* allow students to do so. Most robustly, all of the instructors in this sample require students to produce new work during the semester, with 80% of respondents indicating that they *always* do so. Not only do these instructors see the course as a time for students to produce new work instead of just finishing old pieces, but they also require work according to regular deadlines instead of allowing for inconsistent production as students wait for inspiration; not a single participant said that it was better to let young writers produce work when they felt inspired instead of according to deadlines, and the average rating disapproved with the practice. Half of all participants disagreed while half of the participants said they strongly disagree with the statement. No one in the survey indicated that a course should eschew regular deadlines in favor of inspiration (Table 4.3).

	Percent <i>often</i> or <i>always</i>	Average rating (0-3)
I require my students to produce new work for my creative writing classes.	100%	2.80
I allow students to workshop previously written pieces.	23%	1.00
It's better to let young writers write whenever they are inspired to do so than to enforce writing deadlines.	0%	0.50

Table 4.3: Classroom Practices Survey Responses, PhD-Granting Institutions

Overall, these participants seem to envision the creative writing classroom as a place where students learn to be better writers, assisted by transferable methods applied to assigned writing projects. All of this seems to indicate that creative writing classrooms are not so heavily neoromantic as traditional creative writing pedagogy has been.

There is one area in which this sample of creative writing instructors is more traditional, however, and that is in the type of classroom that they run. While the creative writing workshop has been under attack from CWS scholars as I have described earlier, the writing workshop remains a popular course for the respondents. Three-quarters of all respondents say that they always or often lead a workshop-heavy course for their students, and almost as many agree that the writing workshop is the best way for students to become better writers (Table 4.4).

	Percent <i>often</i> or <i>always</i> (unless otherwise indicated)	Average rating (0-3)
I lead most of my creative writing classes as primarily a workshop of student work.	75%	1.93
The writing workshop is the most effective way for young writers to improve.	68%	1.80

Table 4.4: Workshop Practice and Attitude Survey Responses, PhD-Granting Institutions

While the creative writing workshop remains prevalent among these participants, the expectations of the workshop are overall academic: the student will begin to create

work consistently from when the course begins, and the instructor will apply methods of teaching that will help those students to become better writers throughout the course. All of this sounds very familiar to the composition instructor or other writing teacher. The reasons why the creative writing instructors put such effort into their classes may be likewise familiar.

Purpose of Teaching

Traditional creative writing pedagogy focuses on the star students, the ones who “have what it takes,” but the survey respondents appear to be more democratic in their purpose for teaching. Opposing the most extreme view of neoromantic creative writing pedagogy, almost all instructors in the sample believe that students benefit from creative writing classes regardless of their professional future, and they agree very strongly (Figure 15, row 1). Instead of seeing the creative writing class as a weeder class for discouraging untalented students, the instructors assert that there are real benefits for all students.

The respondents were convinced that creative writing classes improve both student reading and writing, but they were slightly more convinced that creative writing classes contribute to a better appreciation of literature (Table 4.5). As D. G. Myer has said, these classes give students “an elephant’s view of zoology” (*Elephants* 8-9), giving them an insider perspective in the composition of that literature which they typically encounter in its finished, published and anthologized state. This aligns with the less militant neoromantic purpose for teaching less talented students; graduates of a creative writing class become more sophisticated consumers of literature.

The instructors in the survey also agree that creative writing classes improve student writing beyond the creative genres, however, there is slightly less consensus, and the agreement is not as strong. The size of the sample may not be big enough to read too much into the relative support for creative writing's service to literature rather than composition, but these results may indicate that creative writing instructors still see themselves as more closely allied to literature than composition. Outcomes for creative writing classes value literature reading practices or composition writing skills, but the percentage of respondents agreeing is still over 90%, demonstrating a robust consensus that creative writing skills are transferrable beyond the workshop.

	Percent <i>agree</i> or <i>strongly agree</i>	Average rating (0-3)
Students benefit from creative writing classes even if they never become published writers.	98%	2.68
Students in a creative writing class gain a better understanding of and appreciation for literature.	95%	2.60
Students in a creative writing class gain critical thinking and transferable writing skills.	92%	2.41

Table 4.5 Classroom Practices Survey Responses, PhD-Granting Institutions

Overwhelmingly, the participants indicated that they saw real benefits for all of their students in a creative writing class, and believed that their students improved both their reading and writing skills beyond the creative writing field.

The Student

The overall view of students painted by the respondents in my study differs markedly from the neoromantic view of students. The survey results show solid agreement with the statement “All students can learn to be better creative writers” and these instructors generally assert that their classes do not take raw talent into account, but rather focus on effort and progress (Table 4.6). The agreement is not unanimous in the affirmative, but it is high enough to indicate that talent is far from the greatest factor in the minds of these respondents. While fewer respondents agree that creative writing classes *cannot* grade on raw talent, they largely agree that it is immoral to do so. Presumably, these instructors can imagine grades that focus on talent, either because the neoromantic ideas are still in the air or because they have seen or experienced such grading. But these instructors over all think that such grading is wrong.

	Percent agree or strongly agree	Average rating (0-3, strongly disagree to strongly agree)
All students can become better creative writers.	83%	2.18
In my creative writing classes, I grade effort and progress, not raw talent.	76%	2.18
Students in a creative writing class CANNOT be graded on raw talent, but on effort and progress.	63%	1.78
Students in a creative writing class SHOULD NOT be graded on raw talent, but on effort and progress.	83%	2.10

Table 4.6: Student Talent Survey Responses, PhD-Granting Institutions

If students can become better writers through the efforts of themselves and those of their instructors, then writing ability is at least in part learnable and not entirely dependent on either some inborn ability or a fickle muse. The effort and progress that students demonstrate in a creative writing class are metrics familiar to many composition courses as well as other classes in the academy. It appears that in questions of the talent of the student, these respondents over all reject the neoromantic emphasis on inborn talent.

The Teacher

The respondents seem to be skeptical of the neoromantic importance of student talent, but results were far less strong in terms of changing the traditional view of the instructor of creative writing. These respondents did overall weakly agree that there should be some sort of training for creative writing instructors, but very few of them have ever received pedagogical training for creative writing. More than half of the respondents agreed that instructors should receive training, but only 21% have received some training. (Table 4.7). Only 13% of surveyed instructors report having frequent training, and 60% of respondents report *never* having taken a university-sponsored class, workshop or practicum on creative writing pedagogy. The general lack of formal training may suggest that even PhD programs in creative writing don't prioritize pedagogy training as much as other qualifications for teaching. In fact, this sample was rather conservative about instructors, generally agreeing with the neoromantic perspective that the best creative writing teacher is a practitioner passing on experience and perspective (Table 4.7). If the key qualification for an instructor is a publishing record, then formal training through seminars and workshops might not seem so important. The results of this survey are

backed up by interviews that suggest that formal training for creative writing instructors may still be as rare as it was when Kelly Ritter surveyed creative writing PhD programs in 2001.

	Percent agree or strongly agree	Average rating (0-3)
Creative writing instructors should be trained in specific creative writing pedagogy before teaching.	63%	1.63
I take university-sponsored classes, workshops, or practicum in to improve my creative writing teaching.	21%	0.76
The best creative writing instructors are successfully published creative writers, teaching the genre they write.	80%	2.00

Table 4.7: Instructor training survey responses, PhD-Granting Institutions

Still, for all the lack of training, many PhD-granting universities want to hire skilled creative writing instructors. One interviewee said that his program had noted that new hires are "more successful with teaching experience than those who are just good writers" and went on to further stress the importance of having good instructors in the classroom. He said that the PhD program takes student feedback of instruction very seriously and "If they're not up to par, we find out very quickly." However, none of the interviewed program administrators had formal expectations for what training a potential instructor should have before entering the classroom. Almost every interviewee said that they assumed that if their applicants had a PhD or an MFA, then they would have

sufficient experience teaching. One interviewee admitted that their program didn't ask a lot of questions about teaching qualifications, but that they expected their potential instructors would have "seen good teaching and know how to teach." The approach to training creative writing instructors, in other words, seems to be similar to the traditional training of creative writers: having "seen good teaching" and learning through exposure replaces the need for any formal training. Half of the interviewed program administrators said that they assumed that if an applicant had a PhD or an MFA, then that applicant had experience teaching as a graduate student.

In fact, the PhD programs that these program directors administered all gave their students experience teaching. Except for rare one- or two-semester fellowships or work in a writing center or a journal, every graduate student in these programs had the opportunity and the expectation to teach. However, not every graduate student in every program was able to teach creative writing. All of the program directors I interviewed said that their graduate students' first and most common experience in teaching comes in the composition classroom. First-year composition is what one program director called "bread and butter" for funding the creative writing graduate students. While the majority of programs let their students "move up" to teaching creative writing workshops after a year or two of teaching composition, PhD students teach a 2/2 or 2/1 course load of composition classes for most of their graduate careers. All of the program directors I interviewed said that first year composition was the class most frequently taught by graduate students. And just as composition provides much of the experience teaching for PhD creative writing students, composition also provides the formal training in teaching.

All of the creative writing programs in my interview sample gave their PhD students access to composition pedagogy before the students entered the classroom to

teach. These composition pedagogy courses ranged from a “rigorous one-week” workshop or even three-day orientation to a full semester of rhetoric and composition pedagogy. Response to the pedagogy seminar seems to be not consistently favorable; one program director said that the creative writing students “hate it.” Still, for the majority of these programs, composition pedagogy is the only required training before entering the classroom.

Only two of the administrators interviewed described any sort of required formal training for creative writing pedagogy. One required class brought in speakers from other creative writing classes as well as the university community to discuss student needs and policies, and the other program’s pedagogy class employed faculty members to observe novice teachers, give presentations and work with PhD students to design a workshop and another program ran a colloquium to bring in experienced creative writing teachers to tell novices “what worked for me.” Both of these classes rely primarily on shared personal experience and mentorship rather than field-wide established best practices. In addition to these two programs’ required courses, one other program mentioned an elective creative writing pedagogy course taught by an instructor who cares about the subject, but the interviewee didn’t know the details of what that class involved. Over all, most interviewees said that their programs lacked any formal training for creative writing pedagogy, and instead used the composition training to prepare students for teaching. Instead, informal training, such as mentorship and observation, seems to be the preparation most PhD students receive for teaching creative writing classes. Many of these directors explicitly mentioned their PhD students’ “own experience” as a participant in many workshops as qualification for designing and running their own classes.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The participants involved in this study generally see the practice of teaching creative writing as similar to other academic pursuits. They don't see student talent as the primary indicator of student success, and they believe that all students benefit from a creative writing class, not just the select talented few. They generally believe that instructors in creative writing should be trained in pedagogy and they believe that the best practices from one class can be transferred to another. They even suspect that those best practices should look similar to other writing classes, with a focus on creating new work by a deadline. Furthermore, they overwhelmingly agree that the benefits of being in a creative writing class apply to understanding literature and improving writing outside of the creative genres. In all this, it appears that this sample of instructors are not heavily influenced by the neoromantic view of creative writing instruction. However, there are some indications that this sample is still slightly traditional. Writing workshops are still the most common method of teaching, and while there is a slight agreement that teachers should be trained for the creative writing classroom, very few in the sample had engaged in such training.

This suggests that the state of creative writing pedagogy falls somewhere between the neoromantic bugbear that CWS scholars often invoke and the ideal pedagogy CWS scholars like Donnelly and Ritter call for. This sample believes that writing can be taught and there are better and worse ways to go about it, but they still rely on traditional modes of "osmosis" for their own training. As one of the interviewees said, these instructors are sometimes only expected to have "seen good teaching" in order to become good teachers.

It's possible to hypothesize that so many instructors rely on the workshop because that's the mode that they have experience with, both within the academy and within self-formed writing groups. Without explicit training and reading new research in creative writing pedagogy, the instructors only have their own experience to rely on. In such a case, the lore of creative writing marches on from generation to generation of instructors.

Still, these instructors also seem to be influenced by the zeitgeist of professionalization within the academy. They espouse a very different perspective than the author-teachers interviewed by Nancy Bunge, who adhere to the neoromantic perspective of creative writing pedagogy. They see teachers and students in different roles and describe a more democratic view of the purpose and methods of teaching creative writing. Above all, and most critically, they believe that the answer to The Question is that, yes, creative writing can be taught. This sample supports creative writing as a *techne*, having a position in the university. Yet, their concerns that students do not take creative writing classes as seriously as other classes raises a question: do English programs in universities take creative writing classes seriously? If training and research in creative writing programs is lacking, then universities may be asking instructors to be teachers in an academic, not neoromantic, vein without giving them the resources necessary for them to do so.

Chapter Five: Castles in the Sky with Foundations of Tenure Review

"We often talk of funding for creative writing students, funding for creative writing research, support for a capital infrastructure involving physical spaces and technologies, as well as funding for staffing. All this is dependent on a political (and indeed, institutional) will."

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

So far, this project has focused on whether CWS research and pedagogy goals describe a nascent discipline and whether those claims are realized in practice. But here would be a good place to step back and consider how disciplinary claims stake real material consequences as well as immaterial conditions and prestige. Belonging to a "real discipline" has actual material consequences: having a recognized and respected discipline improves the likelihood of receiving departmental sanction, research support, secure faculty positions and rank advancement, and other tangible benefits. The visibility of these resources bolsters the discipline's reputation and that reputation leads to future resources. The process is by nature cyclical: disciplinary institutions support claims for disciplinarity.

As important as it is for research and pedagogy practices to build credibility as a discipline, establishing a disciplinary identity also means courting power-granting institutions in and out of the university. Research and pedagogy are like two sides of a coin, related but opposite. Research emphasizes the creation and dissemination of new knowledge within a discipline, while pedagogy enculturates novices in the recognized theories and practices of a discipline. But both sides of a coin are stamped in the same

metal and both research and pedagogy depend on institutions. Without journals, conferences, programs and departments, individual scholars would be unable to organize and communicate with each other and with novices.

This chapter begins with a description of institutional features, both in and out of the English department, that CWS has claimed as hallmarks of disciplinarity. PhD programs are institutions particularly germane to academic creative writing and CWS scholars place great meaning in PhD programs, so my survey and interviews focus on instructors and program directors from PhD-granting creative writing programs. I highlight three institutional topics from CWS manifestos in my research. First, I ask participants about their involvement in and commitment to their departments to determine whether creative writers feel a “privileged marginalization” (Mayers *(Re)Writing*) in the English department; then I will look at how these practitioners view journals and conferences to determine whether they endorse scholarly work and if they participate in it themselves; finally, I will look at reported hiring practices of faculty to see whether practitioners endorse using the “star” instructor paradigm and if, in fact, departments are hiring on that basis—do search committees believe “only those who can, teach?”

These sites of disciplinarity reflect a scarcity of resources: the department only has so many tenure-track jobs to fill—whom should they hire? The faculty members only have so much time to work—what should they spend their time on? Attitudes and practices of these members of the PhD program reflect prioritizing scarce resources

within institutions like universities. My findings indicate that priorities remain relatively traditional—creative production trumps pedagogy and research for most faculty and administrators—even though faculty members feel at home within English departments that have different publishing expectations. The participants in this study are comfortable with their publishing and hiring practices even when at odds with the wider academy. Still, there are signs (like accepting creative writing research and hiring qualified teachers) that these faculty members also think beyond just producing creative work.

CREATIVE WRITING'S ASCENSION AMID THE ENGLISH CRISIS

Many CWS scholars point to institutional changes within creative writing programs around the United States and around the world as a sign that that creative writing is ripe for an academic discipline. The volume of creative writing students and teachers gives creative writing institutional clout, and, as for composition, there is strength in numbers. Mimi Thebo draws a parallel between composition and creative writing in how pedagogical power has led to their increased independence from literary studies. Thebo writes that composition split off from the rest of English studies “for practical concerns” as “vast numbers of students” who took first year writing were “the course of major funding for English departments” and teaching them gave composition a degree of institutional clout (32) and then draws a comparison to creative writing. Certainly, the increasing professionalization of composition accompanied the post-war boom in university enrollment as did the second wave of college students in the era of open enrollment universities. For Thebo, an explosion of students taking creative writing

has led to “More creative writing departments [who have] seceded from English Studies [...] and more stand-alone degrees were offered” while “Creative Writing BA and MA degree courses in America, Australia, Canada and Britain rapidly proliferated” (36). Thebo argues that with so many students and so many teachers, creative writing will have increased authority in the university to define its own standards and expectations.

Diane Donnelly and Graeme Harper make a similar argument when introducing their book *Key Issues in Creative Writing* (2013). There they point out that “student interest has largely been the force propelling creative writing programs” and they quote Steve May, head of creative writing at Bath Spa University, that because “finance officers like ‘high and easy recruitment’” creative writing is “one of the most rapidly expanding and popular disciplines” (xix). Harper and Donnelly cite the growth of creative writing programs in the U.S., the U.K. and Australia and New Zealand as evidence of institutional buy-in to creative writing. They triumphantly declare the numbers: the U.S. has seen creative writing programs increase from just 79 to 813 in thirty years; in the U.K. a single program forty years ago has blossomed into 139; and in Australia and New Zealand, since 1999, PhD programs have increased from eight to 25 (xiii). Tim Mayers, too, finds justification for a beefier role of creative writing in the increased enrollment in creative writing classes. He reports that “renewed interest in creative writing as a foundational course appears on the rise” (*(Re)Writing* 9) and this means that creative writing is both an institutional force to be reckoned with, but also that it is ripe for disciplinarity.

CWS commenters point out that creative writing's presence in the university has grown with increased enrollment, and that power has come from pragmatic sources: creative writing has the capacity to increase enrollment to the liberal arts college or English major. Thomas Bartlett has pointed to the increased number of creative writing students at universities at all levels, and this "growing interest comes as the number of English majors has declined significantly since 1970" ("Undergraduates"). At a time when a 2013 *New York Times* editorial titled "The Decline and Fall of the English Major" directs our attention to the fact that within twenty years, graduates in English literature at some schools have dropped by sixty percent (Klinkenborg) and MLA enrollment can decrease by 5% a year (Feal), the increased enrollment of creative writing students may feel like reinforcements arriving under the direction of a foreign general. Creative writing's power in the department is increased through these enrollment trends.

The numbers aren't just about visibility and power. CWS scholars hope that having increased numbers of undergraduate students will encourage creative writing to professionalize, the way composition did when faced with increased enrollment in the last century. Some, like Thebo, make the connection explicitly. The proliferation in creative writing programs may, at first glance, seem radically different from composition's increased presence on campus half a century ago. After all, composition's numbers swelled as first-year students were drafted into remedial and introductory writing classes (Crowley), while creative writing's ranks are filled with voluntary recruits. However, the results for university faculty and administration are similar: increased students in a writing-heavy class mean a need for more instructors, recruited

heavily among graduate students and adjuncts, who may seek out professionalizing resources, like conferences, to prepare them to teach in the most up-to-date ways possible. Some traditionalists may still argue that creative writing can't be taught; nonetheless, students are being taught in great numbers in programs all across America and the world.

The general increase in students is important, but CWS triumphantly trumpets the rise of the PhD program in creative writing. The PhD becomes an important signal that universities are committed to the discipline as not just a field that lends to enrichment for undergraduates, but also as a specialization that can provide its own research and its own specialists. The role of the PhD has been important in literary studies and composition as they have developed towards disciplinarity and is similarly important for CWS scholars. Accordingly, the PhD-granting program becomes an oft-repeated defense of their disciplinarity. The Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) has noted an increase in the number of PhD programs in creative writing (although far outstripped by the exponential increase in MFA programs nationwide). Several creative writing scholars (Ritter and Vanderslice, 2007; Bizzaro, 2011; and Andrews, 2009; Thebo 2013, for example) have pointed out the growth of both creative writing PhD programs and the many increasingly autonomous departments of creative writing on universities as important evidence for disciplinary autonomy. The creative writing PhD is still rare enough that sometimes it bears repeating to listeners who are used to hearing “creative writing” paired with “MFA,” but it indicates an alignment of creative writing with the terminal degree affiliated with the rest of English studies and academic university disciplines.

The PhD is an imperfect site, but one which can underline expectations for the nascent discipline. Diane Donnelly is disappointed in how many programs fail to distinguish between career-track and hobby writers, but finds hope in the doctorate in creative writing. She points to the “significant rise in creative writing programs” especially noting the number of PhD programs as an important step for creative writing’s disciplinarity (*Establishing* 78). The PhD program, Donnelly insists, should support reforms in pedagogy and research. She suggests that PhD programs in creative writing should “complement the discipline’s current scholarship and pedagogy in small measure to include more training of creative writing students in the history and practice of the field” (125). Donnelly and Harper approve of the way that universities in the US expect creative writing instructors to count all of their writing—professional and creative—for performance reviews and the growing trend in the creative writing PhD of pairing a creative project with critical or theoretical exegesis (xvii). Katherine Cole, at the University of Utah, describes how her program tries to balance creative work with literature and theory: “the scholarly component of our PhD is strenuous” but even so she notes that “students struggle to divide themselves between two competing, apparently disparate pursuits. Though they believe intuitively that their scholarly work and their creative work are related, they aren’t sure how, and their educations don’t help them to clarify matters” (10). There is a sense that the PhD in creative writing is important, a benchmark in disciplinarity, but that the PhD program in creative writing is fraught with ambiguity for instructors and students alike.

These surveys and interviews focus on the creative writing PhD in part because such programs include academic courses in addition to workshops and are less likely to culminate exclusively in a creative project. But while these programs and their course

requirements may indicate an academization of creative writing, there hasn't been much investigation about whether the creative writing professionals who work in those programs adhere to an "academized" view of creative writing rather than to creative writing lore and tradition. Expanding on a review of the 18 creative writing PhD programs in America, this section investigates the attitudes and perceptions of program administrators and instructors within the PhD programs in America.

METHODS (REPRISE)

This chapter, like the last one, derives from a series of interviews and a survey administered to those who work in PhD-granting creative writing programs within the United States in 2013. The demographic information collected from the survey suggests that the participants were a representative group of mid-career, experienced instructors who were deeply involved in their profession, although they were not overly familiar with CWS as a movement nor with the CWS vanguard (see previous chapter for further information).

Aside from demographic inquiries, the bulk of the survey consisted of statements like "Universities should only hire creative writers who hold an MFA or a PhD" and asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with that statement along a 4-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *agree* or *strongly agree*. These questions focused on perceptions and beliefs of participants. Other questions asked respondents to indicate how frequently they engaged in certain practices. These questions would present a statement like, "I attend departmental meetings," and ask respondents to indicate how frequently they engaged in that practice on a 4-point Likert scale from *never*, *sometimes*, *often* or *always*.

In addition to the more widely administered survey, I conducted phone interviews with the administrative directors of fifteen creative writing PhD programs. These interviews seek to triangulate the responses from the survey participants and elicit long-form responses in addition to providing a more administrative perspective, which is particularly relevant to questions of perceived institutional standing at the university.

Results include percentages of the total respondents who agreed with the statements, or, if indicated, the percentage of total respondents who *often* or *always* engage in the practice. The rating average indicates on a 0 to 3 scale the strength of the agreement, where 0 means every person in the sample strongly disagreed or never participated in the practice and 3 means every person in the sample strongly agreed or always participated in the practice.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE CREATIVE WRITING PHD

My participants generally believed that the PhD was a positive development. Seventy percent of them agreed with the statement “A PhD in creative writing is more prestigious than an MFA” and the agreement was relatively high. Considering creative writing’s traditional exceptionalism, support of a PhD indicates growing acceptance of standard academic degrees. However, despite the perception that a PhD is more prestigious, the participants were split on whether offering a PhD had made their colleagues in the university more likely to respect the creative writing department (see Table 5.1).

	Percent <i>often or always</i> (unless otherwise indicated)	Average rating (0-3)
A PhD in creative writing is more prestigious than an MFA.	70%	1.84
Offering a PhD in creative writing has made others at the university respect creative writing more.	51%	1.59

Table 5.1: Participants’ perceptions of PhD programs

The program directors I interviewed reiterated the importance of the creative writing PhD even more strongly. One director said that it was “unethical” to only offer an MFA because graduates can’t get a job without a PhD these days. Another director agreed with this perspective, pointing out that the “world of CW had evolved that MFA is not considered a terminal degree in academia.” The importance of a PhD program for these directors is in no way incompatible with a hiring preference for published authors. Having a publication record is necessary but sometimes not sufficient, as these directors point out. Several directors used phrases like “there are so many MFA programs—why compete?” or “there is a gap need in the marketplace” for PhD students in the university. The respectability of the PhD became part of the appeal for some of these directors. Said one director, English department “faculty are more comfortable with [PhDs] I guess.”

On a whole, the directors reported that their programs were treated favorably. The “prestige marginalization” that Mayers identifies is present in the responses of these directors. While there may be a lot of support from administration because, as one respondent pointed out, it may be easier for administrators to understand the value of producing creative work than the critical work of literary studies or composition. One

program director stated that the creative writing program, with its very visible celebrity instructors and public readings was “great PR for” the university.

Still, administrators may, as in one example, always mention the creative writing program in the state of the university address every year, but this does not always translate into a perception of financial support for the work of creative writing. One director I spoke to described this process in depth: despite a lot of lip service to the program the administration doesn’t “put its money where its mouth is” and while it “wants to put you on a poster,” the administration sees poetry as “icing on the cake for state occasions, but ignores the everyday work we do.” Frustrated, he concluded, “They don’t know what we’re doing.”

Other program directors expressed similar frustrations. One program director reports that “on a whole, the university is proud,” but nonetheless “you always feel like they could give us more money” for workshops and retreats. Another director echoed the disconnect between moral and financial support: while the university and administrators “adore” the creative writing program, “they adore, but that doesn’t mean they give us any more resources.” Another director says “the administration is supportive, but sometimes you have to wake people up” to raises that didn’t happen for a long time—that director even pointed out that it took sit-ins at the administration building to secure funding for teaching fellows. Program directors also reported that within their own departments, the CW PhD was not without its problems. One director reports that a quality enhancement review concluded that there needs to be more of a distinction between the PhD and the MFA and that the PhD can’t just be “MFA on steroids.”

Difficulty in defining the PhD haunts many of these programs. The key ambiguous site in a creative writing PhD program is the dissertation. In most disciplines,

the dissertation is seen as the crowning accomplishment of a graduate student as well as the initiation into sustained scholarly work of the larger academic community. The dissertation requirement sets graduate studies apart as a knowledge-making enterprise and in doing so grants institutional validation on the writing of novice scholars. In creative writing PhD programs, the dissertation is difficult to define: should inauguration into academic creative writing focus on interpretation or production? Are PhD programs creating authors or scholars? The answer is not clear across American creative writing doctoral programs. Of fifteen PhD-producing programs, six accepted a final creative writing project in lieu of a dissertation, five expected a creative piece with a long scholarly introduction or conclusion, three demanded a hybrid between scholarly and creative work and one required no final project—only aggressive course work and exams to prepare graduate students to teach literature as well as creative writing (Table 5.2).

These requirements are themselves eclectic, but even within the subcategories, writing and scholarship expectations vary wildly. For instance, the critical component of a creative/scholarly dissertation may be an article-length critical introduction about the genre of the manuscript (the example a participant told me was “the role of the Gothic in 20th century literature”), or it may be simply “imagining themselves in a larger context,” or even just “reflections” on the process of composing, which may be formal or informal. Even within the department, there is much ambiguity about the balance of scholarly to creative work. One director admitted “there aren’t many rules [which] can be a challenge for students.”

PhD-Granting Institution	Dissertation requirement
Cincinnati	creative manuscript
Florida State	creative manuscript
Georgia	scholarly, or hybrid creative
Georgia State	creative manuscript or hybrid
Houston	creative manuscript and scholarly afterward
Missouri, Columbia	creative manuscript with scholarly preface
North Texas	creative manuscript
Ohio	creative manuscript with scholarly preface
Oklahoma	creative manuscript with scholarly preface
Southern California	hybrid creative (50% critical)
U Illinois, Chicago	creative manuscript
U Nebraska Lincoln	creative manuscript
U Nevada Las Vegas	creative manuscript
Utah	creative manuscript with scholarly preface
Western Michigan	“serious coursework and important exams”

Table 5.2: Dissertation requirements at American PhD creative writing programs

While the PhD in creative writing is a relatively recent institutional development and it may be unfair to hold it to the same standard as well-established PhD programs in literary studies or composition, my interviews and surveys indicate that creative writing programs are indeed perceived by those within them as prestigious and necessary, but are still nebulous in the expectations for writing genre and discipline. The disciplinary identity of these PhD programs is uncertain: are they just, to repeat a director, “MFA programs on steroids” or are they scholarly programs that align more closely with literary studies? Is the emphasis on interpretation or production? The answer to this question is not inconsequential for these nascent programs or for CWS in general. If, as Tim Mayers has alleged in *(Re)Writing*, there is a hierarchy in English studies that privileges interpretation over production, the PhD dissertation requirements seem to court that hegemony, where the work added to a creative project is interpretative, asking students to analyze their own work in context of genre or period of writing, or even just offer a self-interpretative reflection. Creative writing’s emphasis on production is thus brought into respectability by adding an interpretative element. This move is incomplete and inconsistent across programs, of course, and some programs unabashedly promote a production-based creative dissertation.

The CWS vanguard has argued that since a literary studies hegemony has dominated the idea of English in promoting interpretation over production, this same domination has also extended to the department itself: the work, the relationships and the administration of the English department as a whole. This is the “marginalization” of Mayers’ “prestige marginalization.” If creative writers are only patronized by the university and are not full faculty members, then there is no place for them in the department or the wider university community. Producing creative work in a garret does

not naturally translate to the nitty-gritty administrative work of running a department. But does literary studies truly shunt creative writers out of the university community?

DEPARTMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

The creative writing studies vanguard takes for granted that departmental relationships in the English department are strained, especially with literary studies. Creative writing may seem like a mismatch for the interpretation-based work of the university. Donnelly's manifesto recognizes that creative writing may not fit in with other disciplines in the university. "Creative writing in the United States, situated within a research facility, remains estranged from other disciplines [...]. It is still considered the softer discipline, the angelic community on university and college campuses" (121). Mayers, too, points out that creative writing in the university may be uncomfortable for creative writers and academics alike. In *(Re)Writing*, he argues that because "Creative writing ... tends to be positioned as an anti-academic field existing within academic institutions ... [the traditional] arrangement has never really worked for everyone in creative writing" (20-21).

In CWS manifestos, both composition and literary studies are portrayed as uncomfortable with creative writing. Mayers, after articulating everything that composition and creative writing studies, reports a frustrating debate with a composition scholar, after which he concludes, "If the primary potential bridges between creative writing and composition are theoretical ... the primary barriers are institutional" (114). Literary studies is also supposedly too distinct from creative writing's institutional aims. Creative writing's own institutions lack respect in English departments, as Donnelly claims:

Creative writers are not necessarily compliant with the department's mission or held to the same scholarly standards that dominate the profession as a whole. In fact, creative writers often make further distinctions between the department profession and *their* profession. Many believe that their poems and stories ...which may be published in respectable but not always nationally-recognized journals and presses, are treated like flimsy, onion-skinned tissue paper. Their conferences are sometimes tabled as artsy. Even their professional organization fails to re-envision their discipline. (*Establishing* 94)

Donnelly paints a dire picture of the distinction between the English department as a whole and the creative writing constituents.

As a solution, both Donnelly and Mayers promote increased independence for creative writers in the university, with a separate department or separate programs. Mayers' (*Re*)*Writing* drives towards a call for "either the creation of stand-alone writing departments or a dramatic restructuring of English departments" (167). Mayers endorses most of all "independent departments" for writing studies (130), but would be satisfied also with "a minor or major 'track' ... *within* an English department" (131). New classes might not be enough because, according to Mayer, the "cafeteria counter" of classes "exert no fundamental influence on the over-arching disciplinary structure" (132). Donnelly, like Mayers, insists that "to reverse this marginalization (no one can erase the history of creative writing's peripheral status) means positioning creative writers in a more visible and comfortable academic home" (9)—an independent department.

While members of the vanguard insist on further independence from the English department, the participants in my study were relatively satisfied with the current house for creative writing in American universities. Seventy percent agreed that creative writing belongs in English departments, and agree relatively strongly, while only thirty percent endorse an independent creative writing department (see Table 5.3). Participants were relatively satisfied with being in English departments, although the attitude was by no means unanimous. A thirty percent dissension rate is not insignificant, and the survey finds that there are other signs of independence among creative writers. Thirty-five percent of the participants endorsed blurring the lines with literary studies, but the percentage of those who would ally with composition was even lower at twenty-six percent, and the average rating was quite low—only .92 on a 0-3 scale. The model that Mayers originally proposes in *(Re)Writing*, that of a joint writing studies field with composition, is less popular than the independent model that he moves to in later writings along with Donnelly. Even so, the participants weren't convinced that a separate department was necessary for creative writing, although overall, the percentage and agreement in favor of a separate department were higher than for proposals of greater unity with composition or literary studies.

	Percent <i>agree</i> or <i>strongly agree</i>	Average rating (0-3)
Creative writing belongs in English departments.	70%	1.81
Creative writing belongs in its own department.	30%	1.24
The field of creative writing should ally itself more closely with English literature and literary studies and attend its conferences and publish in its journals.	35%	1.19
The field of creative writing should ally itself more closely with Composition Studies and attend its conferences and publish in its journals.	26%	0.92
My university gives the creative writing program the financial support they deserve	43%	1.46

Table 5.3: Survey Results of Attitude Towards Departmental Alignment

Whether or not the participants thought that creative writing belonged in the English department, they indicate that they are involved members of the English department. Providing a counterpoint to the legend of how T.C. Boyle agreed to found a creative writing PhD only on the condition that he would not be required to attend any meetings (“MFA versus PhD?”), these participants report feeling invested in their universities. Seventy-one percent agree that they are “deeply involved in the university community,” with a solid rating of 2.1 on a 0-3 scale (see Table 5.4). Conversely, only eight percent of participants think that tenure-track creative writing faculty should be excused from administrative duties like attending meetings and participating in hiring

committees. The agreement is very low at only .45 on a 0-3 scale; it is safe to say that these participants do believe they should be involved in department administration.

	Percent <i>agree</i> or <i>strongly agree</i>	Average rating (0-3)
I see myself as deeply involved in the university community.	71%	2.10
Tenure-track creative writing instructors should not be required to participate in department-wide meetings, hiring committees, etc.	8%	0.45

Table 5.4: All participant attitudes towards departmental involvement

The respondents in this study generally practice in accordance to their beliefs. Seventy-five percent of participants indicate they attend departmental meetings and at a relatively high frequency; sixty-five percent are on departmental committees (Table 5.5).

	Percent <i>often</i> or <i>always</i>	Average rating (0-3)
I attend departmental meetings.	75%	2.14
I am involved in departmental committees.	65%	1.97

Table 5.5: Over all participant involvement in department

Because this sample included graduate students, adjuncts and emeriti, who might not be as involved in the department, a look at a sub-set of the data reveals that those with seniority are especially involved. Those with ten years or more of experience teaching were more likely to attend department meetings and serve on committees, possibly because of their seniority and role in the university. With the exception of one participant, none of the experienced instructors answered that they “never” attended meetings, sat on committees or felt themselves deeply involved in the university community. In fact, four out of the ten most experienced instructors (20+ years teaching) selected the “always” option on this question. However, experienced instructors were notably less likely to see themselves as deeply involved in the university community than less experienced instructors. It’s possible this is simply because experienced faculty members may simply have less time to be involved in “extracurriculars” on campus like political, social or cross-disciplinary groups. Regardless, most respondents were full-fledged participants of their departments and universities.

	Instructors with under 10 years experience (<i>always</i> or <i>often</i>)	Instructors with over 10 years experience (<i>always</i> or <i>often</i>)	Total participants
I attend departmental meetings.	60%	78%	75%
I am involved in departmental committees.	47%	74%	65%
I see myself as deeply involved in the university community.	80%	65%	71%

Table 5.6: Involvement in the department by experience

The responses from the surveyed participants reflect the impressions of the program administrators I interviewed. All of the program directors reported that creative writers were involved in departmental committees and initiatives. One director remarked that there is “no difference between literature and creative writing” and that they are “very cooperative” and another director proudly declared that even non tenure-track faculty members were involved in such committees. Far from being marginalized and oppressed, these program directors felt that the creative writing instructors they represent are full participants in their departments. These same directors report that there is a high level of integration with literature and other departments. One director says that resources “move [around] a lot” among literature, rhetoric and creative writing, while another insisted that the PhD in creative writing “needs to function as a hybrid degree” by courting incoming literature students. Other directors pointed to drama and fine arts departments and independent think tanks as sources for funding, but all directors mentioned that the English department was the primary institutional support in the university.

The participants in my study were engaged in their departments and took service roles in meetings and committees seriously. They felt like they belonged in the English department and were relative happy with their affiliation with English and literary studies. They may feel comfortable in the department with their colleagues, but they may not be willing to cross disciplines to publish and present in composition and literary studies. It will be their publishing experience that will describe whether they are publishing creative productions or scholarly interpretations at the university. Like the PhD candidates in the first section, these faculty will be under an ambiguous pressure to write scholarly and creative work.

PUBLISHING SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE WORK

PhD candidates who successfully fulfill the requirements for graduation, including the dissertation, may enter into academia again, to participate in the university community and the English department. If getting a PhD makes one more employable because the “MFA is not considered a terminal degree in academia” or because “there is a gap need in the market place,” the creative writing dissertation may reflect the continuing ambiguities in the publishing work expected of creative writing faculty in a university setting.

The survey of faculty at PhD-granting institutions shows that attitudes towards publishing don't necessarily match publishing practices. Being at a university may influence these participants to over-report how important they feel scholarly publishing is. Most of the faculty in the sample were in favor of scholarly work in creative writing. This stands contrary to the resistance to research Patrick Bizzaro describes; he tells the story of presenting a paper at AWP, and then immediately being accosted by a friend who insisted that “creative writers don't give papers at conferences” (“Should I”). The participants in my study seemed to be comfortable with the idea of creative writing scholarship and some of them do, in fact, give papers at conferences.

Table 5.7 describes the attitudes towards publication from the participants in this survey. A full ninety percent of those surveyed believed that literature and composition journals would benefit from creative writing's insights in writing literature and they believed this strongly (2.31 on a 0-3 scale). Less dramatically, the participants think that that literature and composition journals should be more receptive to articles by creative writers. More than half the participants were in favor of more venues for scholarly work about creative writing. But while the participants may believe that composition and

literature fields in general should provide more opportunity for publication, few participants felt like the colleagues took creative writing less seriously because of their publishing practices. Only around 40% agreed that they felt a lack of respect because of their publications, and they agree only weakly (1.39 of a 0-3 scale). Faculty at PhD-granting institutions report some negative attitudes towards creative writing's publication practices. Thirty-nine percent agree with the strong statement "My colleagues in other departments don't take creative writing seriously because of its unique publishing practices." But instead, these participants believe that their mission in the university is to create literature; seventy-one percent see the expectation for tenure-track faculty to reside in "creating new creative works." Overall the participants agree, and rather strongly agree, that there is benefit in creative writers publishing scholarly work in venues for literature and creative writing, and less strongly that there should be more venues available for creative writing scholarship. Attitudes towards publishing seem to embrace more scholarly work by creative writers. Still, these participants published in very traditional creative writing patterns.

	Percent agree or strongly agree	Average rating (0-3)
Literature and composition studies journals would benefit from the perspective of creative writers on writing literature.	90%	2.31
Literature and composition studies journals should be more receptive to publishing scholarly articles by creative writers.	74%	1.95
More publication venues are needed for scholarly articles about creative writing.	58%	1.58
My colleagues in other departments don't take creative writing seriously because of its unique publishing practices.	39%	1.39
My university expects tenure-track creative writing faculty to focus primarily on creating new creative works.	74%	1.95

Table 5.7: Attitudes of participants towards scholarly publications

While the creative writing faculty in this survey were in favor of research in creative writing scholarship and promoted publication in existing and additional venues, they were significantly less likely to participate in such publications themselves. This is hardly counter-intuitive; it is quite a bit easier to *say* that there should be more research than it is to publish. Only a very small percentage of participants have been involved in scholarly work about creative writing: three percent report being an editor or review of

scholarly work *often* or *always*. A larger, but still limited amount report actively trying to publish scholarly work about creative writing.¹²

	Percent <i>often</i> or <i>always</i>	Average rating (0-3)
I have been an editor or reviewer of scholarly articles about creative writing.	3%	0.33
I try to publish scholarly articles about creative writing.	13%	0.70
I publish primarily creative texts.	87%	2.33
I enjoy reading scholarly articles about creative writing.	38%	1.35

Table 5.8: Publishing practices of participants

Writing scholarly work doesn't seem to keep my sample from also producing creative work. In the past five years, half of the forty participants in my study have not published any scholar works, but—for an optimist—half of them did, despite most of the group agreeing above that creative production is their main focus. These creative writing faculty do write scholarly works, but about half as frequently as creative pieces (see Table 5.8). Fifty-two percent of experienced instructors have published scholarly work in creative venues, and twenty-three percent have published scholarly work in scholarly venues—this indicates that scholarly work is being done not just by novices who may be

¹² Note that this question doesn't ask participants about how successful they have been in publishing scholarly work. As every academic knows, there is a long path between submitting an article and getting it published and that path is subject to the agency of editors and reviewers. This survey only asked participants about whether they make an effort to publish such articles. It can be assumed that the percent who get their work published is even smaller than this indicator, but for this project's purposes, the effort to publish demonstrates participants' engagement in scholarly work

courting literature positions, but by experienced instructors entrenched in their field. The two groups publish quite a bit of creative work: two-thirds of less experienced instructors and more than half of the experienced instructors¹³ have published more than seven creative pieces in the last five years.

¹³ One respondent, in commenting in the “other” category of publication pointed out that “at this point in my career” books rather than articles were the publishing norm. I’ve focused here on short publications in order to provide analogies across my earlier study of the poems, short stories and articles in *New Writing*; however, in doing so, I must deeply discount the work of mid-career writers who produce books, not short publications.

How many publications of the following sort have you had in the last five years? (Times published)		Instructors with under 10 years experience	Instructors with over 10 years experience	Total participants
Creative pieces in creative journals (ex. <i>Ploughshares</i>)	0	6%	0%	4%
	1-3	20%	22%	21%
	4-6	6%	22%	16%
	7+	67%	57%	61%
Creative pieces in general journals and magazines (ex. <i>New Yorker</i>)	0	53%	39%	45%
	1-3	13%	30%	24%
	4-6	20%	13%	16%
	7+	0%	9%	5%
Scholarly articles in creative journals (ex. <i>Poetry</i>)	0	67%	43%	53%
	1-3	20%	30%	26%
	4-6	13%	13%	13%
	7+	0%	9%	5%
Scholarly articles in scholarly journals (ex. <i>College English</i>)	0	73%	74%	74%
	1-3	20%	13%	16%
	4-6	0%	0%	0%
	7+	7%	9%	8%
Other [responses include book-length projects, reviews and journalism about CW]	0	NA	0%	NA
	1-3	33%	22%	26%
	4-6	13%	13%	13%
	7+	7%	17%	13%

Table 5.9: Participants' publication records for previous 5 years.

Publication attitudes in the sample are divided by experience. Those faculty members who have more than ten years of experience teaching are less likely to read and prioritize scholarly work (see Figure 28). Very few of the instructors with ten years or more of experience either read or produced scholarly work, and 87% of the subgroup

indicated that they publish primarily creative texts. Among instructors with less than ten years' experience, the balance is more even, possibly because those instructors with less than ten years of experience may be PhD candidates themselves, who are required by their programs to write about literature, even if it doesn't impact their publications as above. Nonetheless, those PhD candidates are representatives of the field, and their priorities are real priorities.

	Instructors with under 10 years experience	Instructors with over 10 years experience	Percent of full sample <i>often or always</i>
I try to publish scholarly articles about creative writing.	20%	8%	13%
I publish primarily creative texts.	80%	87%	84%
I enjoy reading scholarly articles about creative writing.	53%	30%	38%

Table 5.10: Percentage of subcategories over and under ten years' experience

The participants also attended a variety of conferences, which aligned with the publications they have published. Cumulatively, the participants attended their own discipline's conferences, such as AWP, about twice as often as composition or literature conferences (see Table 5.11). Literature conferences seem to be favored over composition conferences, but not by a dramatic amount. Conference participation matches up with the breakdown in participation. There are some highlights: none of the instructors with more than ten years of experience teaching record attending any

conference in composition in the past 5 years, and only one reports attending more than three over the past five years.

In the past five years, how often have you attended the following conferences? (Times attended)		Instructors with under 10 years' experience	Instructors with over 10 years' experience	Total participants
Creative writing conferences (such as AWP)	0	7%	17%	13%
	1-3	67%	30%	45%
	4-6	27%	48%	39%
	7+	0%	4%	3%
Composition conferences (such as CCCC)	0	80%	96%	63%
	1-3	20%	0%	8%
	4-6	0%	0%	0%
	7+	0%	0%	0%
Literature conferences (such as MLA)	0	40%	65%	55%
	1-3	53%	22%	34%
	4-6	7%	4%	5%
	7+	0%	0%	0%
Other responses [including conferences in theology, popular culture, journalism]	0	0%	17%	0%
	1-3	13%	13%	13%
	4-6	0%	13%	8%
	7+	0%	4%	3%

Table 5.11: Conference attendance by subcategories over and under ten years' experience

The faculty members at PhD-granting creative writing programs showed little resistance to publishing scholarly work in both their attitudes and in their publication practices. This survey sample may be very different than average creative writing instructors who are not affiliated with a PhD-granting institution. At such institutions,

there may be a more progressive atmosphere towards scholarly publications. However, even here a very small number of them, only 13%, say that they make an effort to publish scholarly works, and senior faculty were very unlikely to either present or publish in non-creative writing venues. Their writing priorities are firmly entrenched in creative writing, which reflect the same priorities given in hiring new creative writing faculty. If these participants are responding to the scarce career opportunities in creative writing and stringent requirements for hiring, they may be emphasizing creative work because that's what search committees are looking for; however, just as creative writing faculty may eek out room for scholarly work in the midst of their creative writing, the job description for potential hires may create space for research and teaching—not just producing creative works.

HIRING

When a university hires a creative writer, what is it, exactly, they are hiring? Are they hiring a literary star, whom they will patronize in order that the writer may create great works of literature while on campus or are they hiring an instructor of undergraduate students or are they hiring a mentor for advanced writers? In many ways, the question of hiring a creative writing faculty member is a litmus test of the nature of academic creative writing.

The traditional view of the creative writing instructor values the “star” writer, as described by Kelly Ritter and in the above chapter on creative writing pedagogy. If, as Nicholas Delbanco describes, the creative writing program as a place where “students of

the craft come to learn it at the hands or feet of someone who is reputedly a master craftsman” (qtd. Nuebauer 56), then the key thing is to hire a master craftsman.

CWS scholars take umbrage with this attitude, and instead advocate that universities should expect more from creative writing faculty hires than just an impressive publication history. Mayers accuses creative writing of suggesting that “achievement as a writer of fiction or poetry is an essential (indeed, at times the only) thing that qualifies one to teach creative writing to others” (14). Bizarro also reacts sharply against the AWP’s contention that “the best teachers of writing are the best writers” (“Self-reports” 131). Other voices in creative writing express concern that creative writing programs “have required departments who hire working writers whose primary research focus is their own work and whose most important teaching credentials [are] the publication and ongoing production of literary works” (Coles “The Elephant in the Room” 9).

The participants in my survey were not convinced that universities were acting as patrons of creative writing. Only 24% said that they felt universities functioned as patrons to creative writers (see Table 5.12). Conversely, participants emphasized hiring *teachers* of creative writing: 92% indicated that universities hire to secure mentors for advanced writers and 78% said that teaching general writing classes was the most important reason why creative writers are hired. Among these participants, the perception of why creative writers are on the university is primarily to aid future creative writers and secondarily to

teach open classes and only a few believed patronage of producing creative works was the universities' focus in hiring.

	Percent <i>often</i> or <i>always</i> (unless otherwise indicated)	Average rating (0-3)
Universities hire creative writers mainly to patronize the arts and insure that quality creative writing is being produced.	24%	1.8
Universities hire creative writers as tenure-track mentors and teachers of aspiring creative writers.	92%	2.08
Universities hire creative writers mainly to satisfy student demand for writing classes.	78%	1.95
Universities hire well-known creative writers mainly to increase their prestige on and off the campus.	86%	2.19
Universities should only hire creative writers who hold an MFA or a PhD.	26%	1.3

Table 5.12: Attitudes towards hiring creative writing faculty

However, institutionally, the hiring expectations for these faculty members emphasized their reputations as “master craftsmen” rather than instructors. All of the program directors I spoke with emphasized the importance of hiring published authors, who have written, often, at least one book. The importance of hiring a “distinguished writer,” as one participant put it, is universal across all programs. Every one of the

participants I interviewed immediately mentioned the importance of a good publication history and said that publication history drove hiring decisions. One director admitted it is “almost all about the book” that the potential hire has written. Still, while creative writing publication is still the most important factor, there are other requirements that may make a candidate successful. Four of the program directors mentioned the importance of scholarly work for their programs, whether that is demonstrated in publications or in being “comfortable with talking about scholarly questions.” This may be because of the nature of the particular programs; one participant mentioned how important it was for their hires to be willing to teach in literature because of their program’s relatively few faculty. Although the survey indicated that teaching quality and experience were important for faculty, only three of the program directors mentioned teaching as a requirement for hiring. But those directors were adamant. It is “terribly important” to teach, said one director, while another said that they had two requirements: strong writers and strong teachers. So while the program directors of these programs still heavily weigh the potential hire’s creative publication history, there are indications that both scholarly work and teaching play into the decision to hire a new faculty member in creative writing.

DISCUSSION

The participants in my survey were not clamoring for change. Far from being disenchanted, they feel at home in their disciplines and writing practices. They attend conferences in creative writing and, while they appreciate scholarly interest in creative

writing, they were not necessarily signing up to be the ones to do it. They publish primarily creative works and recruit new faculty who did likewise. Those new faculty could feel “deeply involved in the university community” and in their English departments. In many ways, the participants in this study are content, not cantankerous like the characterization drawn by the CWS vanguard.

There are signs, though, that traditional creative writing attitudes are evolving. Thirty percent of participants agree or strongly agree that creative writing would be best served in their own department. The newer instructors participate and publish in scholarly venues and when new instructors are sought, program directors seek teaching and research capacity alongside a strong creative publication history. While the shoe might not pinch as sorely as the CWS scholars might suggest, there are still changes in creative writing departments, and these institutions, themselves, have an enormous power over determining the shape and focus of creative writing as an academic discipline.

The calls for academic disciplinarity are in some ways cyclical. Creative writers in the university want material support from institutions, like the financial resources that the participants point out when only 43% agree that the university gives them the financial support they deserve. But material support—dedicated professorships, graduate programs, sabbaticals—also carries prestige. The prestige of being a discipline depends on the material institutional support and the material conditions support the case for disciplinarity, like a serpent biting its own tail. The interaction between power and prestige is messy and creative writing shows this dramatically. While creative writing may have serious institutional clout in pulling in students to otherwise faltering English programs, it resists and has been resisted in other forms of institutional influence like reviewing or editing scholar journals.

“But this will to truth,” writes Foucault, “like the other systems of exclusion, relies on institutional support: it is both reinforced and accompanied by whole strata of practices such as pedagogy—naturally—the book-system, publishing, libraries, such as the learned societies in the past, and laboratories today” (219). The ways that creative writing studies has attempted to recruit institutions that can reinforce and accompany their disciplinary claims are uneven and complex. From a contemporary perspective, there can be no conclusions as to whether CWS will ultimately be successful in marshaling the institutional resources to support and justify their nascent discipline, but the consequences of being a discipline—power and prestige—are real. In the next chapter, I will discuss concluding thoughts of how CWS’ bid for disciplinarity reveals the contours of what it means to be a discipline in the 21st century.

Chapter Six: What Win CWS If They Gain the Thing They Seek?

Pliny's *Natural History* records the story of two 5th century Greek painters, Zeuxis and Parrhasius. The two were both pioneers of realism— and natural rivals. To settle the question of who was the better painter, they held a contest. Zeuxis pulled back his curtain to reveal fruit executed in such fine detail that a bird swooped down at the wall, trying to pluck at a grape. He had hidden the construction of his art so well that even nature was deceived. Zeuxis, smug with his success, demanded that Parrhasius pull back his curtain and reveal his entry. Parrhasius demurred; Zeuxis insisted. Parrhasius gave a victorious shrug because, as it turned out, there was no curtain at all, only his expertly painted depiction of a curtain. Zeuxis, Pliny relates, “when he realized his mistake, with a modesty that did him honour he yielded up the prize, saying that whereas he had deceived birds, Parrhasius had deceived him, an artist” (311).

The story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius became genesis to realism, retold innumerable times in the 17th and 18th centuries, but I relate it here for another reason. Just as Zeuxis was deceived because he saw what he expected to see, WID scholars may circumscribe disciplinarity into an outside expectation of what other disciplines looks like. Because long-established disciplines appear to be natural and intuitive, they set the benchmarks of what a discipline is. The work of descriptive disciplinary studies becomes tautological: some disciplines function in a certain way with certain citation practices, genres, processes, etc. and so in order to be a discipline, a field must function in these ways. Disciplines look like disciplines.

At the same time that Parrhasius was painting on walls, Isocrates and Gorgias were defending the disciplinarity of rhetoric against the likes of Plato. Philosophy, argued rhetoric's critics, was a clear discipline. It was *the* way to explore knowledge, the world

around us, the self. What could rhetoric add? If it didn't look like philosophy, if it didn't function the same way, surely it was only a perversion of philosophy. The defenders of rhetoric admitted that rhetoric was different, but asserted that it could still be valid according to its own principles. Emerging or contested disciplines, like Zeuxis' painting, try to demonstrate that they are natural, that they fit into the academic world seamlessly, but their constructed nature is more conspicuous to other academics in more established fields.

The painting competition demonstrates that it is easiest to be fooled by artifice that fits into our expectations. Like the bird swooping for the grape, Zeuxis believed the presence of a curtain on a stage was the most natural thing in the world. It seemed like it belonged. We can be similarly deceived by the seemingly intuitive assumptions of long-established disciplines. The only difference is that established disciplines fool even themselves; it is as if Parrhasius had deceived two artists—his rival and himself—when established disciplines deny their own rhetorical construction. In disciplinarity, the disciplines that seem most natural, that seem to be the farthest from social and rhetorical construction, are deceptively arbitrary. Disciplinarity, as Hyland and others remind us, is always constructed, but when that discipline is successful, its constructed nature disappears. We take for granted that all disciplines should look like these long-established disciplines; the arbitrary nature of a discipline becomes apparent only while the discipline is in dispute.

It can be easy to take for granted that being a “discipline” is a thing a field can be and that there are clear, natural steps that a field must take to become disciplined. Certainly, to contradict the old song, wishing does not make it so—there are some real constraints. But what those constraints are is nebulous. In this dissertation, I've argued

that WID scholars should recognize the disciplinary standards of would-be disciplines, seeking for emic, or insider, definitions of disciplinarity.

In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I have sought to do just that. In the first chapter, I identified some of the broad characteristics of disciplinarity. WID scholars like Hyland, MacDonald and Becher and Trowler have all emphasized the range of fields that can successfully operate as disciplines. Disciplines can be soft, hard, applied, pure, problem-solving or problem-raising and still be acknowledged as a discipline. Further complicating the matter, disciplines don't emerge fully formed, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter; they construct themselves in starts and stops, through trial and errors. There is no one great meeting to establish a discipline, but the work occurs in journals and classrooms across countries and universities, infinitely dispersed.

However, there are three general criteria for disciplinarity that often occur in other disciplines as well as among the CWS vanguard. This triad, by now familiar to readers, consists of research, pedagogy and institutional sanction. The second chapter illustrates the prominence of this triad in CWS manifestos as proponents set out their own vision of disciplinizing the field. The vanguard are very aware of potential resistance to a creative writing discipline from both within and without the field and assert their criteria of research, pedagogy and institutional support.

The next three chapters investigated each of these three criteria, according to the vanguard's own expectation, in actual practice. First, I surveyed the publishing practices of a CWS journal helmed by one of the vanguard. In this journal, I found that scholarly work was being done in creative writing, but that the journal was inconsistent in the content and rigor of the scholarship. Then I turned to questions of pedagogy. By surveying and interviewing creative writing instructors and program directors in fifteen

creative writing doctoral programs, I determined that creative writing pedagogy is evolving away from its traditional form in terms of attitudes towards student talent and the role of the teacher, but traditional forms of teaching, especially the workshop, remain prominent. Additionally, my findings support the earlier work done by Kelly Ritter suggesting that few creative writing instructors are trained for the creative writing classroom (“Professional” 2001), and that few creative writing programs are including good teaching as a hiring requirement (“Ethos” 2007). In the last chapter, I turned to the question of institutional structure and involvement. Contrary to the stereotype in the CWS manifestos, the respondents to my survey saw themselves as comfortable and involved in their departments, with no festering dissatisfaction with their institutional position. They aren’t compelled to participate in the journals and conferences of other disciplines within English studies and they support the practice of hiring publishing writers in the university.

Through the investigation of CWS, several things became apparent to me. First, disciplines are messy. There are no clear boundaries of when a discipline starts or stops or who is involved or what counts of disciplinary work. As Ken Hyland says, “Boundaries of scholarship shift and dissolve [...] New disciplines spring up at the intersections of existing ones and achieve international recognition [...] while others decline and disappear” (*Identities* 23). Disciplinarity is a shifting thing, being painted and repainted by hundreds or thousands of artists in their own studios with very little communication about how or why they proceed the way they do. Creative writing seems especially disparate, in part because of its own internal resistance to disciplinarity as a restraint, even while demanding disciplinary benefits.

Creative writing studies doesn't just make bare the constructed nature of disciplinarity, but also challenges the teleological primacy of disciplinarity. The CWS scholars are up against more than might be obvious at first blush—not only do they have to persuade reluctant outsiders that creative writing can be disciplinized, but they have to convince recalcitrant insiders that to do so is worth their best efforts. So far, this investigation has seen these resistant voices as obstacles to be overcome, critics to be won over. This has been a dissertation about prestige and power, about how bids for disciplinarity argue their significance and also about how those bids may encounter apathy, resistance or malingering.

But creative writing traditionalists may have good reasons for being reluctant to rush into disciplinarity. Creative writing in specific, and the arts in general, have something to lose in becoming a discipline. In a sense, creative writing is trapped between Foucault and Bourdieu's theories of power.

On the one hand, as Foucault argues, power leads to power. Material security stems from disciplinary recognition and disciplinary recognition leads to more material security. In other words, power and prestige feed into one another, cyclically. As a field becomes recognized, the accruals of recognition build up: a dimly lit writing lab in a peripheral Quonset hut becomes a multi-million dollar multiliteracy center in the heart of the campus; positions that were once filled incidentally by spousal hires, adjuncts and graduate students become so well-compensated and respected that PhDs print off their resumes on heavy linen paper to make a good impression; a special interest group that once met from 8-9 pm on the last day of the conference becomes a powerful player, with its own minor, journal, and, eventually, its own conference. As Foucault says in *Archeology of Knowledge*, the “will to truth, like other systems of exclusion, relies on

institutional support: it is both reinforced and accompanied by whole strata of practices such as pedagogy—naturally—the book-system [sic], publishing libraries, such as the learned societies in the past and laboratories today” (219). Academic creative writing relies on structures of power and prestige to support its intellectual work. Scholarship cannot proceed without institutional sanction to fund it.

On the other hand, these material benefits can chafe against the artistic priorities of creativity. Traditional creative writing resists the material and institutional outcomes that many disciplinary scholars assume all members of the community desire. The finding of this study of CWS reveals how arbitrary criteria of power can be. Disciplinarity—and its attendant power and prestige— is just one *type* of power and prestige. One, truly, that holds enormous power in the discipline, but just one. Pierre Bourdieu has noted creative success is sometimes perceived as antithetical to commercial success. It is, in fact, “an economic world inverted: the artist cannot triumph on the symbolic terrain except by losing on the economic terrain (at least in the short run), and vice versa (at least in the long run)” (*Rules of Art* 83).

If, as Bourdieu asserts in *The Rules of Art*, artists tend to value autonomy over institutional inclusion, then all the sleek stainless steel desks and dedicated professorial positions may not be worth the risk of not being a “real” artist. The institutional imperative that has propelled composition (and its offshoots from digital rhetorics to writing center studies) to professionalize, theorize, unite and defend its position to administrators simply does not hold the same urgency for creative writers in the university community. Those who are most likely to identify themselves as true writers are the same who are least likely to identify themselves as teachers, researchers or administrators. Ron MacFarland, creative writing traditionalist, quoting another

traditionalist, Scott Russell Sanders, says “the ethos of the university is aloof, rational, dispassionate. Insofar as writers take on these attitudes, their art is likely to suffer” (31). Seeing themselves as antithetical to the university reaffirms their power as exceptional figures. Again, from Bourdieu, “those who claim to occupy the dominant positions in [creative fields] will feel the need to manifest their independence with respect to power and honors” of bourgeois institutions (*Rules* 61).

INCLUDE AND IGNORE/ EXCLUDE AND ENGAGE

The Foucauldian argument for increased prestige through increased material power is found in many disciplines, and it is this argument that CWS scholars make in relation to outsiders. Outsider responses to a disciplinary claim typically fall into two categories: either they include and ignore or they exclude and engage. The different responses often divide along material lines. Those that can afford to include and ignore have resources available to accommodate, while those who do not have those resources exclude the discipline and then are called to account for their decision.

The former option accepts the claims of the nascent discipline, gives them a seat at the faculty meeting, nods politely in the hallway and otherwise practices benign neglect. This is precisely the response to which Gerald Graff notes “the American university has assimilated change in the same additive fashion as the American city, disarming threatening conflicts by opening new curricular ‘suburbs’--with the difference that in the academy the newcomers get to occupy the suburbs while the established residents stay where they are” (“Conversation” 20). By allowing newcomers their own space, no one is challenged. In mythical eras of generous funding, there may have been resources for never-ending sprawling subdivisions, but—to continue Graff’s metaphor—when the price of land goes up, some disciplines may be forced into uncomfortable

tenements with other, ill-matched disciplines, fighting for control of the space heater. In such circumstances, the disciplines with prestige will gain the upper hand.

This pattern has been invoked in, among other places, composition and rhetoric. Disciplinary boundaries are not just a matter of philosophy, as rhetorician William Keith demonstrates in a somewhat acerbic response to Steven Mailloux's ecumenism among rhetoricians: "Mailloux and I may both read Gadamer, but we also compete for funding; Gadamer won't step in to help our Dean decide whether to put more money into public speaking or freshman composition, once she decides that 'rhetoric' is a good thing and worth investing in" (96). Being a discipline, or having disciplinary clout, manifests itself in tenured positions and grants: to be gauche, in money.

As Keith points out, academic institutions have to "invest" in disciplines, and when money is tight, they have to make choices about which disciplines to nurture and which to cut loose. Even relatively established disciplines like classics, library science and botany, can suffer stark decline when times get hard ("Fastest Declining"), but emerging disciplines can be particularly hard hit. The post-recession cuts of interdisciplinary programs made headlines (at least in academic circles) because it made clear the power external funding structures have on new and marginalized fields.

The new fields are caught in a "last in, first out" of institutional prestige, having barely occupied any space in the university. According to disciplinary scholar Andrew Abbott, proposed disciplines enclose their work "as a single jurisdiction independent of their parents" (95) and the metaphors that emerge in discussing disciplines— territories, boundaries, jurisdiction— all emphasize that discipline-making is, in some ways, a zero-sum game, with real stakes for those defining a new discipline as well as for those who stand to "lose ground" through the new discipline's appropriation of both intellectual

capital as well as institutional and economic support. Alain Touraine has put it this way: “The academic system is neither a community nor a micro-society. It is a production apparatus that, although quite different from a business organization, while fulfilling its own specific function, depends too on the general organization of society and acts also in terms of its own interests and strives to accumulate power” (153). Disciplines, too, are red in tooth and claw.

All new fields in the university struggle for funding and position. Creative writing, though, may have quite a bit to offer a department in terms of material support. For English departments, CW, like composition, has the potential of being a cash cow. Declining rates of literature students have been off-set by increased interest in technical writing, professional writing—and creative writing. In the inaugural editorial of *New Writing*, Graeme Harper asks “Whether, in the crudest terms, [creative writing] has anything *to sell* as a subject in the university” (“Buying”). In the crudest terms, yes. Low-residency, unfunded MFA programs, costing upwards of \$72,000, bring in tuition dollars, while undergraduate creative writing classes, taught by those same tuition-paying MFA students, fill as fast as they are added. English departments who increasingly survive off of perennially full creative writing classes would do well to accommodate and include creative writing, to make them feel secure, because Donnelly’s vision of CWS as an independent department may spell doom for English departments in general. One response may be to keep creative writing close by underfunding separatist movements when they arise, as Tim Mayers has noted (“Revolution” 163).

But surely, you may say, writers would write without institutional funding? Yes, they would, but they would write the same way teachers would teach and researchers would research. This isn’t just an issue for writers, but also for the identities who are

deepest in the discipline: academics. Academics don't like to talk about money any more than anyone else, but for millennia they have been especially trained to believe that the work they do should be untainted by the commercial, both in their pursuit of knowledge and in the transmission of what they find. Yun Lee Too makes much of the tension between the professionalization of education and the expectation that true teachers would teach out of a desire more pure than gold in her book, *The Pedagogical Contract*. It can seem shocking to assert, as Too does, that a “teacher gives away something of value—a body of knowledge, a set of skills, a way of thinking of living, and so on—in return for which the student renders some form of payment, perhaps a salary, a gift or gratitude” (7). The work that defines a discipline—research, teaching, institutional service—is also work, and work that insists on payment. Divvying up who gets paid for what kind of disciplinary work defines disciplines for administrators and deans who have to make hard choices about who to support.

THE GOLDEN WORLD AND FILTHY LUCRE

One of the things to emerge from a study of creative writing studies is a troublesome question: is disciplinarity all there is to success? As assessment has become such an essential element of department and programmatic research, as demonstrable learning outcomes have tendrilled into every humanities class, we have often been called upon to defend the value of the liberal arts (in general) and the university (in specific) in terms of generalizable, reproducible results. Creative writing represents a stronghold against these encroaching assumptions. Resistance to disciplinarity is also resistance to a model of education that spans from the 19th-century German university to last semester's accreditation visit. Creative writing asserts that education may be valuable not because it

is transferrable to other contexts, including the commercial world, but for the exact opposite reason, because of its separation and independence.

If the ordinary academic world is always defined by competition for scarce resources, creative writing may be uncomfortable with engaging in that world. If part of what makes a great poet is “personality and his character” (Stegner 37), writers can feel uncomfortable with the commodification of such attributes, in becoming part of a biopower workforce in the university. Resisting the cyclical growth of power and prestige has long been an objective for creative writers, as Bourdieu describes in the *Rules of Art*. He claims, “specific criteria of peer judgment is almost exactly the inverse of the hierarchy according to commercial success” (114), as favor within the artistic world is “founded on the rejection of temporal satisfactions, worldly gratifications and the goals of ordinary action” (68). Artists are honored the farther away from the commercial world they are and genres that are commercially unpopular—haiku poetry, for example, or installation art—are considered more artistic than genres that bring in money, like blockbuster films or advertising.

For some contemporary scholars, David Downing among them, it isn’t so much that artists place value on work that is in *opposition* to commercial success, but that they highlight the value of work *regardless* of commercial success. The nondisciplinary professional work of creative writers provides a healthy corrective to the cost-benefit analysis of disciplinary funding: “Modern disciplinary practices are not just neatly circled ideas rising above the fray but powerful clusters that sever many of the relations in and out of the networks by contractually regulating the powers of workers and management” (Downing 73). Instead of always connecting power and prestige, creative writing can separate the two, defying disciplinarity and empowering nondisciplinary work. For

instance, I have elsewhere (“The Writing Teacher Who Writes”) argued that creative writing’s mentorship model could be potentially empowering for graduate students and adjuncts in composition, who have been institutionally discriminated against. The connection between prestige and power breaks down in the creative writing and the “prestige marginalization” of which Mayers complains may in fact be an improvement for some populations who long lacked institutional prestige.

Those who practice creative writing in universities must constantly negotiate the prestige that comes from being an autonomous artist, free from institutional stricture and bourgeois commercial expectations against another prestige, the prestige that comes from economic and institutional power within the university. There is no one right ratio between these two forces and there can be no consensus, no caucus of creative writers to determine, once and for all, just how invested they are in becoming a discipline just like any others. Creative writing studies of the last two decades engages this key struggle for academic creative writing, arguing for standards of research, pedagogy and intuitional sanction; the next two decades may see creative writing studies gain more adherents and a foothold in the debate or favor may swing away from the movement towards a more traditional perspective.

The same questions that plague academic creative writers can trouble writing-in-the-disciplines scholars. The case of academic creative writing presents a puzzle at the very edges of disciplinarity: can arts be disciplines? If scholars from MacDonald to Wilder and Warren have been able to find telltale signs of disciplinarity in the interpretation of literary texts, could the *production* of creative texts also yield disciplinary characteristics? The disciplinary habits found in journals, among writing instructors, in program writing requirements have all been plumbed by WID scholars

investigating sciences, social sciences, and, recently, the humanities. The ways that WID might expand to the arts, with their own insecurities about disciplinarity, could break down assumptions we have about what a discipline can look like and whether, even, disciplinarity is always desirable.

Creative writing in the academy is at a crossroads. Down one road, it is likely that conforming to internal standards of research, pedagogy and institutional structure will create unity within the field and with that unity, the accompanying power and prestige of academia. However, that unity will disrupt the current journey. Conforming to disciplinary standards comes at the cost of the community's relentless individualism. Furthermore, power in the form of greater institutional presence may not be a priority for those creative writers who feel comparably comfortable in their English departments; gaining disciplinarity may not incur any significant benefits for some creative writers. Worse, the prestige of the academy may be antithetical to the calculations of prestige within the creative writing world. The main aim of this dissertation, therefore, has been to examine this crossroads—the arguments for joining the thoroughfare and the native proclivity to stay on the road less travelled by.

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