

CREATIVE WRITING JOINS RHETORIC AND THE PUBLIC ARTS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CRAFT, WORKSHOP, AND PRACTICE BEYOND
ENGLISH STUDIES

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

Creative Writing Joins Rhetoric and the Public Arts: A Comparative Study of Craft, Workshop, and Practice beyond English Studies analyzes the field of creative writing through the lenses of classical rhetorical scholarship, aesthetic theory, and craft criticism in the arts. Through a historical analysis of *techne* (craft or method) and *telos* (end or final cause) in the work of Aristotle and Plato, I argue that what we call "craft" often suffers from a limiting definition that privileges formal and material constraints over the more vital concerns of knowledge and consciousness reflected in artistic education. Craft knowledge is demonstrated through the processes of art-making internalized by the student apprentice. No matter the form or discipline, craft practice embodies the processes and consciousness that make art education possible. The dissertation analyzes concepts of craft as technique while revealing how artistic method illuminates the ends to which art serves. Craft consciousness, a term outlined in this dissertation, is defined as an awareness of artistic method and practice across disciplinary boundaries. If applied by teachers and students of creative writing, this *consciousness* will redefine writing workshop, curriculum design, programmatic elements, and the mission of creative writing as an academic discipline.

By shifting the field toward the craft principles shared with the performing and fine arts, the dissertation uses rhetoric and public arts as lenses for reimagining the mission of creative writing more broadly as a discipline simultaneously engaged with democratic and occultic principles. In proposing an alternative approach to traditional writing workshop by examining author-function, this dissertation also draws from Paulo Freire's term "nuclei of contradiction" in order to argue for a pedagogy that attends to the inherent contradictions that form the foundation of creative writing culture. Freire's "critical consciousness" informs the term "craft consciousness" and the latter term forms the scaffolding in which to reimagine educational principles in creative writing. In order to reimagine craft and workshop practices in traditional and virtual spaces, this dissertation examines how theories, histories, and practices in craft will transform creative writing into a field grounded in artistic practice and intellectual inquiry.

CHAPTER ONE

KNOWLEDGE IN PRACTICE: CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP, CLASSICAL *TECHNE*, AND THE ORIGINS OF CRAFT

Between compositionists and creative writers, perceptions about writing workshop may come down to the question—what part of speech? For composition and literary studies scholars who teach freshmen and advanced writing courses, workshop is a *noun* that refers to the forum in which student writers navigate the seeming contradiction between peer-to-peer collaboration and individual authorship. Composition studies scholars sometimes associate the term "collaboration" with the term "workshop," and surveys such as Rebecca Moore Howard's bibliography of composition and rhetoric¹ reflect the pendulum swing between the individual and the collective. Critical terms such as "coauthoring," "sharing," and "community" contrast with terms associated with the individual writer who seeks "agency" and "autonomy." The canon of scholarship on workshop by compositionists reaches beyond the simple parameters of the individual and the collective. Countless writing teachers know the institutional histories of writing groups by Anne Gere or Kenneth Bruffee and the scholarship on rhetorical invention by Karen LeFevre or the work on peer workshopping by Peter Elbow. No shorthand list of articles and books on collaboration can quite account for the value in this work, and for the purpose of this chapter, I am more interested in observing without admonishment (or

¹ Rebecca Moore Howard's "Bibliography of Composition and Rhetoric" gathers together more than 250 critical terms and scholar names in the field and offers source information for "Collaboration" and "Creative Writing Pedagogy," but ironically, none for "Workshop" or "Writing Workshop." The site acts as an invaluable website for navigating rhetoric and composition scholarship. The website address is as follows: <<http://wrt-howard.syr.edu/bibs.html>>.

shame) just how invisible this scholarship may be to those who commit weekly to the creative writing workshop and the knowledge demonstrated through artistic practice.

For creative writing teachers and their students, workshop sometimes drops the article "the" and is sometimes capitalized to give proper weight to what Kenneth Burke would refer to as one of the "God terms" of the discipline. Workshop may be viewed, in one way, as a *proper noun* that signifies the field's inception at the University of Iowa in the Writers' Workshop. Portraits of the Writers' Workshop have been captured as anecdote in Tom Grimes' collection *The Workshop: Seven Decades of the Iowa Writers Workshop* (2001) and as more historical studies like Stephen Wilbers' *Iowa Writers' Workshop* (1980). *Picture this*. It's the summer of 1939 and writers assemble in the improvised war barracks set up on the Iowa City campus. In the corner of the room, Flannery O'Connor listens to her teacher Paul Engle. Stories about iconic authors and dedicated teachers such as Ray Carver at Syracuse University, Wallace Stegner at Stanford University, or Francois Camoin at University of Utah reach beyond anecdote—they are cemented in lore and represent the tradition that greets creative writing students.

Workshop has become a metonymy for a collective experience in creative writing culture. It is a marker of self-identity. Creative writing teachers who know institutional history understand this identity was not easily won; they remember when graduate programs were not so numerous and when writers assembled to commit what was at the time the heretical act of writing for writing's sake.² By contrast, and perhaps because of

² The *Association of Writers & Writing Program*, the representative body of graduate creative writing programs, began in 1967 with 13 founding member institutions. According to 2009 AWP statistics, there are now 144 MA, 153 MFA, and 37 Ph.D. programs granting graduate degrees in creative writing. Both

the proliferation of graduate programs outside Iowa, today's students often experience workshop as a *verb* whose action appears like a targeting spotlight: "When do you get workshopped?" or "I could never workshop that story." The use of workshop as a *verb* underpins what is best understood as an experiential process based in craft that is both cherished and endured. The gap between the connotations of the term "workshop" in creative writing and in composition studies is large enough that neither differences between writing genres nor pedagogical approaches can quite account for the cultural significance of workshop to creative writers. Much like composition classrooms, workshop is an initiation into the expectations of an audience of readers, but unlike composition, creative writing acculturates writers into their identities as craft artists. The word "art" triggers its own connotations, as predominately counterfeit as Tolstoy argued, sometimes elitist, at other times just plain obnoxious and associated with what Irish poet Maurice Scully calls *Literature* with its flashing neon "L." To think of creative writers as artists, as I believe we should in English studies, is to assume that the substance of their education requires different pedagogical approaches than those in composition and literary studies. The substance of this education is certainly experiential, but it is nonetheless elusive. Is the goal to learn craft? To find a voice? Or (*gasp*) to be inspired?

The fields of composition studies and creative writing may be differentiated by their perceptions of writing workshop, but they are also distinguished by their perception of the student writer and the extent of influence one may have as a teacher.

Compositionists, especially during the open enrollment revolution of the 1960s, have

MA and PhD programs in creative writing have shown slight declines since 2004 while MFA programs have continued to expand by nearly 30% during the same 5-year period.

envisioned writing as an inclusive practice with a populist agenda and more definitive course objectives and rigorous assessment measures. Teachers of composition know by semester's end the limitations of their student writers, but they endeavor (and are required by the university) to train students in writing skills that will last beyond freshman year and hopefully into students' future careers. Creative writing teachers, in contrast, may view both undergraduate and graduate students as limited by their natural talent to write and create art. The populist argument of composition and the elitist argument of creative writing share much more common ground in undergraduate education and as students complete English writing major degrees, but they separate sharply when considering the education of the graduate creative writer. If the writer is limited by his or her natural talent, as the argument goes in creative writing, then the discipline could occupy a rather tenuous ground between institutional existence and non-existence; however, creative writing continues to be buoyed by its established tradition and enduring popularity.

Nonetheless, The University of Iowa Writers' Workshop mission statement on its program website reflects the hesitancy with which creative writing teachers measure their ability to educate students. This hesitancy parallels a popular culture belief that training in art reflects a knowledge or talent that may lay beyond pedagogical influence. It reads:

Though we agree in part with the popular insistence that writing cannot be taught, we exist and proceed on the assumption that talent can be developed, and we see our possibilities and limitations as a school in that light. If one can 'learn' to play the violin or to paint, one can 'learn' to

write, though no processes of externally induced training can ensure that one will do it well (Writers' Workshop: The University of Iowa).

The statement highlights the tentative "possibilities and limitations" of a creative education, an education that characterizes "learn[ing]" and "externally induced training" as artificial, if not counter to the process of developing artistic talent. The declaration "we exist and proceed" allows the author to establish a tone of authority that feels historical and fleeting; the tone assumes a foundation and permanence that is nearly undermined by the use of the present tense. Unlike an artist's statement, the manifesto speaks to the collective rather than an individual vision, and the cornerstone in the statement "talent can be developed" appears buried in qualification and reservation. The translation—we may be able develop *talent*, but we cannot change *nature*.

The statement leads with the subordinate clause "though we agree in part with the *popular* insistence that writing cannot be taught," and the words appear sourceless and fragmented with qualifications. At the same time, the words have the weight of history as "though we agree in part with the *classical* insistence [...]" Changing the word from *popular* to *classical* insistence orients the history of creative writing beyond its 20th century development as a program of study and alludes to one of the central questions separating creative writing and composition—can writing be taught? Associated Writing Program Executive Director David Fenza alludes to such a historical orientation in his essay "About AWP: The Growth of Creative Writing Programs: A Brief History of AWP." In the essay, Fenza offers perspective on the mission of creative writing in the

university, the humanities, and culture more broadly. In speaking to the historical mission of creative writing, Fenza points to classical origins of creative writing:

By offering classes in creative writing, academe has, ironically, reclaimed an aspect of literary study [...] In a classical education, students once studied Greek, Latin, rhetoric, and composition by writing stories and poems in Greek or Latin, often imitations of past masters. Students studied the accomplishments of the past by entering personally engaging practicums that emphasized the creative act (The Association of Writers and Writing Programs).

It is difficult to pinpoint where Fenza sees the intersection between classical education and contemporary creative writing, and whether he alludes to Greek declamation or other educational practices, he believes that the "creative act" of workshop (what he calls "practicums") has "reclaimed an aspect of literary study" from the classical period. Reading Fenza's statements in the light of The University of Iowa mission statement prompts questions that are foundational to the teaching of creative writing—can writing be taught, and if we believe it can, what is the method and goal of this education?

This chapter analyzes the concept of craft through the classical terms *techne* and *mimesis* and presents the terms as they are associated with the contemporary methods and practices of creative writing education. Creative writing studies scholars, for their part, face challenges in evaluating the efficacy and equality of educational practices in workshop, and it is the goal of this dissertation to expand the arena of this scholarship through a more thorough transdisciplinary understanding of craft. I argue throughout this

dissertation that an analysis of concepts and practices of craft will not only change pedagogical methods, but it will allow artists and scholars in the field to better evaluate the purpose of a creative writing education. The end to which a creative writing degree serves is dependent upon their institutional goals, and the purpose of this dissertation is to establish craft as a site for knowledge-making and consciousness development.

Craft influences the means and ends of creative writing education, and the term is often referred to as technique or the "teachable element" in arts education. In creative writing, a student's choice of genre determines the material and formal limitations of the craft education they receive. Craft knowledge may be associated with specialized knowledge of one's art form in the same way a craftsman or vocational apprentice *learns* the trade of shoemaking or blacksmithing. Another way to approach craft, though, requires scholars and artists to move a step beyond specialization, and to investigate craft knowledge as an experiential-based way of knowing. Artists are separated by medium, genre, professional, and institutional boundaries, but we can observe that knowledge of artistic method and philosophies often links artists in a similar consciousness. Craft consciousness, a term outlined throughout this dissertation, is influenced by John Dewey's definition of art as an experience (not just an object) and Tim Mayers' concept of craft criticism as a genre shared by compositionist and creative writers. Craft consciousness is defined as the knowledge of artistic production methods from in and outside a professional artistic discipline. To develop knowledge of craft requires a negotiation between mental and physical forces, and I argue that the student artist is best

initiated into the processes of art production through internalizing knowledge of craft from across art disciplines and in craft studies scholarship.

Craft is a term internalized by the artist, and this dissertation uses rhetorical analysis to evaluate both the methods (*techne*) of artists and the purposes (*telos*) of creative writing education. In this first chapter, the analysis begins with the question of whether writing can or cannot be taught and moves toward an examination of the classical treatises and dialogues on the term *techne* (craft) and its relation to *episteme* (knowledge) and *telos* (end). In the final section of the chapter, the analysis moves to a discussion of *mimesis* (representation) in order to argue that craft include definitions that are representational and performative. The chapter concludes by initiating a discussion of *telos* as it relates to the various causes and objectives of craft production, including commodity and art.

Perceptions of Craft Knowledge in Creative Writing Studies

In the collection *Can Writing Be Taught?: Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy* (2007), Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice use the question of whether writing can be taught to argue that creative writing workshop is often dictated by what Stephen North terms "the pedagogy of lore."³ Ritter and Vanderslice remind us that lore encompasses both productive and unproductive elements. As a traditional arts practice, whether in storytelling or arts and crafts, lore carries the cultural values and rituals from one generation to the next. Lore allows successive generations to inherit the cultural

³ Stephen North's *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field* (1987) is a foundational text in the field of composition studies. The work outlines the "modes of inquiry" students use in making knowledge. The second section of the book analyzes "practitioner knowledge" and provides the lens for Ritter and Vanderslice's discussion of the relationship of lore to creative writing pedagogy.

wealth of previous generations and may be integral, as Walter Benjamin suggests, to the transmission of craft knowledge. Viewed in a more unproductive light, lore may be associated with elements of culture and educational practice that become inflexible and potentially oppressive over time. Ritter and Vanderslice argue that creative writing has come to rely on those unproductive aspects of lore in workshops and graduate programs by remaining unwilling to experiment or revise pedagogical and institutional practices. The editors frame the collection in the classical question of whether writing can or cannot be taught, though their central purpose moves beyond this question and initiates a discussion of the efficacy of craft and pedagogical practices in creative writing. The other essayists in the collection believe not only that "talent can be developed," but that creative writing workshops and programs can be theorized and reconceived through developing pedagogical and artistic practices that are more efficacious and dynamic.

The essayists believe that writing can be taught, and they employ a diverse set of research methodologies including interviews with teachers, institutional histories, personal testimonies, and theoretical discussions. Creative writing studies scholars, a subset of teacher-writers in composition studies, attempt to displace unproductive methods such as lore. The collection represents an exemplar of how creative writing studies scholars have developed their cause in the last twenty years. By critiquing and recommending changes to the field, scholars seek to redefine the field in the image of composition studies and more clearly delineate the best practices and outcomes of creative writing. By building resources for teachers of creative writing and attempting to shift the theoretical and pedagogical orientation of the field, scholars have sometimes

dismissed concepts such as lore or craft in favor of more concrete and historically integrated scholarship in English studies. Historical studies of creative writing from Paul Dawson, D.G. Myers, and Mark McGurl have also contributed to the foundation of creative writing studies. These studies portray creative writing as the subfield of literary studies where craft is either a practical substitute for critical theory or a discourse that has been commodified by the marketplace for contemporary literature. Creative writing studies has missed opportunities to build upon existing craft discourse and has attempted to stimulate critical inquiry into classroom pedagogy and build broader historical studies.

In his book *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* (2005), Paul Dawson frames his own discussion of creative writing history and pedagogy by reminding readers that the question of whether writing can be taught is classical in origin. Horace's ancient phrase, "*poeta nascitur non fit*" or "poets are born not made," assumes, as Dawson interprets, that the poet is a matter of talent for which instruction may be a benefit, but not a cause for excellence. Dawson parallels Horace's thoughts on writing with those of the Romantics and the aesthetic theorist Immanuel Kant. For Kant, the process of artistic production subverts the rationalism of science, and as Dawson explains, the definition of "art and learning in the production of poetry [is] a product of genius" and that art is "defined by the fact that it cannot be taught" (8). By using nature rather than science as its standard or exemplar, Kant, in Dawson's argument, "invert[s] Plato's criticism of poets by celebrating their lack of knowledge, making this a guarantee of genius" (8). Kant's definition of art offers parallels to Stephen North's "pedagogy of lore" and both scholars

associate art with non-intellectual, unsystematic, and natural activities in human behavior.

By associating art with a particular lack, Kant and North read this deficiency from very different positions. For contemporary creative writing scholars of the last ten years, the deficiency is characterized by insufficient pedagogical training for creative writing teachers, the absence of critical and reflective scholarship by writers, and the inability of many workshop students to voice their personal experience in workshop and graduate programs. Creative writing scholarship has evolved based upon the belief that the discipline benefits from filling perceived gaps in knowledge through the use of research methodologies, critical theory, pedagogical methods, and publishing venues in composition studies.

Many professional creative writers in the university, conversely, would side with Kant—that the lack of theoretical knowledge is exactly the point. By resisting theoretical knowledge in the form of formal scholarship, creative writers demonstrate their knowledge of craft through creative expression. Independence from the historicizing, theorizing, and analyzing literature, leads creative writers into an identity, as practicing artists and adherents to a knowledge formed in *praxis* rather than theory. One way to read the difference between literary scholars and critical theorists and creative writers is to assume that it is the conflict between scholars and practitioners; however, this reading often neglects the ways in which craft enacts an identity through the process of workshopping. Through writing workshop and craft seminars, students identify ways in which professional writers view the making of literature. By observing pedagogical

methods and interacting in the informal spaces of book readings, writers' conferences, and craft lectures, students are drawn into the experience of becoming writers through a network of identity formation as artists whose knowledge *is* craft.

Becoming an artist is more than workshop, and students learn that the peripheral happenings encompassing a creative education are inherently different than courses in literature and their preparation as writing teachers in composition studies. What they learn is founded in craft knowledge and lore and this experience partially supplants Kant's definition of art as sourceless or purposeless. Craft instruction acts as a hedge against those definitions of art as processless. Professional writers in the university provide no guarantee of success to the apprentice writer; however, their dedication to craft as practioners of an art performs a knowledge that is demonstrative and predicated on work rather than pure inspiration. Dedication to craft becomes part of an identity that binds creative writers in their community and drives many to resist theoretical knowledge.

In her essay "The Fiction Writer and His Country," Flannery O'Connor characterizes theory as an impediment to fiction writers. She writes, "I think that if there is any value in hearing writers talk, it will be in hearing what they can witness to and not what they can theorize about. My own approach to literary problems is very like the one Dr. Johnson's blind housekeeper used when she poured tea—she put her finger inside the cup" (36). As perhaps the most famous creative writing student, Flannery O'Connor identifies ways in which *witnessing* has more value than *theorizing* in the life of the writing student. Often without critically examining the difference between theory and

praxis, creative writing workshops view theory as the part of the mental quagmire that ruins good stories and might impede the student writer's ability to produce writing.

Theory is potentially anti-imagination and anti-community, and like the time-squeeze of heavy teaching loads, it may be identified as an obstacle to the writer. Workshop provides a social forum that works against the alienation of a solitary writer, and in this respect, O'Connor agrees "the isolated imagination is easily corrupted by theory, but the writer inside his community seldom has such a problem" (52). In its most idealized form, workshop, conferences, and retreats offer the sanctuary of fellow writers and a context to create an identity in (and apart) from the scholarly pursuits of others in the English Department. Robert Frost echoes O'Connor's remarks on theory in his essay "The Figure a Poem Makes" (1939), and he discusses the fundamental ways artists receive and conceptualize knowledge. He writes:

Scholars and artists thrown together are often annoyed at the puzzle of where they differ. Both work from knowledge; but I suspect they differ most importantly in the way their knowledge is come by. Scholars get theirs with conscientious thoroughness along projected lines of logic; poets theirs cavalierly and as it happens in and out of books. They stick to nothing deliberately, but let what will stick to them like burrs where they walk in the fields (441).

Given the knowledge differences expressed and performed by professional writers in English, creative writing studies scholars are better served to recuperate craft and lore, as pedagogical methods and end that serve to develop the consciousness of writers. Craft is

not easily recovered much less defined, and the term leads scholars to address convergent and divergent questions about the field of creative writing. How does craft reflect knowledge in artistic practice? How does instruction in craft intersect with the goals and outcomes of a creative education? Where are there opportunities to initiate collaborations with other fields of artistic practice and performance that employ craft or technique?

To answer these questions, it is best to assume that creative writing is neither untheorized nor ahistorical, and that the pedagogy and terminology of the field have been critically examined for at least the last ten years in creative writing studies scholarship. I argue in this dissertation that creative writing studies scholars should conceive of craft as both the method and end of education in the field. And more than cajoling creative writing to "shape up" by employing the methods or purposes of other fields in English, we must establish what Kelly Ritter calls "markers of professional difference"⁴ in order to articulate the knowledge artists possess in practice. In order to create these markers of knowledge, this chapter examines the presumed contrast between the terms *techne* (craft) and *episteme* (knowledge) in classical Greece and in Plato's *Ion* and *The Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Metaphysics*.

Performances of Ion: Classical Techne and the Origins of Craft

Our modern notion of craft in creative writing was, conceptually speaking, not possible for Plato. It is also important to note, with scholar David E. Cooper, that Plato

⁴ Patrick Bizzaro utilizes Kelly Ritter's term "markers of professional difference" in his article "Research and Reflection in English Studies: The Special Case of Creative Writing" (2004). Bizzaro argues that creative writing must establish itself as a distinct discipline in English Studies by separating from literary studies. He suggests that the professional and scholarly methods used to establish the field of rhetoric and composition may offer a constructive paradigm for establishing creative writing as an autonomous discipline.

had no formal definition of "art" or "artist," especially not one that featured an autonomous representation of the author. Plato included such art and art forms in the broader term of *techne*, so that the skills and practices of medicine or horse training share a relationship in what Plato conceived of as art (Cooper). Without the operative term of *craft*, poetics (or *poiesis* "to do, to make") is the classical term that shares the closest and most definitive relationship to contemporary creative writing. Plato's dialogues are really more idiosyncratic than comprehensive in their analysis of poetry and poetics, and whereas the rhetorician is one studied in persuasive techniques, the poet is depicted as one swayed by madness or commanded by the Muses. Plato defines poetics as skill in verse-making and identifies it along with rhetoric and the performing arts as having a potentially corrupting effect on an audience. The philosopher conflates rhetoric, poetics, and the performing arts in *Phaedrus* and Book X of the *Republic*, though it is in his dialogue *Ion* that the philosopher engages most directly with an artist-performer: Ion. Plato distinguishes between the *knowledge* of the philosopher and the *craft* of the rhapsode (rhapsodist) Ion and his material—the epic poetry of Homer.

The popular rhapsode Ion travels to festivals to recite and interpret dramatic scenes from Homer. At the prompting and cajoling of Socrates, Ion brags that he can transform himself and transport his audience so wholly that both actor and audience are moved to tears.⁵ Plato interrogates Ion on whether his effect on an audience comes from a place of *knowing* and if the rhapsode or the poet Homer himself were specialists in all

⁵ Ion's allusion to tears may be the origin for Robert Frost's famous advice to writers in his essay "The Figure a Poem Makes" (1939), where he writes: "no tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader" (440).

forms of knowledge, what he calls *techne kai episteme*, "possessing of the art of generalship" (Cooper). Ion eventually admits that neither he nor Homer may have complete knowledge of the subjects for which they speak. Plato's argument outlines the way poets, actors, and rhetoricians adopt protean characteristics and veil true knowledge in their craft and remain oblivious to their sway upon an audience. Plato contrasts the deception in the craft of performance poetry to the philosopher's true knowledge. Ion might have been better served to respond that he has knowledge of craft and that practices of performance make him knowledgeable in at least one form of knowing. The rhapsode *knows* how to move his audience into the experience of Homeric tales.

Plato's indictment against Ion parallels arguments against creative writing teachers who argue that writing can *and* cannot be taught. Creative writing scholars, many of who are former students of graduate creative writing programs, have worked diligently to identify ways in which the method of workshop, what Wallace Stegner calls "mildly Socratic," has failed many young writers. Beginning with the pioneering work of Wendy Bishop in *Released into Language: Options for Teaching Creative Writing*, and following from the more recent work of Kate Haake's *What Our Speech Disrupts: Creative Writing and Feminism* and Anna Leahy's *Power and Identity: Authority in the Creative Writing Classroom*, scholars have utilized theories from composition, literature, and cultural studies to advocate for reform in writing programs and workshops. Research into the inequities and inefficiencies of writing workshop continues to be essential to the future of creative writing studies, and it would seem that creative writing teachers have been cast in the part of Ion, one who moves us through art, but remains unreflective in his

practice and incomplete in his knowledge. Creative writers have been maligned for their inability to challenge the pedagogical tradition of workshop and creative writing scholars have adopted the cause of Platonists, providing knowledge of theory to practitioners.

The philosopher Plato is not without his own contradiction when characterizing the poet and his poetry. Beyond the current biographical scholarship that discusses the possibility that the young Plato was a playwright himself who found philosophy only after coming under the tutelage of Socrates, there is the argument that Plato's literary flair may undermine his argument against poetry.⁶ Whether in the *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Ion*, or *Gorgias*, Plato uses metaphor not only as a literary device, but as a rhetorical tool underpinning his argument against poetry, something like—do what I say, not what I do. Returning to *Ion*, the philosopher offers concession to the rhapsode if he accepts that his specialty is only in Homer, and the epic poet himself is not a knower, but one who is divinely inspired. To Plato, the great poet is "an airy thing, winged and holy" and "the transmitter of a divine spark" who he likens to the "drunken worshippers of Bacchus" (*Ion*). Characterized as one who is thrice removed from knowing, Ion accepts that he is acting as the performative middle man between the poet Homer and his audience. Ion's ability to move his audience to tears is further undermined by the observation that the poet Homer himself is moved only by the divine touch of God, not unlike dancers or singers. By bunching practitioners of the arts such as the poet, singer, dancer, actor, and rhetorician into the same category, Plato appears to extend the "mimetic" act in a

⁶ The biographical scholarship outlined in Patricia Bizzell's book *Rhetorical Traditions: Rhetoric from the Classical to the Present* points to the fact that the young Plato was an aspiring playwright and that his mentor Socrates had once been a practicing musician.

metaphoric chain, a linkage that scholar C. Griswold compares to: "the relationship of the god to poet to rhapsode to audience is like a magnetized sequence of links in a chain, each ring of which sticks to the next thanks to the power of the divine magnet at the start" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). The magnetism that links each individual to the next sequentially also links the actor Ion and the poet Homer through the activity of imitation or representation, what Plato refers to as *mimesis*. Before turning to *mimesis* and its more complex definition, it is important to note that the discussion of poetics in *Ion* allows Plato to contrast philosophy to the duplicitous craft and teaching practices of the rhetorician and the convincing and manipulative performances of rhapsode and poet.

It falls to Aristotle, Plato's student, to perform the complex task of redeeming the art of poetics, and specifically tragedy and epic poetry, through outlining the methods of narrative craft. In the treatise *Poetics*, Aristotle acknowledges that the temperament of the Muses cannot be directed, but in providing a dynamic taxonomy of narrative elements for achieving audience *katharsis* (cleansing, purging), he creates the first treatise on craft. The treatise does not entirely subvert the notion of divine inspiration, but instead transposes upon this concept a technique in *mimesis*. *Mimesis* is the "representation" or "imitation" of narrative elements, and it takes character as its primary means (secondary adornments include style or music) and plot as its end. Aristotle argues that the mimetic act should represent highly moral characters in compelling circumstances, so that classical tragedy allows the audience to recognize "this is that." The realization of the "this is that" comes when the audience member recognizes the implicit argument and probabilities established by the plot (*mythos*) and is transformed emotionally through the

pathetic appeal (*katharsis*). In *Poetics*, Aristotle argues that mimesis is not simply reducible to imitation, and instead comes to represent the powerful interplay between the actor and his audience, a temporal space that is both poetic and rhetorical. Plato makes clear in Book I, II, and X of *The Republic* that mimesis is marked by irrationality, imitation, and femininity, a characterization analyzed by Matthew Potolsky in his book *Mimesis*. Potolsky writes, "Whereas Plato associates mimesis with violence, extreme emotions, and the irrational, Aristotle regards it as a rational and fully valid practice. These two positions define the contours of the debate over mimesis in Western culture, and continue to inform discussions over the value of art" (7). The definition of mimesis can be understood as a form of craft that includes both representational and performative elements. Mimesis is a form of craft that encompasses the transformative processes occurring inside the artist and his or her audience.

Plato is not interested in art's "representation" of the world, and instead argues that the arts of painting, poetry, theater, and rhetoric function as "imitation" and should be judged and sequestered accordingly. Plato's definition of mimesis parallels its definition in the term *mimos*, and Potolsky points out that *mimos* signifies a person who imitates (such as a mime) or those performances in which an actor (such as Ion) imitated stereotypical character traits (16). In Plato's definitions, the relationship between art and reality is likened to the relationship between an object and a mirror. Plato makes this comparison between mimesis and mirrors more literally in Book X of *The Republic* by characterizing the phantom and illusory nature of the visual image that painters produce. In Book X, he also establishes his well-known distinction between what appears to be

separate and distinct roles in mimesis: the producer, the player, and the representational artist. Using the example of a flute, Plato argues that the flute player is most akin to the philosopher because he has intimate knowledge of the flute itself. The craftsman that produces the flute and the painter who creates an artistic facsimile of the flute does not share in the flute player's conception of the object. To this end, Plato strips the craftsman of any rights to real knowledge, and he argues that the artist, most especially, is thrice removed from the reality of the object, and therefore most void of knowledge. In order to recover craft as a knowledge-based practice, the next chapter more fully discusses *telos* (end) as it relates to the work of artists and craftspeople.

Despite his critical treatment of mimesis, Plato recognizes the utility in imitation, and as is the case in Aristotle's *Poetics*, and much of the classical Greek (*declamation*) and Roman education as (*progymnasmata*), the imitative performances of poetry, music, and theater are associated with the education of young boys who naturally imitate to learn. By recognizing mimesis as a significant (and primal) human activity and combining the arts in the term imitation, Plato simultaneously redeems and demeans the arts in his use of the term mimesis. It is clear Plato recognizes the power of mimesis, and whether in the performance of Homer or representation of Achilles in a painting, he acknowledges representation and performance as vehicles for cultural knowledge and as methods to transform an audience. Mimesis signifies imitation for Plato and Aristotle, but it is often overlooked that Plato is most threatened by mimesis' ability to influence and corrupt an audience's sense of reason. Reason offers a counterbalance against the

powerful and compelling sway of art and artists, and for Plato's argument, the arts are too unreasoned and corrupting in practice, an argument disputed by Aristotle.

Aristotle's definition of mimesis does allude to Plato's, and both believe that it can be a congenital activity for humans and animals, in which the uninitiated (children or students) learn from others more knowledgeable (parents or teachers). Aristotle expands his definition of mimesis throughout his treatise and most pointedly when he outlines the various elements in the emplotment of a narrative. More than a vehicle for mirroring reality, or inanimate artifact, mimesis exists for Aristotle as an internal and external process that is reliant upon the interaction between performer (or dramatist) and audience. The interactivity of craft is critical to understanding how creative writing may revise pedagogical practices in writing workshops and envision craft as a way of thinking. Craft knowledge is developed through an awareness of the processes that create the object, but they are not the object alone, and it is the challenge of scholars, teachers, and artists to conceptualize craft as a process-consciousness developed during creation.

Representational and Performative Craft in Mimetic Theory

In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle makes three divisions in the genres of oratory. These three oratorical genres: forensic, epideictic, and deliberative may not appear to be critical to understanding creative writing, but the categories offer a lens to imagine the performative elements in a creative education. Workshops generally approach student submission stories as artifacts. These artifacts fit in what Aristotle would consider forensic proceedings in which writers remain silent while peers and the instructor offer evaluations of the stories' consistency with craft elements and its ability to move them.

The forensic quality of workshop may seem to be necessitated by the editorial judgments passing through the mail—acceptance or rejection—however, students often linger over questions that conjure up Aristotle's concept of katharsis—does this story *move* us?

Workshop procedures as a result tend to limit (through consensual agreement) the parameters of craft and force workshop members to separate the product from the writer.

In her book *Released into Language: Options for Teaching Creative Writing* (1990), Wendy Bishop challenges the product approach to workshop by framing a discussion of undergraduate writing workshops in rhetoric and composition theory, most notably process-pedagogy. Bishop uses Louise Rosenblatt's "transactional theory" as a lens for demonstrating ways in which student writers may develop "reciprocal, mutually defining relationships" as writers and interpreters of texts. Transactional theory argues that readers and writers do not toss ideas back and forth, but instead that students learn best when they navigate multiple discourses simultaneously. Typical *interaction* between writer and interpreter is contrasted with *inhabiting*. By performing multiple roles as writer and interpreters, Bishop argues that creative writing students are best educated through producing and interpreting multiple modes of discourse. Bishop's argument for a process rather than product approach in creative writing education borrows from composition studies and her argument is similar, ironically, to characterization of Ion.

Plato accuses Ion of being like the mythical figure Proteus who may transform aspects of himself and his recitative material to move his audience. What Plato reads as *manipulation* in his classical dialogues might be read in our postmodern era as an *advantage* to creative writers. Student writers must now develop their knowledge of craft

and writing processes in print and online contexts. In the swift disintegration of print publications, there is no static definition of craft that is possible. I argue that creative writing studies is passing the kairotic moment when it must explore the connections between its definition of craft and those in the performing and fine arts fields. The term *mimesis* as discussed in Plato and Aristotle represents a concept that precedes contemporary definitions of craft, and as seen in *Poetics*, those craft terms remain unrevised and unchallenged. By reexamining *mimesis* in a classical context and reviewing contemporary scholarship exploring the term, artists and scholars can reimagine ways in which comparative approaches to craft may expand knowledge.

Douglas Hesse's essay "Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*: Narrative as Rhetoric's Fourth Mode" and Ekaterina V. Haskins' essay "'Mimesis' Between Poetics and Rhetoric: Performance Culture and Civic Education in Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle" demonstrate ways to reconceive the definitions and practices of *mimesis*. Hesse focuses on the relationship between Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* and argues that narrative, as it unfolds temporally in the interaction of audience and performer, represents the fourth mode of persuasion in Aristotle's canon. Hesse observes that Aristotle's definition of "representational *mimesis*" is vastly more expansive than what Plato sees as imitation. By focusing on the transformative qualities in the definition, Hesse also cites scholar H. Adams, who discusses the poet as a sculptor of nature's form. Adams writes:

The poet's imitation is an analogue of [nature's] process; he takes a form from nature and reshapes it in a different matter or medium. This medium, which the form does not inhabit in nature, is the sources of each work's

inward principle of order and consequently of its independence from slavish copying...It is through his peculiar sort of imitation that the poet discovers the ultimate form of actions (47).

Adams demonstrates ways in which the personality and skill of the artist create and reshape form through what Whitman would call the poet's "precious idiosyncrasies."⁷ This analogue between nature and the artist makes form not simply form—but a reflection of the artist's process and representation of the world. Any workshop approach that dismisses the artist's process then risks favoring a diminished approach to narrative form and craft. Hesse further connects his definition of mimesis to Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (1990) in order to argue that *temporality* is the central feature of mimesis. Ricoeur argues that narrative is "the dynamic activity of composing, not an artifact or result" (26). Ricoeur refers to the dynamics of composing in a similar way to Bishop, and each, along with Aristotle, sees mimesis as an unfolding craft process. Mimesis then exhibits structures that are internal and made unique by the individual artist; these structures are parallel with those that unfold in the act of reading or seeing. Narrative structure then is not an objective form, Hesse writes, "plots are not found in or measured against reality but are rather constructed and measured against existing strategies for constructing. Each plot, then, argues for a possible causal configuration of its constituent

⁷ Walt Whitman discusses in his 1871 essay "Democratic Vistas" from *Democratic Vistas and Other Papers* (2002) the notion of democracy and what he believed to be the country's corruptions. The quote below echoes in the manner of Robert Frost's earlier quote regarding artist knowledge and it offers a context for understanding artistic intention and practitioner conceptions of knowledge. He writes: "True, the full man wisely gathers, culls, absorbs; but if, engaged disproportionately in that, he slights or overlays the precious idiosyncrasy and special nativity and intention that he is, the man's self, the main thing, is a failure, however wide his general cultivation. Thus, in our times, refinement and delicatessen are not only attended to sufficiently, but threaten to eat us up, like a cancer" (41).

events" (26). Hesse sees rhetoric and poetics as having analogous methods, and he connects the structure of narrative to argumentation through mimetic theory.

Hesse argues that the mimetic act is a transformative mode of persuasion and that "the audience is displaced from one position to another and most powerfully when the 'new position' appears to be natural, as in the outcome of enthymemic reasoning" (34). This "new position" is associated with Aristotle's concept of *katharsis* in which the audience experiences the uncanny sense of being cleansed through the pathetic appeal of tragedy. Character is a means to *katharsis*, and in the case of Aristotle, these should be highly moral characters put in compelling circumstances. Narrative means is also analogous to rhetorical means for Hesse, and the scholar's reading of *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* argues for ways to conceive of narrative as argumentation. The trajectory of his research, much like Bishop's, allows us to conceptualize representational mimesis as a process, and even a performance. Hesse and Bishop move away from a static, two-dimensional conception of craft, one in which narrative elements are seen as the materials of construction. In place of these static or traditional models of craft, artists and scholars are free to conceive of their craft as rhetorical, process-based, and performative.

In Ekaterina V. Haskins' essay "'Mimesis' Between Poetics and Rhetoric: Performance Culture and Civic Education in Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle," the scholar argues that mimesis has long been associated with representational rather than performative mimesis. Haskins contrasts the definitions of representational mimesis by Aristotle and Plato with those of performative mimesis demonstrated by sophists such as Isocrates. By focusing on Aristotle's view of mimesis, Haskins "demonstrates that

Aristotle shares with Plato a distrust of the performance-centered culture and its effects on the citizen training. It is, by contrast, Isocrates' view of performance (*mimesis*) as a source of civic education that Aristotle counters with his separation of performance into poetics and rhetoric" (7). The scholar constructs her argument in a similar way to other revisionist scholars like Hesse who argue that Plato and Aristotle reduce *mimesis*' potential by ignoring overlaps between its poetic and rhetorical elements.

Haskins concentrates on how performance remains critical to the "civic education" of classical Greece and contrasts sophistic education in which performative elements provide a "condition [for] activating and sustaining civic identity" (8). For Isocrates and his discourse education, *logon paideia*, the "analytical separation of *mimesis* as representation from *mimesis* as performative imitation and audience identification," is impractical, and subsequently, such a separation ignores the centrality performance plays in "activating and sustaining civic identity" (8). By activating "civic identity" through performance, Ion enacts what was culturally and critically significant about classical poetry: its performance acted as a representation *and* a means to activate the civic identity of an audience. Anxiety about how performative elements may have an incantatory and hypnotic effect on an audience lead Plato to dismiss *mimesis* on the grounds of imitation and Aristotle to concentrate almost exclusively on representational elements in his treatise *Poetics*. Haskins cites scholar Eric Havelock, who describes classical poetry as far from imitation, and instead as "a sort of encyclopedia of ethics, politics, history and technology which the effective citizen was required to learn as the core of his educational equipment" (9). Haskins counters Platonic and Aristotelian

definitions of mimesis and reminds us how alternative definitions in sophistic thought and education may lead toward a renewed vision of mimesis and craft.

Haskins' definition of mimesis has significant implications for definitions of craft and concepts of identity in creative writing and its scholarship. Creative writing craft could be bound to handbooks, as is the case in many undergraduate writing class; however, craft inscribes itself upon graduate students through avenues that are not yet recognized in creative writing studies scholarship. Workshop anecdotes may exhibit the negative elements of lore, but these stories chronicle the historical tradition of the field and invite students to conceive and embrace an artistic identity. As Ritter, Vanderslice, Leahy, Haake, and Bishop remind us, claiming an artistic identity in creative writing culture may remain out of reach for those who do not have the advantage of social, racial, and/or gender privileges. Claims against and in support of creative writing culture must follow from an expanded conception of the performative elements in craft. Author readings and visiting writer workshops inscribe themselves on graduate creative writers. Outreach programs in creative writing are nearly invisible components in a creative education, and scholars have yet to research ways in which literacy and coalitions between the community and the creative writing program activate writers' sense of their civic identity as artists. Small literary magazines and the work of manuscript reviewing and editing of these publication exposes students to the complex world of publishing. Teacher training in composition and creative writing may also help scholars to understand how concepts of craft are articulated between graduate writers and their undergraduate students. Assuming that craft is both process and performance, as is

argued by Bishop and Haskins, creative writing studies scholars may better understand how writers are acculturated, how definitions of craft are disseminated, and how methods of workshopping connect the creative writing to arts fields throughout the university.

Conclusion: Artistic Identity and the New Causes of Craft

Craft follows a path limited by the classical definitions of mimesis. Plato establishes mimesis as imitation and introduces the restrictions of definitions that Aristotle attempts to rebut in *Poetics*. In turn, Aristotle creates his own taxonomy of poetics and transforms mimesis from imitation to representational mimesis, an effort that ironically, forms the foundation for much of our modern conception of narrative craft. Doug Hesse and Ekaterina V. Haskins' scholarship on mimesis recasts the boundaries of craft in the light of the temporal and performative elements in their definitions of mimesis. These reappraisals of mimesis invite creative writing studies scholars and artists to explore articulations between definitions of craft that are central to all arts disciplines. The question of whether writing can or cannot be taught is central to determining the extent to which teachers determine how and in what ways artists believe they can (or should) influence young artists. How do we conceive of craft and how can we teach it? Questions about what is teachable in writing are echoed in the performing and fine arts as teachers and students wonder: can theater acting or classical music be taught? These questions help students to conceptualize their education and they form the basis for artists to explore knowledge-making in their own artistic practices.

By introducing artists to university settings, the members of English departments in the U.S., and now around the world, have created a system of education that challenges

the way in which we conceive of knowledge and knowledge-making. In order to claim the autonomy necessitated by art and art practice, it is the responsibility of artist—first and foremost—to be artists and for them to challenge their own preconceptions of what and how they are to teach art. The workshop is more than a collaborative forum, and for creative writers it enacts an identity and establishes them in a community that supports and sometimes alienates them. As a community, and growing culture, creative writing must continue to expand its history through critical inquiry, and in doing so, search out those disciplines in the university that share ideological and methodological footing.

The next chapter analyzes craft through an examination of the relationship between work and art. As part of this analysis, the chapter determines the extent to which craft functions to create commodities and artifacts that influence our conception of art. Surveying the creative writing studies scholarship of D.G. Myers, Paul Dawson, and Mark McGurl, the chapter outlines the purpose(s) (*telos*) of creative writing education. The mission of creative writing as an arts discipline is determined, as I argue, in the negotiation between *techne* and *telos*. The chapter continues by examining Howard Risatti's scholarship on craft with definitions of functionalism in art. Craft consciousness develops as the artist mediates between material and formal limitations in their own mind, and it is the four causes of substance Aristotle outlines in *Physics* that the second chapter articulates the connection between artistic intent and the function of craft.

CHAPTER TWO

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from "On Weaving" by Anni Albers (1962)

REIMAGINING THE 'WORK' OF ART: TOWARD NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CRAFT IN CREATIVE WRITING STUDIES

Looking back at my childhood from the perspective of a writer, one of my first encounters with *craft* may have come watching my mother cut fabric on the living room floor. Surrounding her daily work as a seamstress was a cold farmhouse, three young children, a husband working in canneries, and a woodstove that she fed oak logs. Each morning she would bend down and unroll the colors and patterns across the floor. She measured with a yardstick before running shears through the fabric with the holy concentration she had learned from nuns in Chicago. Her children, my sister, my brother, and me, battled each other with the leftover cardboard tubes and let her vanish like time itself into the hours she spent kneeling on the floor or sitting at the sewing machine.

Through the afternoon she half-listened to *The Phil Donahue Show* and *Days of Our Lives* and pedaled the *woobwoobwoob* of her Viking sewing machine, looking up only to settle us down or stretch her eyes. She sewed decorative throw pillows for Stange's of Waupaca, the upscale furniture store in our small town. They paid her under the table, and not very well. Her boss Louise was dubbed "LoLo" because we felt it fit with the royalty and pageantry of her entrance through the door. Without a knock she entered and yelled, "*Youhoo—OH—Youhoo!*" All of us children scattered from the tempest of LoLo's presence, her hoop earrings, the cascade of necklaces, and the burn of

her outloud perfume. My mother could soothe her with thoughtful commentary about stuffing or seams, and the ritual ended when the pillows were bagged inside the neck of a plastic garbage bag and delivered ceremoniously to Queen LoLo's pearly white Cadillac.

The pillows were herded on sofas and arm chairs inside Stange's. We saw them on rare visits to the store where it was new furniture smell and the crammed-together vision of a furnished home. My mother's pillows were piled, wedged, cratered, and manipulated into what I understood to be accents. I would ask my mother, "Which ones did you make?" She answered with a whisper, almost embarrassed, "All of them, sweetie." At the time, I took pride in our monopoly on production; she had made *all* of them. The first year the Christmas bonus from Stange's was a floral-pattern soup tureen. Another year it was a recliner with no arms that looked like the color of a mashed potato. The dog could not get comfortable atop the thing, and so it sat useless and strange like a man sitting with his hands in his pockets. My mother quit (or my father quit for her) after the IRS audited us. Stange's had claimed my mother as an employee even though she received no benefits and no overtime. My parents paid the tax penalty, but not before my father roared through Stange's with a wild—if not historic—demonstration of impotent rage.

For my mother, Mary Kaye, a seamstress removed from the mass industrial factories of Southeast Asia and the day laborers that line 8th Avenue at 37th Street in Midtown Manhattan or the Garment District in Los Angeles, craft remained yoked to the purpose of work and the creation of functional objects.⁸ She produced smaller

⁸ Nadia Sussman's recent *New York Times* report (March 21, 2011) on garment district workers in New York City highlights the continued struggles of undocumented immigrant women, 100 years after the infamous 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire claimed 146 lives and created the first calls for increased safety and unionized labor in the industry. The report discusses the effect of globalization on the shrinking

merchandise that aided Stange's in selling the larger merchandise of their store.

Fortunately for my mother, she did not initially have to learn the craft of sewing in order to find work. She chose to learn sewing at an early age from her older sister Susie who learned it from their mother, my Grandma Dolly. My mother continued the craft tradition in our home and mentored high school 4-H girls in dressmaking, an endeavor that added to my pubescent love longing. I spent afternoons moving through the house to spy on the girls' faces warping around the challenge of learning to sew. My mother's initiation into the craftswomanship of sewing highlights the powerful gender dynamics of the 1960's and 70's, and she would major in Home Economics before returning to graduate school to receive her Master's degree in Environmental Education. Her education in sewing might have limited my mother's professional choices; however, she began sewing through self-initiated projects and to fulfill the goal of clothing her large family of five sisters and a brother. Only later would my mother translate her craft into paid work as a seamstress.

My own initiation into craft did not come until graduate school at Loyola Marymount University, and rather than pressing the pedal of a sewing machine, I began to understand craft in the guise of an artist pursuing an MA degree in literature, and later an MFA in fiction at University of Arizona. In the writing workshops and craft seminar courses I enrolled in, the purpose of craft was to develop a technical understanding of fiction through artistic practice and workshop discussion. In this context, craft was a term bound to practice and apprenticeship to a master practitioner and published writer. The

garment industry in New York, an industry has moved toward high fashion dresses and other specialty items as mass production operations move abroad. With local garment workers, New York designers may keep a smaller inventory and make last minute alterations. The advantage of local production allowed Stange's to employ my mother and have her produce pillows to fit with their shuffling inventory of couches, chairs, and beds rather than ordering from a larger pillow manufacturer (Sussman).

purpose of my education in writing was to hasten the process of becoming an artist, though oftentimes I felt as though my education was more focused on developing the aptitudes and acumen of a literary studies scholar. Literature requirements have been foundational to creative writing degrees in MFA programs and to a greater extent in MA and PhD programs in creative writing. These curricular requirements do not reflect the ends of a creative writing education, and it is craft (*techne*) that separates literary studies scholars from practicing writers. Scholars and writers utilize a different heuristic in understanding literature, and because of this fact, I argue that we must examine how the methods and practices of craft determine the end (*telos*) of a creative writing education.

Definitions of craft determine the method of instruction. Craft knowledge, as discussed in the previous chapter, demonstrates the ways in which creative writing and arts education have a different set of objectives than other fields in English. In order to understand the goals that drive creative writing, it is essential to view craft as both the method and end of such an education. What are the causes then to which creative writing is called? How does craft reflect the methods and ends of creative writing education? This chapter uses Aristotle's discussion of "causes" or "goals" in *Physics* to illuminate definitions of craft in creative writing studies and to determine how views of craft transform perceptions of *telos* (end) or the purpose of a creative writing education.

Art is suppose to be craftless. My mother worked and I made pseudo-art objects. Short stories are throw pillows for workshop discussion, and they represent the deviation between the function and functionless, between work and art. Art's association with craft, especially in the fine arts, may seem only supplementary in comparison to the more

fundamental association between art and talent. What might link my mother's craft to my own "work" and education? Craft reflects a more complex relationship between work and art than we initially perceive, and whether we discuss craft in relation to sewing or writing, investigations into the ways we theorize and practice craft dramatically change the ways we perceive creative writing as a field. Contemporary craft theorists Howard Risatti and Glenn Adamson argue that craft is cast in the role of the subordinate to the fine arts establishment because craft possesses a level of "functionality" that compromises Modern definitions of art as purposeless or causeless.

Aristotle distinguishes between four principles of substance (what he calls "causes") in his treatise *Physics*, and it is worth analyzing here how the mission of creative writing education is reflected in the substance and perception of craft. Material is the first cause for which Aristotle identifies, and craft is often distinguished by the physical matter for which it produces an object. Clay makes a sufficient pot, but a less functional poem, and the substance of craft for my mother, fabric and thread, is inherently different than the substance of words. The second cause involves the formal nature or "essence" and it is observable that creative writing separates *form* into genre specializations for students. Do the causes of poetry and fiction or literary nonfiction have different or connected causes? The third cause is connected to "change or rest" and what moves the substance between states of being. The craftsman and his or her instructor (and peers) may change the cause for a workshop submission, but ultimately it is up to the artist to negotiate material and formal causes through a process that comprehends what to change and what to leave alone. The final cause (*telos*) or "that for

which a thing is done" determines the reason why an activity is performed or an object is made. This final purpose (*telos* or goal) intersects with previous three causes and provides the reason for an action. The final cause provides the scope for understanding the mission of creative writing, and it is the purpose of this chapter to determine how the first three causes, as they are articulated in the histories of creative writing and perceptions of craft illuminate what we believe the field can offer apprentice writers.

The goal (or cause) of my mother's craft began in the material understanding of fabrics and stitching techniques and moved toward an expanded design understanding of pants and dresses for her and her siblings. What brought her to an understanding of material cause eventually led her to become an instructor, and subsequently, to change the final cause for which my mother sewed. First and foremost, she found expression and the cause of clothing a family and her siblings, and later, clothing her children to save money. She also made quilts and baptismal dresses as gifts while eventually turning to sewing with the goal of employment and financial subsistence. These final causes provide a window into craft as it moves from material knowledge to an evolving set of causes. In the end, no one cause has defined my mother's sewing, but admittedly it is difficult not to imagine her turning the Halloween costumes she now creates for my two daughters into a profitable business of couture-like garments sold on Etsy.com. The final cause of my mother's sewing has at times drifted into causes of a commodity-driven economy; however, as her economic position has improved and she has found work as an elementary school teacher, she has returned to sewing as a means of self-expression.

The goals of creative writing embody the complexities that define the methods and ends of craft. Scholars and writers argue about the goals of creative writing, and I argue that perceptions of craft in creative writing studies dictate the final causes of the field, and we have reached the kairotic moment in which the material substance of a creative writing education is no longer limited to literary studies. The cause is at once artistic and expressive, though the field also includes the potential to serve the interest of those commodity-driven social and economic forces that represent what Mark McGurl refers to as "experiential commodities" or D.G. Myers calls an "elephant machine." These characterizations of creative writing, as I argue in this chapter, determine the final causes for those scholars suggesting revisions to the field in creative writing studies. The efficacy of a creative writing education pivots upon a dynamic understanding of craft, and I argue that creative writing studies scholars better serve the field through reviewing how craft determines the material, form, efficacy, and final causes of the field.

Material Difference(s) and the Search for Method and Cause in Creative Writing

Graduate and undergraduate programs in creative writing have institutionalized material identities through the establishment and separation of genres for study: fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and playwriting.⁹ Genre divisions are crossed and re-crossed by students and faculty with ease or difficulty depending upon the institution and program. Specialization provides the infrastructure for curriculum and workshops, hiring lines for professional writers, university funding sources, and the essential craft practices

⁹ *The Associated Writing Program Official Guide to Writing Programs* also lists programs of study in screenwriting, writing for children, criticism and theory, professional writing (technical writing), literary translation, and popular/genre fiction.

introduced to the apprentice student artist. When students answer the question of their peers—what genre are you?—they are really answering the question—what forms the material of your artistic identity? Ironically, creative writing programs have been built upon the presumption that material knowledge of writing and craft comes through enrolling in literature courses. Does the purpose of creative expression and artistic specialization require the creative writing student to understand literary studies and critical theory? Perhaps the answer is yes, and since the practice of *reading* of literature has vanished so markedly, there is the need to require students to take literature courses.

Despite the considerable heft of literature courses, it is clear that the material and formal causes for reading literature are different, one field renders meaning and the other creates an experience. Even as a child, it was clear that my mother as (producer) and her boss LoLo (seller) had a different knowledge of the value and craft of pillows. My mother understood intimately the material and formal dimensions of a pillow while LoLo determined their ability to become commodities to be sold and enhance larger commodities. The important distinction between writers and scholars in English comes from the way they view the material of literature. Craft provides a lens for analyzing literature that sees it as a product of the present and as an exemplar for construction. The flute maker (as Plato observed) sees the flute differently than the flute seller or the flute player, and it is puzzling that creative writing programs remain content to allow literature courses to serve as causes for developing artistic sensibilities and a craft knowledge of literature. Literature represents a different material for the scholar and the artist, and though formal causes may be shared, it is craft, and not critical theory, that determines

the goals and objectives for educating creative writers.

An understanding of form (or the formal cause) also determines the degree to which students decide on genre specializations. Art disciplines outside of creative writing share these complexities of cause and fields in the craft, fine, and performing arts find themselves negotiating discipline distinctions. Based on their relationship to craft, the causes and function of an art object often determine the position of the artist to their craft. Material and medium separate and categorize artists and their objects along the line of functionality. The functional is diminutive—the functionless is Art.¹⁰ In his book *A Theory of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression* (2007), Howard Risatti observes that the craft arts have remained subordinate to the fine arts because the former lacks the supporting theoretical framework enjoyed by fine arts disciplines. Risatti argues that this hegemonic relationship is a result of a definition of art that presents "non-function" as the final cause of art. In this subordinate position, scholars such as Adamson and Risatti recognize that theory must demonstrate how craft is integral to definitions of art so that the functionality of objects such as textiles do not fall outside classifications of art.

Purpose (or cause) and function are not one in the same, and the former moves outward from the artist whereas the latter involves a negotiation with an audience. Craft finds its original and evolving cause in the artist, but it often remains outside the purview of the audience who determines its function. The experienced artist synthesizes the

¹⁰ There is significant artistic and scholarly debate about the categorical difference between craft and fine arts. Generally, fields separate the fine arts (visual and performance arts) of painting, sculpture, poetry, installation, calligraphy, music, dance, theater, architecture, photography, and print making. Craft arts (studio, decorative, and applied arts) fields include textile arts, weaving, pottery, ceramics, metal work, woodwork, glass blowing, and others. In many instances these categorical separations are shifted to accommodate curatorial or scholarly agendas; for example, a textile such as weaving might be presented as a fine art in a museum exhibition.

correlation between the purpose and function of an art piece. Craft allows for the material and formal causes of creative writing to be institutionalized and taught. In order to begin artistic production in an institutional context such as the American university, creative writing needs craft to articulate its function as an educational apparatus, otherwise art could not exist in such a context. No craft means no creative writing or other art programs. The scale to which creative writing has grown in the 20th century remains part of the ongoing criticism of the field as inefficient and overgrown. Aristotle's third cause, that of the "change and rest," determines the purpose of creative writing studies scholars. Creative writing historians have argued that the final cause of creative writing should be determined by literary studies and they view the field as having grown too large in scope and influential on the production of literature. Craft connotes a scale of production that is small and representative of a careful, intimate experience between material and form and the isolated craftsman. Has creative writing become an unwieldy craft industry?

In the introduction to his anthology *The Craft Reader* (2010), Glenn Adamson offers a definition of craft as "the application of skill and material-based knowledge to relatively small-scale production" (2). This definition presents "skill," "knowledge," and "production" along a sequence that is qualified by the modifiers "material-based" and "small-scale." These modifiers articulate a dependence on context and scope as with "application" and "scale" while offering knowledge that appears constrained and bound to materiality. Knowledge seems a strange concept to limit, but if scholars and artists in creative writing view craft in terms of material alone, they risk presuming that constraints dictate the scope of craft. Adamson's definition of craft fits well in the "small-scale

production" context of writing and studio workshops where knowledge is proven in the artisan tradition—through the process of making. The inclusion of craft knowledge owes much to the progressive educational movements of John Dewey and his pioneering advocacy for experiential education. In *Art as Experience* (1934), John Dewey argues that art is often separated from the living experience of art practiced by the artist. The removal of art from experience and practice damages art by sequestering it from the parlance and engagement of living beings. Art is experience, not just an object of admiration. Dewey outlines his theory of aesthetics by viewing the raw material of experience as the stuff of art and the pedagogical method for which humans best understand art. Art's source is human and understood best as an interactive experience, and not as the dominant view of art as an aesthetic object or a marketable commodity.

The dialectic between human experience and contemporary art making in creative writing are, as D.G. Myers has identified in *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880*, reliant upon the progressivist ideology and aesthetic tradition of Dewey. Craft knowledge remains a reclamation of art from the past, in the tradition claimed by Dewey and Fenza; however, craft in creative writing has also become part of the commodity industry that markets and sells authorship and the experience of being an artist. The creative writing program is now an institution from which craft is marketed with the face of the published writer and the experience of authorship. Does creative writing then reclaim an integration and interactivity between culture and artist, or, does it represent an institutional monolith that commodifies craft? The shift from product to process remains

critical to redefining craft as more than its material limitations. The focus on material and formal causes has influenced the histories written of craft in creative writing.

Among the scholars, D.G. Myers, Paul Dawson, and Mark McGurl, craft is situated as a product and object of literary magazines and as a by-product of creative writing programs emerging in the early twentieth century. By presenting craft as an effect of institutionalization and literary magazine markets, Myers, Dawson, and McGurl severely limit the definition of craft by characterizing it through material and formal limitations. In their representations of craft, the efficaciousness and final purpose of creative writing is limited to the causes and objectives of literary studies. In the section, I survey the histories of creative writing in order to analyze the concept of craft and make recommendations that illuminate how craft definitions determine the telos of the field.

New Markets, New Commodities: Craft Limitations Inside the Elephant Machine

D.G. Myers' book *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880* (1996) does not explicitly analyze the term *craft* and its usage in the field, and the scholar only alludes to the term in his discussion of the social and educational movements of Progressivism, Humanism, and New Criticism. Analyzing the work of the progressive reformers John Dewey and Hugh Mearns, Myers identifies the components of self-expression and artistic practice that underpin the experiential educational theories of Dewey and Mearns. Myers portrays Norman Foerster as the figure responsible for establishing the creative writing program at the University of Iowa in 1930. As a literature scholar and humanist, Foerster dismisses, according to Myers, progressivist self-expression and assumes that creative writing was a constructivist method for teaching literature. Myers characterizes the birth

of creative writing as the union of Dewey's progressivism and Foerster's humanism, but interestingly, the definition of craft he provides is related to New Criticism and associated most intimately with methods of close reading. In Myers' presentation of the historical origins of the field, craft is established and practiced as a supporting activity to practical literary criticism, and as a result of this analysis Myers associates craft with the language of New Criticism and its formalist causes.

Unfortunately, the definition of craft articulated by Myers presents creative writing as no more than a bridge between practical literary criticism and critical theory. Myers' presentation of the final cause of creative writing is paralleled by Paul Dawson and other creative writing studies scholars; however, Myers concludes that the central figures of New Criticism such as John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren, and R.P. Blackmur simply transformed craft language into New Critical language. Myers writes, "the method that came to be known as 'practical criticism' or 'close reading' was founded upon the sort of technical discussion of poetic problems that would occur among a group of poets" (Myers 131). The formalized language of New Criticism then takes the writing workshop as a source, and though Myers does not take the opportunity to analyze the role of New Critics who were scholars and artists, he does identify sites in which material and formal notions of craft were coming into being.

In his chapter, "An Index of Adagios," Myers provides anecdotes about the formation of artists' colonies in Carmel and MacDowell. The chapter also discusses how Robert Frost and Ezra Pound took sojourns to the university, but never stayed. Between the chapter "An Index of Adagios" and the final chapter "The Elephant Machine," Myers

presents craft as a pre-institutional or primitive form of New Criticism. Craft provides a cause for the more formalized language of New Criticism and Myers presents the current purpose of creative writing as proliferation and production of its educational model. What is lost in the contemporary cause of creative writing? For Myers, creative writing has lost its origin and its final cause as a branch of practical literary criticism. Myers finds that creative writing will become more efficient if it returns to its cause in practical criticism. In presenting the field of creative writing as the "elephant machine," Myers need not provide an explicit judgment upon the field. The industrialization and institutionalization of creative writing represents a lost and wandering cause. Glenn Adamson, a craft studies scholar mentioned in chapter one, argues that craft is defined by its contrast to industrialization. Would we have craft in creative writing without the evolving cause of New Criticism or would we have creative writing without New Critic writer-scholars?

Myers presents craft as a pre-institutional formulation and practice in the 20th century. In *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* (2005), Paul Dawson expands upon the historical range of Myers' study by contextualizing the field in the moment of "crisis" between literary studies and critical theory in the 1980's. For Dawson, creative writing found its original purpose in mediating the schism between New Criticism and what Dawson calls the "anti-humanist" agenda of critical theory. In the "post-theory" academy of Dawson's argument, creative writing programs should adopt the goal of producing "public intellectuals rather than disinterested scholars" who educate apprentice writers in the "sociological poetics" of their creative work. Dawson recasts creative writers as intellectuals who will redefine English studies and the "New Humanities" through a

constructivist approach to literature that is aware of socio-political factors of artistic practice. In Dawson's argument, the purpose of creative writing is to play a foundational role in expanding (and more or less saving) the mission of the humanities in the public sphere. Dawson pushes the history of creative writing into its classical past, and his presentation brings an interdisciplinary and international scope to the field.

Dawson analyzes craft as a material and formal commodity of market forces. He argues that craft developed because of turn-of-the-century market forces in American literary magazines and the scholarship on the short story developing in academic settings. Handbooks on short story writing exploded at the end of the century and Dawson writes that these publications "'codified and popularized the most seminal axioms of creative writing pedagogy'" (Dawson 60). The axioms of early 20th century handbooks share a lineage with Aristotle's *Poetics*, though Dawson argues that instruction in narrative form remained subordinate to the new cache of the short story writer. Contemporary writers and scholars are familiar with the author as a marketable commodity, and Dawson writes about the converging forces between craft handbooks and the popular author. He writes:

Handbooks on story writing thus emerged in response to demand for short fiction by mass circulation magazines, and catered to the promise of pecuniary reward, celebrity and cultural cachet which these magazines offered to writers. 'The short story writer of the early twentieth century', according to Andrew Levy, 'was a muted version of the present-day pop star' (Dawson 60-61).

Dawson outlines the significant achievement of craft as a commodity force. Andrew Levy's book *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story* (1993) details the emergence of the short story form in what was conceived of and marketed as an original American art, a literary genre that rose out of American life as a distinct form and that represented and reflected the excellence of its country of origin.

Craft handbooks such as Brander Matthew's *The Philosophy of the Short Story* (1901) converged with textbooks like Charles R. Barrett *Short Story Writing* (1898) to create a coalition of critical scholarship and more popular instructional publications on craft. The response to this explosion of interest in short fiction led to scholarly responses. Dawson cites Fred Lewis Pattee's *The Development of the American Short Story* (1923) as one of the first studies to trumpet against the popularity of the short story. In a rebuttal to the popularity of handbooks and textbooks lauding the form and its method of construction, Pattee criticizes authors and teachers for reducing art to "a trade-school matter, a handwork vocation to be acquired by mere diligence and mastery of technique" (Dawson 63). Pattee reduces craft to "handwork" and "technique" and his sentiments dramatize the schism between craft and art. Craft is a reduction of the final cause of art. Technique is not inspired and it follows that craft reduces the aura of any art form.

Dawson does not link craft knowledge to the cause of humanities and he presents creative writers as "public intellectuals" or "scholars" in a light that is decidedly different than the artistic identities that professional writers align with in English. Additionally, Dawson argues that creative writers should educate apprentice writers in the "socio-poetics" of their creative work. In making this argument for the mission of creative

writing, Dawson presumes that the field will take the cause of bridging the impasse between criticism and theory rather than serving the final cause of artistic production and education. In a fashion that is similar to Myers' cause for creative writing, Dawson envisions the field through the lens of cultural studies. To assume that creative writing teachers will give themselves more fully to the interest of literary criticism (or hybrid forms), as Dawson argues, is to assume that craft is best used to make critical inquiries into the meaning of literature. Through his representation of craft as a commercial manifestation of the market for literature, Dawson analyzes the effect of craft on the writer and their audience. In his conclusion, he defines "sociological poetics" as:

a recognition that *aesthetic* or craft-based decisions of a writer are always the result (consciously or otherwise) of ideological or *political* choice: the choice to employ social language and the ideologies they embody in certain ways, and hence the choice to position a literary work in relation to these languages, as an active intervention in the ideological work they perform (211).

The "recognition" and "active intervention" upon artistic choices during the process of creation offers an important shift from the material and formal limitations to questions of efficiency associated with Aristotle's third cause. If creative writing were recast in the lens of cultural studies, it would articulate the "socio-poetic" mission outlined by Dawson. The final cause for creative writing, in Dawson's argument, is to create articulations between theory and criticism through cultural analysis. Craft is nearly absent from Dawson's overall argument for the mission of creative writing, and he concentrates

on method as it is marketed rather than practiced. How does craft reflect cultural influences and the political and social contexts for its creation? Dawson's questions are critical to understanding the orientation of creative writing in English, but he positions his argument above the more foundational artistic goals of the field. In this way, both Myers and Dawson envision the final cause of creative writing as bound to literary studies and the commercial forces that push craft to the forefront of the marketplace for literature.

In *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (2009), Mark McGurl analyzes the growth of creative writing programs as an aesthetic and economic force impacting post-war literature. McGurl refers to the period as "The Program Era" and he aligns craft with the concept of self-discipline and motivation. In the tradition of professional writers in creative writing, McGurl views craft as opposed to the self-expression and voice associated with Deweyian progressive educational models. Craft is a by-product of the expansion of literary production and the "fall into institutionalization" that brought professional writers into the university. Ironically, craft is institutionalized through a dominant ideology of *anti-institutionalization*. McGurl highlights this irony and provides innumerable anecdotes of writers such as Vladimir Nabokov and Raymond Carver moonlighting in the university. In addition to these narrative anecdotes, McGurl uses economic and systems theories to evaluate the impact of Program Era literature on aesthetics. In his taxonomy of Program Era aesthetics, McGurl creates the categories of "lower middle-class modernism," "technomodernism," and "high cultural pluralism." By shedding progressivist ideals and Deweyian experiential or expressive principles, McGurl identifies craft with oppositional forces in

aesthetics. He represents his argument on *craft* through the dichotomies of self-expression/*self-discipline*, pride/*shame*, creativity/*experience*, and imagination/*memory*. Rigor, as craft is associated with, becomes the hallmark of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and the "lower middle-class modernism" espoused by its writers.

Aesthetics, as McGurl outlines, involves an evolutionary movement from Raymond Carver's minimalism to Joyce Carol Oates' maximalism. Along with analyzing the aesthetics of individual writers, McGurl observes that craft arrived in part from coalitions with the performing arts and other artistic fields. In George Pierce Baker's 47 workshop at Harvard, a site that D.G. Myers also identifies, Eugene O'Neill, John Dos Passos, Thomas Wolfe and other writers of the era received training in the "scenic method" that McGurl connects to "show don't tell" and Baker's book *Dramatic Technique* (1919). In his chapter section "Self-Expression and Scenic Method," McGurl mediates between the paradox of artistic originality and the rigorous work of craft. McGurl identifies the paradox of technique and talent and provides a reading of craft. He writes:

The paradox of conventional unconventionality is only intensified when it is narrowed to the specific issue of formal instruction in literary creativity, where the essence of the thing taught is understood to be originality. How can the teacher give instruction in this area without falsifying it from the beginning? One answer would be to try to separate the question of talent and originality, which cannot be taught, from the question of technique, which can (93).

By separating "formal instruction" from "literary creativity," McGurl presents the former as both the method and final cause for any graduate creative writing program.

Interestingly, McGurl represents the cause and method of instruction through observing a change in the way writing moved from "error correction toward what would later be called 'creative self-expression'" (94). Acting as a counterbalance to progressive ideals and the *pleasure* of self-expression, craft becomes a *method* for sustaining the pedagogical and programmatic structure of creative writing and other arts programs.

McGurl also analyzes the ubiquitous and positive qualities of "creativity" while associating craft with the ethos of work. Thus, the vocationalism and work ethic that Pattee and other scholars observed as the determinant to art practice are embraced in the creative writing program under the banner of "rigor." McGurl associates craft most closely with the aesthetic of minimalism, but in his analysis of craft, he identifies creative writing in the context of labor. He writes:

Thus the prideful attention to 'craft' associated with literary minimalism can also be understood as the utopian return of unalienated labor in an economic order characterized by a large increase in jobs that are 'white collar' in standard social definition but no less 'alienated'—and often worse paid and less secure—than the unionized blue-collar jobs of the past. The model here is the William Morris' Arts and Craft movement and its American variants, which sought to reclaim ennobling, soul-satisfying labor from the mechanical jaws of industrialism (296).

McGurl does not expand his discussion of craft beyond the dichotomies of work and talent, but he does provide insights into the ways that method and causes intersect.

Positioned as a return to more pleasurable and romantic labor, craft may be seen as a resistance to industrialism, and it is ironic that McGurl aligns his argument with Myers and Dawson by representing creative writing as both industry and system. The systemic influence of creative writing on literary production requires McGurl to construct aesthetic categories that seem prescribed and narrow. His observations on craft, though, demonstrate what is not found in Myers and Dawson, namely that creative writing has become its own institution and system that possess its own ideological bent and causes. Creative writing impacts artistic production, and craft is, conceptually speaking, a concept that functions to articulate the work performed through instruction and practice.

McGurl refers to creative writing programs as "experiential commodities" akin to an expedition in literary authorship in an economic system that has dramatic influence on contemporary literature. Viewed with this systemic approach, craft instruction has a much larger impact on English, and arguably, an influence that will continue to grow. The first significant literary analysis of creative writing on contemporary literature is somewhat diminished by the aesthetic taxonomy provided by McGurl; however, his study identifies how an understanding of craft may illuminate artistic practices and instruction. Craft knowledge and the consciousness associated with creative writing requires scholars to expand their research into artistic fields outside of English. Myers' characterization of craft as pseudo-New Critical language and Dawson's observation of craft as a product of market forces should push creative writing studies scholar to look to craft as a method

that underlies the mission of creative writing more broadly. McGurl presents craft as the work and rigor of aesthetic categories in literature, but he also observes sites where craft knowledge is shared and transferred across artistic disciplines and fields of study.

I argue that craft knowledge should be analyzed across the four causes outlined by Aristotle in *Physics*: material, form, efficiency, and final cause (*telos*). Scholars and historians of creative writing should begin by articulating what final cause they believe the field should be moving toward. To this point, the effect of creative writing studies has been to argue for "change or rest" in the field without first articulating how creative writing should articulate its mission. I argue throughout this dissertation that craft demonstrates a knowledge and consciousness that aligns the field with the arts, not just scholarly fields in English, and that rearticulating craft practice and instruction will provide creative writing with clearer sense of its mission as an educational field.

In the introduction to *The Craft Reader* (2010), the editor Glenn Adamson moves from his earlier definition of craft as "the application of skill and material-based knowledge to relatively small-scale production" to a definition that reflects craft's complex relationship with modernity, industrialism, and evolving modes of literary production. Adamson argues that craft becomes or is created as a result of modernization, and his second definition sets the term as a discourse that defines modernity. He writes:

[It] is only when artisanal labor is placed in explicit contrast with other means of production (chiefly mechanization, fine art, and technological mediation) that craft itself becomes a locus for discourse. Indeed, it could be argued that until its modern separation from these other possibilities,

'craft' itself did not exist, at least in our sense of the term. It is a term established and defined through difference (5).

Craft in this definition is a "locus of discourse" that is created because of modern industrialization, and this definition contextualizes the term more broadly than creative writing handbooks or New Critical discourse. McGurl and Adamson define craft in conjunction with economic and labor forces that act upon the writer, and rather than calling upon these "socio-poetics" forces to educate the writer, it is more profitable to educate the writer in interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to craft. Adamson sees craft as forming a complex and diverse site for critical inquiry. He defines craft as:

a dialectical term, held consciously opposition with other terms and therefore susceptible to widespread ethical, aesthetic, and economic analysis [...] it entails irregularity, tacit knowledge, inefficiency, handwork, vernacular building, functional objects, and mysticism. Further, craft's association with gendered, ethnic and local identities could be seen as inherently resistant to (or potentially, critical of) modernity's homogenous transcendentalism (5).

As a dialectical term, craft not only reflects differences in scholarly perceptions, it also helps artists mediate across the differences associated with material or formal limitations. Whether defined as a locus for critical inquiry or as a mechanism for knowledge practice, craft functions to articulate the practices of craft in critical, artistic, and work contexts.

The Promise of Craft Criticism & Other Revolutions in Knit Fabric

It was my carefully divined fate to make the journey from the old farmhouse in rural Wisconsin to Los Angeles and marry into sewing celebrity. After moving west to graduate school, I met the California girl my mother asked me not to meet. My fiancée, Jessica, invited me to visit her family who had relocated to Phoenix and there I met her grandmother Ann Person. From swatches of conversation and after-dinner talk with the family and Grandma Ann, I found out that she was the only 2004 inductee into the Sewing Hall of Fame.¹¹ Ann had grown up outside Eugene, Oregon in the 1930's, raised three daughters, and in early 1960's began to experiment with a stitching technique for crafting knit fabrics. Ann developed a revolutionary technique with knit remnants from a ready-to-wear manufacturer and then continued to practice what would become the content for her first book *Stretch and Sew* (1967). As a homemaker turned sewing entrepreneur, Anne took the opportunity to create and copyright an extensive portfolio of patterns for home sewers, and her company expanded from a single storefront in Oregon to an impressive franchise of 353 Stretch & Sew Stores nationwide by the late 1970's.

During the era of disco pants suits and leisure polyester, Anne stood over a growing empire of do-it-yourself home sewers. She hired a limo driver. She was interviewed by radio and television shows from Iowa to New York City and sat next to Johnny Cash the year she received a Horatio Alger Award. Newspapers coined her "Halston for home sewers," and for her bright head of white hair, "the Colonel Sanders of

¹¹ The American Sewing Guild (National Headquarters Houston, Texas) has confirmed 10 inductees into the Sewing Hall of Fame since 2001. The American Sewing Guild mission seeks to "advance sewing as an art and life skill" and the ASG Sewing Hall of Fame "recognizes individuals who have had a lasting impact on the home sewing industry with unique and innovative contributions through sewing education, product development, media or other sewing industry related endeavors" ("Sewing Hall of Fame," *American Sewing Guild*).

the garment industry" (Sewing Hall of Fame). Between Stretch and Sew franchises, home sewing patterns, print publications, and other media products, Anne crafted a method for women to circumvent the high cost of fashion by make their own clothes using her patterns and techniques on knits, wovens, fleeces, berbers, and lycras materials. The Anne Person Method™ transformed the DIYer into a competent craftsperson and my mother used Anne Person patterns to create the long delicate dresses for her sisters. Anne's craft began as her own technique before becoming a revolutionary model that would proliferate throughout the country. By the early 1980s, her franchise empire had begun to dissolve, a casualty of fashion's shifting taste and consumer desire for ever cheaper blue jeans and other imported garments. Anne's story highlights the way craft can move from the individual into a market force that simultaneously empowers and profits from a group of craftspeople.

Glenn Adamson identifies "how-to" as the "original craft," and observes the way craft "codif[ies] and distribut[es] the norms of practice." His definition explains how the Anne Person Method™ may parallel the Iowa Workshop model often cited by creative writing studies scholars. How do craft practices and techniques become codified in a broader culture of craftspeople? The question might assume that best practices will bring efficiency and empowerment to a larger and larger group of artists. My mother, in fact, taught her own method of sewing to a group of apprentice seamstresses in the 4-H program. Teaching craft implicates the craftsperson in the social and political act of art instruction, and the reflective teacher, as Dawson may argue, provides students with an opportunity to analyze the craft-decisions they make during artistic production.

We commend Anne's entrepreneurial spirit as an individual and businesswoman; however, the enterprise of craft, once systematized and institutionalized becomes rife for criticism as either too large or too industrialized. Craft is compromised by its growing scale. When did creative writing become the function of a systemic and unreflective enterprise or when did the nostalgia for craft as the labor of the individual artist become representative of a machine or a system? Scholars have elided the answers to these questions and assumed that creative writing's expansion has compromised artistic integrity through institutionalization and perhaps violated the myth of the isolated artist. In evaluating the efficiency of the field, the cause of "change or rest," creative writing studies scholars must ask how and to what end the field serves. Historians have limited the final cause of creative writing to their affiliations with literary studies, and I argue that creative writing must further evaluate its base of knowledge in craft and explore the concept of craft in creative writing practice and in other field in which craft is analyzed.

Craft no longer translates as simply "technique" or "what we can teach" in creative writing, and it is more essential to develop sites for dialectical exchange about craft processes and knowledge. In *(Re)Writing Craft: Composition, Creative Writing, and the Future of English Studies*, Tim Mayers identifies "craft criticism" as a bridge writing genre composed by creative writers and compositionist in English. Mayers defines craft criticism as a kind of work that "refers to critical prose written by self- or institutionally identified 'creative writers'; in craft criticism, a concern with textual production takes precedence over any concern with textual interpretation" (33). Mayers cites James Berlin's *Rhetoric, Poetics, and Culture: Refiguring College English Studies* (1987) as the

latter characterizes the split in English departments between textual interpretation and textual production. In Mayers' argument, composition (and rhetoric, to a lesser degree) and creative writing have been split from each other by the monolith of literary studies. Mayers identifies craft criticism as a "marginal" discourse that often discusses the pedagogical and socio-political, institutional, or economic elements of textual production. This discourse takes craft as its method, but it also has a rhetorical function that identifies audience and the reception of creative genres as being pivotal to craft criticism.

Mayers argues that craft criticism can be traced historically to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Sidney's *Defense of Poetry*, T.S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. The tradition of the craft identifies a theoretical trajectory that Mayers links to Heidegger, Kant, and other theorists, but in examining contemporary creative writing, the author presents craft criticism in the light of praxis, what he calls "critical prose that focuses squarely on issues of contemporary 'creative' text production in academic settings"(34). Craft theorists Glenn Adamson, Howard Risatti, and others, share concerns over production, reception, and theories of craft with creative writers who occupy universities. Mayers call for the expansion of craft discussion should strike creative writers and creative writing studies as central to creating what Kelly Ritter calls "markers of professional difference" and requires writers and scholars to investigate the causes of creative writing education. Mayers writes:

By insisting that the origin of the creative work is beyond the realm of analysis, and by reducing 'craft' to mere surface matters of technique, they have (often inadvertently, sometimes not) closed off the possibility that

creative writing can be a field of intellectual inquiry rather than simply an activity or trade propped up by an institutional (and therefore economic) apparatus (95).

Once expanded beyond its conception as "technique," craft presents creative writing programs the opportunity for self-definition and further alignment with the causes of artistic practice and instruction. Aristotle provides four causes in the material, form, efficiency, and final cause, and it is in craft criticism and the craft studies scholarship reviewed in the next chapter that creative writing can best articulate its mission. Craft knowledge evolves into a dynamic consciousness that allows artists to negotiate the methods and causes of their art. Craft works to articulate its cause in work and its cause in art. The challenge facing creative writing studies scholars and professional artists is to articulate their intent through the methods of craft knowledge and practice.

The next chapter analyzes the scholarship that constitutes "theories of craft" in order to explore how aesthetic scholarship changes the cause and method of workshop and creative writing programs. In an effort to reconstitute the lens from which creative writers view craft, aesthetic theory from Kant, Heidegger, Benjamin, and contemporary craft scholars provides a theoretical base for articulating the knowledge and practices that make up artistic education. Aesthetic theory provides a way to view craft that differentiates practice from activities that search for knowledge through other methods and causes. Craft knowledge and craft consciousness allows for creative writers to represent their work in a manner that presents craft as a way of knowing *through* practice.

CHAPTER THREE

"The ultimate goal of technology, the telos of techne, is to replace a natural world that is indifferent to our wishes, a world of hurricanes and hardships and breakable hearts[...] with a world so responsive to our wishes as to be a mere extension of the self." *Jonathan Franzen "Kenyon College Commencement"*

THE TELOS OF TECHNE: GROUNDING CREATIVE WRITING IN NEW AESTHETIC CONTEXT(S) FOR CRAFT

Several creative writing studies scholars, as discussed in the previous chapter, claim that creative writing should continue as a branch of practical criticism in literary studies. While this claim may have been valid earlier in the 20th century, I will argue in this chapter that such a historical representation drastically limits the future mission of the field as a comparative discipline responsible for training artists. Beyond the limits such historical scholarship may impose on the future educational apparatus of the field, I argue that professional writers and creative writing studies scholars should expand their field of vision beyond considering creative writing as a subfield of *literary* studies to engage with practices that support interactive artistic production in the same way that compositionists have supported *literacy* practices outside the university. The autonomy of creative writing remains superficial, and it is time that the academic field acknowledge the breadth of its influence—including not only the host of undergraduate and graduate programs, but also the assembly of literary journals, visiting and tenured writers, outreach initiatives, performances and readings, writing groups online and off-line, and all other collaborations that support written expression as a center for supporting, producing, and distributing contemporary literature.

What is watershed in the present moment is now becoming clear to contemporary literary studies scholars as well. In his book *The Program Era: Creative Writing and the Postwar Era* (2010), Mark McGurl presents creative writing programs as institutions of aesthetic influence, and in analyzing theories of economics and cultural capital that inform the Postwar era, McGurl argues that "paying attention to the increasingly intimate relation between literary production and practices of higher education is the key to understanding the originality of postwar literature" (*Preface ix*). McGurl's book expands D.G. Myers' history *Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880* (1996), and McGurl focuses most closely on the system of influential programs and prominent writers in the "Program Era" rather than on the larger progressive reforms and social movements focused on by Myers. McGurl concentrates on the often ambivalent relationship between individual authors like Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, Raymond Carver, and Joyce Carol Oates, and the graduate programs they were educated and instructed in. By concentrating on individual authors of the era, McGurl highlights the importance of the relationship between author and institution, and he writes that "the graduate program represented a dramatic escalation of the relationship between the profession of authorship and the school, a systemic coupling, without (as of yet) a final merging, of art and institution"(4). In his discussion of the "fall into institutionality" of creative writing programs and their authors, McGurl's analysis of the "Program Era" exemplifies the paradox of creative writing: individual author or educational institution?¹²

¹² McGurl elaborates on what he terms "the fall into institutionality" through outlining the dominant aesthetics of the "Program Era," including: Technomodernism, High Cultural Pluralism, Lower-Middle Class Modernism. Creating aesthetic groupings for authors requires McGurl to play a delicate line between his analysis of the "period" or "system" and his analysis of a few individual authors in the period.

We are given to characterizing, and even marketing, creative writing through the guise of the individual writer, and the relationship between professional writer and student writer may be even more saleable and attractive now than the relationship between reader and writer. The phenomenon of the "Program Era" then is at once individualized and part of a system that English studies scholars are just beginning to study. What is certain is that creative writing has become an enterprise of artistic production, and despite its legacy as a discipline born of literary studies, it is now best understood as an enterprise associated with the dialectic of craft and as a site for textual production rather than textual interpretation. Through the proliferation of creative writing programs cited by McGurl, there has been less attention paid to the systemic influence of creative writing (in the form of professional writers, graduate programs, community outreach, and graduating students) on the public sphere. Creative writing has swelled in the U.S. over the last fifty years, and recently international programs have developed in England, Australia, Philippines, New Zealand, Korea, Ireland, Norway, and Spain.¹³ The influence of creative writing programs might be best understood as an ocean wave, and to steal the metaphor fully, the capillary waves are more than what we see rippling the surface. Creative writing moves like the gravity waves in the ocean—pushed through

¹³ The *Guide to Associated Writing Programs* now published online lists 12 international graduate degree-granting institutions as members of AWP, primarily in the UK; however, a broader search reveals at least 59 graduate-degree granting institutions in the UK, 6 in Australia, 4 in Philippines, 2 in Spain, 2 in New Zealand, 1 in China, Ireland, Korea, and Italy respectively ("Graduate Creative Writing Programs"). The development of creative writing programs internationally has not necessarily reproduced American models in workshop and programmatic requirements. International creative writing scholars Paul Dawson, Gregory Light, and Graeme Harper have also observed the interdisciplinary relationships between arts and writing programs and these models may begin to influence American programs.

their depths by the pull of the moon—and cresting into sight only when they reach the sand of the shore.¹⁴

Creative writing has shifted the epistemological position of English studies, and what it means to "study" literature has become different when taught and embodied by practitioner-writers. Practitioner knowledge or "knowledge through making" is not necessarily the contraposition to theoretical knowledge, but it represents an alternative heuristic for understanding literature that often complicates and changes the value of literature as a cultural artifact. The analysis of practitioners' views literature as a *making* rather than an artifact *made*. Working as artists rather than scholars or theorists, creative writers are trained to use evaluative lens that seeks to understand art and literature as an applicable and experiential form of knowledge. By evaluating literature for its technique and using formal qualities that are distinctly different than those of literary scholars, student creative writers are trained to see literature as the work of a craftsman. This "craft" approach to literature can be seen as a fertile method for developing a writerly sensibility, but it can also be seen as a devaluation of literature as a historical specimen or cultural artifact, a method of moving literature from past to present tense. The "craft consciousness" that is developed in MFA programs is formalized through craft seminars taught by creative writers, but it is also cultivated through graduate programs that value

¹⁴ Oceanographers define surface waves, sometimes called capillary waves as those that are affected by the wind and other surface elements. Gravity waves, on the other hand, are caused by interactions between the fluid layers in a body of water—these waves occur in the ocean and cloud masses in the atmosphere as they are acted upon by gravity and the movement of the earth (NASA Science News). On a smaller, different scale we might imagine creative writing as the object that has been dropped in the pool of English departments. Scholars have presumed that creative writing is more like the breeze that ripples the top of a cup coffee and less like the kid who cannonballs into the shallow end of the pool and sends the waves sloshing over the edge—creative writing now shifts the water.

interactivity and provide students with the opportunity to take courses outside of literature.

MA and PhD programs in creative writing tend to assume that literature and creative writing are bound to one another through similar programmatic and curricular causes. But why? New Critics, many of whom embodied the scholar-artist, provided an essential link between literary study and creative expression. The professionalization and institutionalization of creative writing owes much to the careers of poets and writers such as John Crowe Ransom and Malcolm Cowley who were both poets *and* critics. What is overlooked in this representation is that the interactions between artists took place outside English and inside arts workshops, retreats, and communes like Black Mountain College, Breadloaf, or Sewanee. These contexts provided a site for interdisciplinary discussions of craft before creative writing was formally realized as a program of study in English. Along with D.G. Myers' history of creative writing, Stephen Wilbers' book *The Iowa Writers' Workshop* (1980) illustrates the influences of community writing groups and scholarly movements in regional literature that gave momentum to the formation of the first program in Iowa City. At the University of Iowa, the scholar Norman Foerster and the writer Paul Engle were able to position writing as a humanist endeavor that eventually legitimized creative degree programs. During this same period, and in some cases before the formation of the Writers' Workshop, fine arts programs in Dance and Theater Arts programs were established at University of Iowa and throughout the country.¹⁵

¹⁵According to the University of Iowa's website, the Dance program at Iowa was established in 1914 and the Theatre Arts program was founded over 90 years ago, around the time of the forming of the Writers' Workshop in 1920. There has been a strong relationship between the Theater Arts program and the Playwrights' Workshop that established an MFA program in 1971. The grand influence of "workshop" is

The Dance program mission statement at University of Iowa provides a better illustration than the current Writers' Workshop statement mentioned in Chapter Two of this dissertation. In the statement the application of practitioner knowledge provides the way to connect creative expression to the world, it reads:

To provide specific bodies of knowledge, and ways to discover, synthesize and apply this knowledge is paramount. The Dance program is based upon the central premise that both art and education are extensions of the total humanistic endeavor, and that by developing creative artists and nurturing the art of dance in higher education, individuals may be empowered to enrich and further the arts in our society in relevant, diverse and meaningful ways (University of Iowa Dance).

By providing "bodies of knowledge" and "extensions of the total humanistic endeavor," the program articulates a mission that highlights that craft "develop[s]" and "empower[s]" individuals to "further" art in society. The tone of the statement reflects a synthesis between art and society, and in this branch of humanism, it articulates interactivity between the artist and audience. The future of creative writing in English depends upon articulations between fields outside of literary studies. As is the case at the University of Iowa, coalitions between arts programs and engagement with community initiatives remain integral to the humanistic mission of undergraduate fine arts programs. The future development and emergence of creative writing depends upon a new mission that is

often associated with Iowa, but it may be that the integrative nature of their Playwrights' Workshop and Theatre Arts programs are the model of education we should be studying as creative writing and crafts arts scholars. Also, the fact that the Theatre Arts MFA program predates the famed Writers' Workshop MFA provides further evidence that definitions and practices in craft should be viewed as part of a larger tradition of arts education in this country.

integrative, comparative, interdisciplinary, and multi-modal. In his recent book, *The Evolution of College English: Literacy Studies from the Puritans to the Postmoderns* (2011), Thomas P. Miller identifies the four major fields in college English as writing, language, literature, and literacy. In his argument, Miller presents English as a field that has fractured and dissolved into strata of professionalization and specialization. Miller argues that the current model of English is in need of a better articulation between the interest of the public and endeavors that engage civic entities. Aligning with these calls for reform in the humanities, Miller reinforces the argument for coalitions between creative writing and composition studies made by Tim Mayers. Mayers envisions craft and craft criticism as both a genre and language that intermeshes the work of writers in English, and Miller's argument presents an integrative model for the future of English.¹⁶

These paradigmatic shifts in rhetoric and composition scholarship present the field of creative writing studies with a moment to reflect upon how it might build upon its coalition with literary studies and the approaches to craft and workshop method of the performing and fine arts. There is now considerable evidence that creative writing should no longer be cast as a subfield of literary studies and should now become associated with training in the craft consciousness of the arts. Apart from leaving English departments, an alternative that rhetoric and composition departments have realized at some institutions, creative writing must investigate how their coalitions in and apart from English studies serve to solidify their mission in the university and in extra-institutional contexts. The

¹⁶ Mayers concentrates primarily on craft criticism as a genre, and in identifying writing on craft, he provides the opportunity to see how practices and scholarship links our work as compositionist and creative writers. In this vein, and by extension, we can see how his vision of integrative practice and theory in craft can be expanded to include fine and performing arts.

recent formation and growth of MFA creative writing programs internationally serves to identify ways in which interdisciplinary coalitions are being built to reflect the identity of creative writing as a comparative field of creative practice and scholarship. Additionally, the rapidly changing models of literary publishing and distribution online and in the e-books are changing the way creative writing reflects its historical tradition, and it must now anticipate the ways the education field will change in order to contribute to the creating and distributing of contemporary literature.

In this effort to reenvision the educational apparatus of creative writing in higher education, it would seem most appropriate to start with the celebrated and maligned writing workshop. Workshop has acted as a vehicle for solidifying the ideology of creative writing culture, but I argue that the impetus of workshop—what we call *craft*—be examined before discussing the forum for its dispersal and entrenchment. In the previous chapter, I discussed ways in which definitions of craft in creative writing studies have continued (with exception of Tim Mayers) to be incomplete. Definitions of craft that characterize the term as simply "how-to" handbooks or the by-product of New Critical discourse have done little but reduce the capacity to which creative writing may become a field for artistic and intellectual inquiry. This chapter serves to examine ways in which theory and criticism from aesthetics serve to reinforce two goals in the field: 1) To solidify creative writing as both interdisciplinary in scope and comparative in approach to the methods for producing art and educating young artists. 2) To provide a "theoretical" framework for artist-practitioners that serves to preserve and celebrate the inarticulate, mystic, embodied, authentic, and imaginative.

In examining aesthetic theory as it applies to craft and creative writing, it is impossible to reach the full breadth and scope of its applications in the field; however, the chapter initiates a discussion into the function of craft objects as they situate themselves in traditional print and digital contexts. Craft also has often been conceptualized in opposition to fine art, industry, modernity, and even technological advancement, and it is the purpose of this chapter to examine how craft is best understood as a dialectical process that highlights the interactivity in storytelling. In Chapter Four, I will discuss the implications of an interdisciplinary approach to craft to in writing workshop and other interactive forums for educating writers and artists. An examination of aesthetic theory and craft criticism serves more than as an interesting aside in the field, and I argue that knowledge of these cross-disciplinary genres will redefine the theoretical, pedagogical, and artistic precepts that form the core of graduate creative writing education.

Kant and Heidegger: Intention and the Object(ive) of Art

In *Critique of Judgment*, the eighteenth century philosopher Immanuel Kant lays out a theory of aesthetics that provides an understanding of the position of craft in contemporary art. Kant argues against a purely rationalist understanding of art, and in his discussion of beauty, he presents the human mind as the principal site for the experience of art. By introducing the notion of a "play of faculties" in the human mind, Kant outlines an aesthetic that foregrounds the mind rather than abstract authorities such as God. Kant sees the human mind as a universe that reflects a fierce and radical rationality of its own. Following this line of argument, Kant writes that art should reflect a "purposeful

purposelessness" and that artistic intention should remain colored with ambivalence.¹⁷ As we look closer at Kant though, it is important to observe, with scholars like Sandra Corse, that his philosophies of aesthetics are often taken out of context and presented as "anti-craft." In *Craft Objects, Aesthetic Contexts: Kant, Heidegger, and Adorno on Craft* (2009), Corse argues that Kant's theories are often taken selectively and not seen in light of other eighteenth century theories driven by the conceptual—the mode of thinking resisted by Kant and other Romantics of the period.

Kant saw the human mind as an agent that was reflective of the universality of aesthetic experience. By departing from the universality of God's vision and the conceptual-thinking of the period, Corse notes that Kant concentrates on beauty as an experience, not on the object or as concept that fits in a formalist mode of thinking. For Kant, people often agree upon what is beautiful, but there appears to be no way of accounting for this fact by rationalist means. Rather than having the object fit in a conceptual, rationalist framework, Kant chooses to evaluate the beautiful as a "play of faculties" reflecting the universal in humans' experience. As it relates to craft and definitions of craft in aesthetics, Corse points out that Kant does not dismiss "purposeful" craft objects necessarily and instead is more concerned with the interactive nature of art. Corse identifies the dichotomy assumed by Kant's *Critique of Judgment* between craft

¹⁷ In Chapter One, I discussed the contradictory nature of dictum "writing can and *cannot* be taught" and its possible origin in Plato's dialogue *Ion*. The paradox in this phrase as well as Kant's "purposeful purposelessness" reflects the anti-rationalism that is foundational to art-making and aesthetic theory. Indictments against creative writing that neglect to identify contradictions evident in the writings of Plato, Kant, and artist-practitioners more generally are in danger of missing what has been a tradition in criticism that utilizes (and values) contradiction and paradox.

and art, but the scholar presents counter-arguments that see other scholars, not Kant, as subordinating the objects that are traditionally associated with craft.

Sandra Corse's work, like much of the work of other contemporary craft theorists, is motivated by a desire to produce generative definitions of art that not only include craft, but present craft as a site for knowledge-making. Kant structures the mind as a play between intuition, imagination, and understanding. As Corse writes, "The structure of the mind when contemplating something beautiful is for Kant similar to the structure of the mind when reasoning; aesthetic experience is, then, a form of thinking" (39). Despite focusing on aesthetic experience from the standpoint and position of the audience, we can also see how art-making, in the progressive tradition of John Dewey and others, lead to a form of thinking that is different than the formalism advanced by New Criticism. The play of faculties illustrates the interactivity of the sensory and conceptual in Kant's notion of art, and he sees the imagination as facilitating an experience that travels from sensory impression to categorical and concept-bound understanding. Corse points out that Kant departed from his contemporaries by seeing the mind as an active agent rather than as a blank slate acted upon by the world. This interactivity in aesthetic experience changes the way the audience and artist view craft in creative writing, and art education more broadly.

By beginning with material definitions bound to objects or genres, we present students with conceptual limitations before we provide an opportunity for the more formative sensory and imaginative experience found through exploration. Objects born of the present model of creative writing education are perhaps limited by the curricular and formal limitations that segment and specialize writers. To return to the object again and

again as the conceptual beginning and end for training writers is to assume that interactions are fixed in specialized categories that are always already self-limiting.

In chapter two, I discussed the ways in which the craft arts perpetuate a version of "work" that poses a threat to the fine arts establishment and its purported removal from human affairs. Art should not take intention as a beginning or an end, and though there is certainly a value and function in craft and fine arts objects, the fine artist must always be wary of being marginalized as either propagandist or craftsman, or, either overtly political or simply amateur. Ironically, the field of creative writing has been established in the fissure between craft art and fine art. In the American university system of this and the last century, this position has led the field into a protean identity, one in which it must demonstrate the purpose and accountability required in a university setting without compromising its artistic autonomy. Craft occupies the interstices and acts as a unifying field of knowledge disseminated through a forum (workshop) to speak and a method (craft) to speak of the objects created by practitioners.

It has been my argument in the first two chapters of this dissertation that craft signifies the extent to which creative writing reaches into the established and ongoing conversations happening in the arts about the ways in which art is made. Scholarship on craft holds a diminutive status compared to discussions of fine art, namely in aesthetic theory, and it is as Howard Risatti posits in his book *Thinking Through Craft* (2007) that scholars do more than say "craft is art, too." Risatti discusses the craft object as beginning in the producer, and in this way, it seems that the writer and the potter may set upon the task, one to make a pot, the other to produce a story, poem, or essay. Intention, though,

has long been less like an antidote and more like a sickness for student writers. Purpose, like intention, is often among the most dangerous and potentially manipulative assumptions for a writer to make when approaching their writing (and their reader). Inexperienced creative writers fill their stories with symbolism and themes that they very much intend. The story has to include this idea or this theme often because it happened to the writer. This intention like the potter's reservoir tends to see the story as filling a material vessel and functions to give voice to an incident or idea that occupies the mind of the writer. Perhaps the most wobble-headed advice made by non-writer to writers: "*That* would make a great story, or, you should write about *that*." The assumption in such advice is that the writer fills the world of a story with their experience, or worse, the experience of a close friend or family member. To give such advice to a writer is to attach a leash to their neck and to treat writing as reporting the writer's world as the *only* substance and content of their own experience.

Are the potter and writer making a reservoir in which to pour their experience? The education of undergraduate creative writers speaks to impoverished notion of craft as "how-to," one in which Paul Dawson sees as the origin of craft. And in many ways, Dawson is right. A traditional poetry handbook might present the journey to make a poem as the action of material gathering, formal understanding, and efficient communication through form, rhythm, line, and the other elements that make up the substance of a poem. The intentionality that this approach to teaching indoctrinates the student *and* the teacher (sometimes a graduate student themselves) to conceive of poetry or short story writing as a process based solely on material-based knowledge, a process

[*insert self-help tone*] where all that is needed is—you! The problem in instructing about craft in this manner is that the writer conceives of the story as vessel rather than void. I am alluding here, of course, to Martin Heidegger's essay "The Thing" in which he challenges the assumption of materiality (or thing-ness) as the define function of an object or thing.¹⁸ Writers may conceive all the materials that constitute a story, but these materials, much like the jug from Heidegger's example, does not a story make. The jug and the story are voids defined by their nothingness, not their materiality. The abstraction here is critical to craft, and more than being playful, Heidegger's discussion of the jug complicates the process for which an object is made and reframes craft as constituted by the something beyond the thing.

Heidegger's example illustrates what happens when craft is limited by materiality and formal assumptions about the limits of art. The example also sheds light on the examples from fiction writers and poets in the university who worry, rightly so, that intentionality may severely limit the capacity and capabilities of writers in their art. The anxiety of intentionality is illustrated in Charles Baxter's essay "On Defamiliarization" from *Burning Down the House* (1997). Baxter discusses the link between meaning and experience. He writes:

Art that is overcontrolled by its meanings may start to go a bit dead: The images in the story will have a wilted quality, the feel of the vehement message about to leap over the experience. The image or scene will have

¹⁸ Tim Mayers provides an expanded analysis of Heidegger as it relates to craft and creative writing, and in chapter three: "Writing, Reading, Thinking, and the Question Concerning Craft" in *(Re)Writing Craft*, he provides some foundational texts for retracing the origins of craft, especially Carl Fehrman's *Poetic Creation: Inspiration or Craft* (1980).

been clapped onto a use function, and because everything has become pre-programmed, it becomes airless. Instead of being an experience, it has become a vehicle of opinions (Baxter 33-34).

Baxter represents narrative as experience rather than meaning or message, and in his position as both writer and instructor, the implicit message here is that "control" and "use function" are not the responsibility of the writer, but for the reader to determine.

Intentionality creates an overdetermined object in Baxter's reference to short story writing, and it is important that the writer represent *character* experience rather than *writer* experience in the telling. Baxter's advice parallels Richard Hugo's advice in *Trigger Town*, where he says, "if you want to communicate, use the phone" or the oft-referenced observation by Flannery O'Connor that she did not know when writing "A Good Man is Hard To Find" that the Bible salesman would run off with the prosthetic leg until just before he did. Much of the anxiety over intentionality parallels prevailing anxieties about craft arts such as pottery, namely the fear of amateurism and/or the sense that the object has been made for commercial intent. Pottery may be made for manufacturing and distribution, but the short story should, we conceive of having a higher purpose, lest it be deemed formulaic or worse—viewed as genre writing.

If we conceive of the craft object as both a void and an experience for the *reader* rather than the writer, the object becomes less an expression of self than a performance from which an audience interprets its function. Craft approaches in creative writing have taken an inductive approach that inevitably begins with the seemingly logical question: what object would you like to make? If the answer is a short story, then we gather and

name the elements that constitute a short story, let's say its plot, character, or voice, but in the material elements a story is not necessarily *made*, what Heidegger would call *qua*-story. What makes a story is what makes for an experience for the reader—nothing more, nothing less. What a deductive approach to craft might look like is more along the lines of a *craft consciousness*, which I am defining as a perception toward the making that posits dialectical process as the beginning and end for a craft object, rather than the product as the method and the end. The dialectic between writer and reader makes the creative writing workshop a different venture than that in the Romantic tradition often supposed as craft's origination and tradition. Imagine craft not as a spontaneous overflow but as a secular communion between artist and audience.

The function of objects in creative writing challenge the writer to imagine without over determining the world which will move the reader—to reflect Kant's "purposeful purposelessness" or Aristotle's catharsis. Writing workshops serve to test the functionality of these objects, their resonance, their voice—their use. The anxieties of intention professed by creative writers are not unlike the crafts art potter who worries that the object of their creation may be conceived of and experienced as a simple reservoir. Both of these fears reside in the reduction of the craftsperson or writer to an industrial mechanism, the artist devoid of art. The characterizations of creative writing as an "elephant machine" and an "experiential commodity" in the historical studies of Myers and McGurl are all the more condemning in the context of craft theory. Additionally, the incriminations from writers outside the university that accuse creative writing programs

as corporate-like enterprises cranking out "McStories" or "McPoems."¹⁹ I argue in this section that rather than assembling the materials of craft through formalist logic, an artist may conceive of craft as a dialectical knowledge that transforms them and an audience.

Craft in the Scholarship of Walter Benjamin

Much of aesthetic theory that focuses on definitions of craft comes from the perspective of Marxism because theory in this vein generally contrasts the humanity with the hostile abstractions of modernity and industry. Craft theory then is pitted against the antagonism of industry, modernity, and to some extent technology; however, craft is also, as Glenn Adamson argues in *The Craft Reader* (2010) challenges that are driven by the larger contexts of industry, modernity, and to some extent, technology. Aesthetic theorist Walter Benjamin sees craft as emerging from a close-knit relationship between the labor of the craftsmen and their experience exchanging memories and journeys with a fellow craftsperson. Written after World War II, Walter Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov" argues that "the art of storytelling is coming to an end" because humans in the wake of World War II have lost "the ability to exchange experiences" (1). In the cataclysms of the 20th century, Benjamin observes that "never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power" (1). The application of "warfare" against "experience" is part of the physical and social chaos experienced in the wake of World

¹⁹ The term "McStories" may derive in part from Douglas Coupland's novel *Generation X* (1991) that defines a correlating term "McJobs" as "a low-pay, low-prestige, low-dignity, low-benefit, no future job in the service sector"(5). This term applies specifically to what is judged as workshop stories that are low-risk, aesthetically similar realism stories.

War II, and Benjamin contrasts the inhumanity of warfare with the humanizing effect of storytelling.

For Benjamin, craft becomes reflective of the fading kairotic moment in which craftpersons exchange experiences in the intimacy of the workshop. The losses signified by the erosion of human interaction and the devaluation of human experience create the dualism of craft—work and art. Benjamin's sense of mourning is echoed in the more contemporary representation of creative writing in the university. The Associated Writing Programs Director, D.W. Fenza, provides a historical account of creative writing in his article "About AWP: The Growth of Creative Writing Programs." In chapter one, I discussed the manner in which Fenza represents creative writing in the classical education tradition, and in a similar fashion, he presents the field as bound to humanistic endeavors of creative expression and human experience. He writes:

Many students, especially today's students, feel that the world is not of their making, and not theirs to form or to reform; but writing classes often demonstrate the efficacy of the human will—that human *experience* can be shaped and directed for the good—aesthetically, socially, and politically (2).

Both Benjamin and Fenza believe creative expression to be mediums of experience that fight against the inhumanity of the world. In the case of students, Fenza does not represent a world as apocalyptic as Benjamin's; however, it is important to see how scholars portray a "feel[ing] that the world is not of their making, and not theirs to form or to reform"(Fenza 2). Fenza and Benjamin see the writing class and the craftsperson's

workshop as sites in which humanity is revived through artistic practice. This idyllic view of storytelling, for Benjamin, is linked to the intimacy originating with the itinerant craftsperson and the settled master craftsmen. These abstract figures continue the rituals of storytelling over centuries in the pre-industrial world. The work provides a gathering in which multiple crafts are perfected, and the community that shares with and supports the individual improves itself as a larger trade enterprise. Benjamin identifies the workshop in the much the same way that Fenza sees the writing classroom. Benjamin writes:

The resident master craftsmen and the traveling journeyman worked together in the same rooms; and every master had been a traveling journeyman before he settled down in his hometown or somewhere else. If peasants and seamen were past masters of storytelling, *the artisan class was its university*. In it was combined lore of faraway places, such as much-traveled man brings home, with the lore of the past, as it best reveals itself to natives of a place (*italics mine*, 2).

It is difficult not to read Benjamin's narrative through the lens of creative writing programs and the introduction of the "artisan class" to the university. The ever-itinerant creative writer speaks and travels to read and sometimes workshops with graduate students. The visiting writer complements the tenured writer who is part of the permanent faculty, and in the best scenario students build a new understanding of craft through more and more experiences with professional writers. Interdisciplinary approaches to craft represent the ideal, but it may also be true that graduate students are educated by

provincial writers who are more interested in reproducing an aesthetic and literary tradition in their own image. Viewed in another way, Benjamin's narrative is the tradition of an insular masculine world in which the craftsman is like Homer, traveling to share the journey of Odysseus with—*well, er*—other men.

Benjamin's essay introduces particular poignancy to the critiques of writing programs and workshops by creative writing studies scholars. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, Kelly Ritter and Stephanie Vanderslice's book *Can It Really Be Taught?: Resisting Lore in Creative Writing Pedagogy* (2007), critiques lore as a domain in which unproductive views of writing instruction are perpetuated. Ritter and Vanderslice acknowledge the potential of lore, but the personal narratives and critical scholarship of Wendy Bishop, Kate Haake, and Anna Leahy implicates the field in limiting an artisan-apprentice class of women, minorities, and other marginalized groups. Bishop describes her experience as a student in creative writing classes in her essay "On Learning to Like Teaching Creative Writing" and Haake interweaves critical theory and student stories to represent the dangers inherent in traditional workshop methodology. As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, Anna Leahy's edited collection *Power and Identity: The Authority Project* (2005) has continued the critical examination of the inefficiencies of creative writing culture through the framework of power structures in the field.

Returning to Benjamin, the scholar makes no mention of the influence of gender, race, or class upon the transmission of craft between craftspeople; however, the scholar does discuss other impediments to the storytelling tradition. Benjamin identifies the genre of novel as a "form of isolation," and he sees the loss of opportunities for oral interaction

as part of the technological force leading to the decline of storytelling and the communities that support its production. The novel form represents an isolating form of art, and though Benjamin's sentiments echo the perennial observation of the decline of the novel, he argues that the true antagonist to storytelling is "information." Perhaps because of the prodigious rise in journalism during the postwar era and during the writing of his essay, Benjamin sees media platforms, what he calls "benefits," as providing structures that favor *information* rather than *story*. In simplest terms, it may be that information requires expeditiousness and story requires the occasion for creation. Arguably, the dichotomy between information and story is what makes up the heart of institutional divisions between journalism and fine art programs in writing.²⁰ Benjamin sees the encroachment of platforms for information as antagonistic to story, but he also identifies way in which information and story provide different experiences for the reader. He writes:

In other words, by now almost nothing that happens benefits storytelling: almost everything benefits information. Actually, it is half the art of storytelling to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it [...] the most extraordinary things, marvelous things, are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological connection of the events is not

²⁰ Both D.G. Myers and Thomas Miller trace divisions between journalism and creative writing programs during their formation in the 20th century. The recognition of creative nonfiction as a distinct form and genre has complicated divisions between what we call information and story. It is possible to conceive of dramatic narratives as "journalistic" just as it is conceivable to see stories as "informational." In this same vein, and more recently, documentary filmmakers have further complicated these boundaries, and genres and whether called a "mock-umentary" or "docu-tainment," films like *Catfish* (2010) and *Marwencol* (2011) make questions of fact or fiction less interesting than questions of ethics and the separation between public and private lives in a digital age.

forces on the reader. It is left up to him to interpret things the way he understands them, and thus the narrative achieves an amplitude that information lacks (4).

The contrast between the "accuracy" of information and the "amplitude" of storytelling is conceived as a psychological difference that is supported by the context and mediums of distribution. The nostalgia for the craftsperson's workshop correlates to the nostalgia now felt for print books, literary journals, and small presses. Writers in the university feel the ground shifting in publishing, but it is unclear how these changes will affect conceptions of craft. What are the new amplitudes of storytelling and how will craft reinscribe itself in digital contexts?

Some magazines like the *Atlantic* have followed Benjamin's predictions and curtailed their literary offerings in favor of larger graphics and truncated articles, but still others like the *Missouri Review* or *AGNI* have expanded their offerings to include audio and video podcasts, visual and fine art content, special supplements, and e-book applications. Information increases in speed, but there are new literary and commercial publications that see the contraction of print mediums as a boon to storytelling. The recent launch of the print and online literary journal *Slake—A City and Its Stories*, founded by a collective of L.A. journalists, claims to be "devoted to the endangered art of deeply reported narrative journalism and the kind of polished essay, memoir, fiction, poetry, and profile writing that is disappearing in a world of instant takes and unfiltered opinion. *Slake* marks a return to storytelling" (*Slake Magazine*). Magazines like *Slake* are joining with hybrid delivery methods in e-book applications such as *The Atavist* that are

"created as a way of reviving long-form nonfiction, *The Atavist* is the 'Goldilocks' of e-reading: a just-right blend of digital and printed magazine"(1). For new writers, the permanence of seeing their work "in-print" might be surpassed by the permanence of hearing their audio podcast online. Benjamin in "The Storyteller" discusses the notion of permanence and the scholar focus on psychological power is coupled with the transformative power of story. He writes:

The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has surrendered to it completely and explains itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expand itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time [...] it resembles the seeds of grain which have lain for centuries in the chambers of the pyramids shut up airtight and have retained their germinative power to this day (4-5).

The "germinative power" of the story is contrasted to the capriciousness of information and Benjamin makes the craftsman most equipped to produce objects that transform the reader. The craft object is born of a warm captivity, the historical legacy of work, and the experience lived in the teller. The storyteller then "cling[s] to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (5). The "handprints" and tactility of the printed book have reached the moment in which their value may be reestablished through

evolving reading technologies and new configurations for reading and art that prize craft.²¹

Benjamin's "The Storyteller" laments the loss of the story and presents the theorist's most explicit views on the relationship between craft and the storyteller; however, Esther Leslie's article "Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft" identifies other works in the theorist's canon that expands his view on craft and its relation to the human body, industry, and technology. Much like his critique of information, Benjamin sees technology as "storm[ing] the human body and subjecting the human sensorium to a complex training, and provoking a 'crisis of perception'". Soul, eye, and hand are disjointed"(Leslie 388-389). Leslie observes ways in which Benjamin argues that the body endures a form of violence through subjugation to capitalism and forces in industry. The worker in the Marxist tradition subsists despite being diminished in a perpetual marginalization by the "machine."

In this context of subjugation to capitalism, Benjamin views "The Hand" as a metonymy for the experience of genuine storytelling, an encounter that brings human bodies into interaction. This idealistic view of "The Hand" connects humans to craft and storytelling and it represents the high exemplar of art for Benjamin. In two of his other essays, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility" (1935) and "The Author and Producer," (1934) Benjamin elaborates on the "unraveling web" of work by

²¹ Dr. Chuck Rosenthal, a fiction writer at Loyola Marymount University, hoped that the literary journal and independent literary presses might emulate the success of American microbrewers of craft beer. In the most optimistic terms, Rosenthal hoped that craft beer might serve as an exemplar for the revival of literary fiction in America. Local breweries have diminished, and in some cases, supplanted the dominance of larger, commercial breweries. Contemporary literature is not beer, but the notion that Americans will buy and appreciate non-commercial literature because it is a powerful reading experience that often reflects authenticity.

also arguing that the "web that cradled storytelling is unraveling at all its ends" (Leslie 389). Benjamin argues that lithographic reproduction and other manufacturing technologies are unraveling and dissolving the relationship between the craftsman and their art, and subsequently, the relationship between the artist and their audience. Despite the gravity of Benjamin's predictions for the decline of craft, Leslie reminds scholars that new opportunities are beginning (not ending) between the physical and spatial worlds of craft. She writes that "the mass appropriation of art signals literally a manhandling of cultural products" and leads to 'tactility' or 'handiness' that disrupts notions of artistic aloofness (390). In much the same way the creative writing workshop disrupts a student-writer's sense of apartness from a community of readers, the acceleration of online publications, reading technologies, and social networking forums presents the artist with new contexts for craft. The online interactions between craftspeople have born DIY and design-arts movements, and Leslie points to the manner in which space is recovered and "remodeled." She writes:

This physico-spatial 'bringing closer' of new cultural forms allowed by mass reproduction provides a 'remodeling' of pre-industrial folkloric relations of space. Crucial to the earlier epic tradition is a reliance on the propinquity of a collective of listeners. Industrial capitalist relations corrode the oral communicability of experience, but technical reproduction reimburses that change, instituting new potential for a familiarity between receivers and producers, once more in the form of

collective experience: through mediated mass-produced things. Space is recovered technically (391).

The "remodeling" of creative writing will be predicated on a reconfiguration and redefinition of craft. The writing workshop resists the corrosion of the traditional space of storytelling and craft by reinforcing "the oral communicability of experience" and the value of community. The future of creative writing education will be determined, though, by the discipline's ability to reconfigure space in response to technologies responsible for producing and distributing literature. Craft theory shifts the educational framework of creative writing and reinforces the ideological position of the field as bound to aesthetics. Craft criticism, in a similar vein, establishes art practice as a site for "knowledge making" and integrates creative writing into fields of inquiry that are broad-reaching and not bound to the schism between academic and creative.

Throughout this chapter, I have concentrated on how craft theory shifts the epistemic and ideological foundation of creative writing. The theoretical shift toward craft presents a new way of thinking about creative writing in the university; however, craft criticism, as studied by Mayers, Risatti, Adamson, Corse, Alfondy, and others, also pushes the field toward a "practitioner-knowledge" that reflects the ways writers and artists approach their work. From these theoretical and critical perspectives, creative writing may be assessed from a more complex vantage point than as a subfield of literary studies. Both Thomas Miller and Tim Mayers' discussions of craft present an integrative model for reassessing creative writing's relation to other fields in English studies and the

arts. Craft moves beyond the model of "how-to" handbooks and material and formal limitations to represent a dialectical process that educates creative writers.

If viewed as a dialectical process, the craft education of creative writing students is a more complex enterprise than workshop and literature requirements currently reflect. In chapter four, I will discuss the most important context for the entrenchment of craft in creative writing—the workshop. By advocating for a workshop approach that utilizes Clifford Geertz's concept of "double play" in the Balinese cockfight, I will present a more dynamic model for writing workshop. In this new model for workshop, I will explore the author function using Foucault and Barthes and Joshua Gunn's rhetorical analysis of the democratic and the occultic. Workshop's place in creative writing is foundational, but it is also the site in which craft philosophies become indeterminate, mystical, and reflective of community in/stability. In chapter five, I will define the concept of craft consciousness as it relates to Paulo Freire's critical consciousness and discuss authority in the pedagogical setting of writing workshop. As part of this chapter five, I will also determine how creative writing might better navigate the contradictions of the field as they serve to offer professional training and community outreach in a rapidly changing virtual world.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYZING CREATIVE WORKSHOP AS A DEEP (AND DOUBLE) PLAY IN THE DEMOCRATIC AND THE OCCULTIC

The creative writing workshop can be said to form a membrane around its students, and the nucleus is the professional writer navigating the aesthetic expressions and mitosis of the student cohort.²² The metaphor could be expanded from the site of the nucleus to the cytoplasm of readings or writers' conference, or programmatic concerns that dictate, in part, the DNA of creative writers and their lives after graduate studies. This chapter does not elaborate on this metaphor, and instead concentrates its energy on the analysis of the contradictions and conflicts that form the nucleus of creative writing workshop. In the effort to extract these paradoxes and tensions that form the basis for understanding workshop, this chapter examines progenitors of the creative writing workshop in oratorical education, medieval guilds, literary societies, and writing groups. From this historical examination of pedagogical sites that inform the future of creative writing workshop, the chapter analyzes the conflict between the democratic and occultic beliefs that form one of the central conflicts of writing workshop practice and protocol.²³

²² The cell nucleus is enclosed in a double membrane called a "nuclear envelope," and in drawing the analogy between the workshop and the nucleus, I hope to demonstrate how beliefs in craft and aesthetics in creative writing control the procedure and ritual of the writing workshop. In a broader context, and as this dissertation expands in the future, I will argue that qualitative research into the experience of graduate students is the most important way to understand the DNA of creative writing culture ("Nucleus" *National Science Foundation*).

²³ "[W]hat people term the 'occult' is best described as the occultic, a form that articulates an inchoate system of beliefs, images, attitudes, and texts together that, nevertheless, reconfigures from individual to group; its meaning is wholly dependent on expert and popular perceptions held in dialectical tension without resolution. Conceptually, we can understand the one end of as a temporal continuum and 'the occultic' as the other" (Gunn xxiv).

The chapter does not intend to condemn or lambaste the traditional Iowa workshop model. Writers will continue to critique the traditional model as discriminatory (and sometimes inimical) to educating apprentice writers while other writers will celebrate workshop as a nearest-to-democratic enterprise that lets "the work" be judged above (and in separation) from the writer. Rather than offering amendments to the Iowa workshop model, which has been the calling of many in creative writing studies, the final chapter provides an alternative heuristic for conducting writing workshop using Paulo Freire's concept of the "nuclei of contradiction." The objective in proposing a new model of workshop should be to diversify from the traditional workshop model. The diversification of workshop parallels my call for a craft consciousness that I defined in the previous chapter as an awareness of the modes of production and invention that inform artists in performing, craft, and fine arts disciplines. Craft consciousness has implications for the programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical approaches to creative writing, and the final chapter touches on the work of Paulo Freire and William Covino to propose a new vision for craft termed craft consciousness. In order to facilitate these new approaches to workshop and craft, the dissertation argues for interdisciplinary and "intertextual" approaches to the pedagogy of creative writing by examining workshop's shared histories and presenting craft consciousness, and what I am calling the "critical workshop," as a means to diversify and expand the field.

This chapter argues that pedagogical approaches to workshop must be analyzed rhetorically and reimagined to employ a critical approach that understands the mystical-aesthetic principles that define craft. In the previous chapter, I outlined the legacy of craft

as born of aesthetic theory and those philosophies of artistic practice that signify the work of creative artists. Craft is what is taught in workshop, and it is worth noting that the maxims of technique such as identified by Wayne Booth in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983) or in the popular handbooks of Janet Burroway *Writing Fiction: A Guide to Narrative Craft* (8th edition, 2010) are embodied and practiced in the creative writing workshop. Professional writers who teach creative writing in graduate and undergraduate programs may directly facilitate the review of workshop material or they may choose to allow the democratic process, in the form of consensus, to express itself through the verbal and written comments that constitute workshop discussion. Traditional workshop procedure calls for a writer to submit a piece and for peers to evaluate this piece through class discussion. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss Clifford Geertz's cultural analysis of the Balinese cockfight and Joshua Gunn's history of the occult to contextualize the inherent contradictions and meaning of creative writing workshops. Before making recommendations for amending the role of the published author in writing workshop, the chapter traces the historical lineage of workshop and concentrates on how the productive conflicts between individual and community belief inform the creative writing workshop.

The (Re)Formations of Workshop Through the Centuries

In *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880* (1996), D.G. Myers limits his study of creative writing workshops to educational sites that formed in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, Myers does mention in his chapter "An Index of Adagios" the potential cross-pollination between artists in workshop that may have taken

place at Black Mountain College and in artists' colonies of the early twentieth century. Similarly, Mark McGurl, in his book *The Program Era: Postwar Fiction and the Rise of Creative Writing* (2009), discusses interdisciplinary sites for workshop such as John Hawkes "Voice Project: An Experiment in Teaching Writing to College Freshmen" conducted at Stanford University in 1966 between artists, actors, and student writers. The history of creative writing workshop is often anchored to the Writers' Workshop as it was coined at the University of Iowa in 1936, but as mentioned the previous chapter, the Theatre Arts program at Iowa predates the Writers' Workshop by almost a decade.

The etymology of "workshop" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* also destabilizes the Writers' Workshop claim to the term and further demonstrates the performing arts claim to workshop. The first entry for the noun "workshop" appears in a 1937 *New York Times*' article discussing summer workshop for training teachers. The entry for the verb "workshop" comes from a Brisbane newspaper, observing that "most of the new Australian plays that are hitting the market come as the result of the plays being workshopped" ("Workshop" *Oxford English Dictionary*). The history and method of creative writing workshop must acknowledge the definition of workshop as a pedagogical forum and as a site for rehearsal performances. The verb workshop highlights the exploratory nature of workshop and outlines the goals of the forum: "to present a workshop performance of (a dramatic work), esp. in order to *explore* aspects of the production before it is staged formally (*Oxford English Dictionary*, emphasis mine). Differentiating between these parts of speech provides an avenue to envision workshop as an educational forum that is communal, performative, and process-based. Rather than

imagining the solitary writer arriving to listen to their readers, the workshop should be a site in which the communal activity of discussing a text allows the participants to identify and examine the conflicts that form the biases and beliefs of their discourse community.

From as far back as Ancient Greece, pedagogical forums included imaginative exercises to prepare students for public oratory. Rhetoric scholars D.A. Russell's *Greek Declamation* (1984) and George Kennedy's *Classical Rhetoric and Its Secular & Christian Tradition* (1999) provide an overview of what is called *melete* in Greece and later becomes *declamatio*, or declamation, during the Roman Period. Declamation, as referred to here, denotes to the practicum in which young male students performed public demonstrations on invented topics and hypothetical cases. There is some disagreement about the historical evolution of *melete* and *declamatio* as it pertained to the education of young rhetor, and whether these were merely voice exercises or the height of educational practice; however, Russell and Kennedy agree upon the creative elements explored in *declamatio* and *melete*. Russell writes, "The double role of *melete* as practical exercise and as imaginative literature means that its history is one of conflict between two opposing tendencies. It was a crown in the curriculum and though we cannot underestimate its practical side, these mock battles have certain evidence for being literary and social aspects of an art" (Russell 12). The "double role" of *melete* as educational and creative is pivotal to understanding the constructive contradiction between "practical" and "imaginative" that informs the artistic elements of workshops.

George Kennedy goes on further to identify declamation closely with the sophistic tradition, and the scholar emphasizes the manner to which declamation played a

central role in the sophistic educational model of *logon paideia*. For Kennedy, the history of declamation devolves from one based on the merits of argumentation to one based on the merits of style, from Greek rhetoric to the ornamentation of Roman rhetoric. Kennedy writes, "Imagined and created declamation were judged more on their cleverness or novelty of what they said or the ornamentation of their style than for the cogency of their argument. Public demonstrations drew crowds and became part of entertainment in Greece and Rome"(Kennedy 46). As an educational method, declamation required student orators to perform in the context of the public, and it is stark contrast to the more private and intimate setting of most creative writing workshops. The education or *becoming* an orator or a writer remains, after millennia, a practice committed to the play between professionalization and artistic training. Kennedy and Russell's discussion of the "doubleness" of declamation as a contrast between practical and imaginative connects to contemporary writing workshops. Do we see imagination as unpractical, or, practicality as unimaginative in a contemporary context? In "Role-Playing in Comp—Fake It 'Til You Make It," scholar Brian Jackson links declamation to contemporary writing practices. He writes simply "rhetoric has been long associated with pretending" (99).

The role-playing associated with declamation need not be pinpointed as the beginning of the creative writing workshops in the university; however, it does point to the way creative role-playing and "faking-it" performances provide training in a broader context for a vocation. Jackson draws comparisons between the rhetorical situations used in writing to those that connect our work as writing teachers to those educational forums in professional contexts. He writes:

We jump into a fictional situation, often inventing and performing the words and acts of someone else, and we appeal to an audience made up either of other fakers pretending to be persuaded or being imaginary, absent, or dead. Just as the Romans used declamation for training purposes, some professions like business, medicine, law, psychiatry, and national defense train their future workforce with elaborate fake-it-till-you-make-it-exercises (Jackson 100).

A forerunner to workshop, declamation may seem more plausible when we consider the workshops or "patient simulations" used in educating medical doctors. In the case of "standardized patients," what is now in entrance interviews at all 125 medical school programs in the country, students are required to interact with patients who fake their sickness. In *The New York Times* article "Medical Students Get a Taste of Real-Life Doctoring," standardized patients are used in places like New York City medical schools where Dr. Mark H. Swartz, director of the Morchand Center, rationalizes the use of actor patients by using a clinical rationale: "because we have an intense gut feeling we're helping develop better doctors" (Garfinkel 1). The objective in these educational workshops is to see if simulated doctors can assess simulated patients, and no doubt Jean Baudrillard would recognize such a world in which simulated doctors *simulate* the diagnosis of simulated patients. These faking-it scenarios provide a quality of "doubleness" that allows training physicians to evaluate the ethos of student doctors while also providing students an interactive simulation to demonstrate their knowledge through making a diagnosis.

The graduate student in the creative writing workshop cultivates the identity of the simulated author with a simulated poem, story, or essay. The workshop then sets up the dynamics of the elder sophist or medical doctor who takes the student through a performative scenario; this exercise parallels the craftsperson and apprentice relationship highlighted in the previous chapter and demonstrates the "knowledge through making" of craft. Simulations like declamation or those simulations for medical students test students' ability to perform a diagnosis rather than theorize one. In the handbooks of medicine, like those in creative writing, nothing is created or learned—only as Freire would say—"banked." The educational moment is actualized in the experience of performing a diagnosis in the same fashion authorship is realized through the performance of workshop as a peer evaluator. The connotations to the "vocational" and "theoretical" often form a stone-bordered path that directs creative writers toward performances that are demonstrative of their specialized genre. Neither vocational nor theoretical, the simulated author must perform a practical function as reader. The "reader" that writing students become influences the craft perspective of their genre and may lead, as some scholars argue, to specialization and in-grouping that narrows the goals of art.

There is little argument that creative writing programs have boomed in the twentieth century; however, scholars and writers differ on how writing practices have been affected by this expansion. In his 2010 essay for *Boulevard* "The MFA/Creative Writing System Is a Closed, Undemocratic Medieval Guild That Represses Good Writing," Anis Shivani draws an analogy between creative writing and medieval guilds. He expands his analogy in the same manner McGurl discusses creative writing programs

as a system. Shivani views the system of graduate programs as a cloister and the writing workshop as a modern day Inquisition. For all the author's sensationalism and hyperbole, Shivani argues that creative writing is constituted by a kind of repressive government or craftsperson guild that barter a product that is universally coveted, blandly liberal, and continually reinforced by confining master-apprentice relationships. The scholar describes the written products of workshop as though they were highly controlled artifacts akin to political propaganda. He writes:

Good conduct for medieval guild masters was extremely important for the maintenance of reputation vis-à-vis the outside world, and without this credibility the guilds would have fallen apart in no time. Freelance craftsmen would have found it easy to identify individual buyers, and the whole system would have collapsed. With the guild product, you had the guarantee of a certain quality. In terms of the character of the master/journeyman/apprentice, what you get—as a cost of removing writing from the hurly-burly world of rude market principles—is a certain time, politically correct liberalism (universally in effect throughout the American creative writing guild now), which makes appropriate, but extremely subdued, noises about political depredation (Shivani 27).

Interpreted in a more forgiving light, Shivani warns that aesthetic conservatism and tactical professionalism may isolate the professional and graduate writer from a "hurly burly world." Shivani identifies "standards" as a protective "maintenance" that buffers the guild from the pressures of the free-market. In contrast to declamation, or other

professional or educational forums, the characterization of the workshop as a guild foregrounds the repressive ideological and aesthetic forces that characterize the workshop as a site where specialization isolates the writer from the world. Despite assuming a satirical and malicious tone, Shivani brings to the fore questions of the governance of workshop and how it influences the position of creative writing in a more public context. The irony, and logical fallacy, is that writers outside of creative writing programs (Shivani included) inherently enjoy a freedom from governance that is impossible for those writers confined to programs and departments inside the university.

Shivani views craft as the product that allows for the perpetuation and growth of creative writing programs under the guise of the "quintessence of democra[ti]c" institution—forcing "the master, journeyman, and apprentice alike [to] express in public their modesty, their lack of divine inspiration (otherwise the system couldn't sell itself as being able to teach craft), and the predominance of sheer luck and fortuitousness in any success they've had" (28). Shivani's argument contrasts Benjamin's idyllic view of the workshop as the site for exchange of stories and techniques for their telling. These opposing perspectives on the workshop and the artist presents craft as the *substance* of the creation or the *myth* that makes possible an educational element—when as Shivani would argue—there is none. Reading craft as the substance or myth of workshop, obviously changes the perspective in which the writer conceptualizes craft. What is important to note in Shivani's reading, though, is that workshops shelter the writer from the world. In contrast, classical declamation exercises and professional-training workshop provide a site for public engagement and/or forums for the craftsperson and journeyman

to trade techniques of craft. Shivani's charge against creative writing programs paints the field as a cloistered society of liberal aesthetes that suppress their student writers through indoctrination and exclusion. Does craft education through the writing workshop separate and exclude students through isolating them from the world or does it provide a space for the free exchange of the principles of craft? Can the method for workshop instruction open or close the artist's world?

Oratorical workshops or guilds of craftspeople perform differently in different epochs, but each workshop functions to gather participants to a common practice of creation while also acculturating them into craft perspectives that shift their notion of knowledge-making. The degree to which students must shift their own perspective on writing is dependent upon their subject position—as social insider or social outsider. Shivani's characterization of the master and apprentice demonstrates a power relationship that dictates taste, but the workshop, or the salon as it was practiced in 17th and 18th century France (and Italy), provides another key in understanding contemporary writing workshops. Salons provided forums for intellectual conversation and were, depending upon the historical reading, sites for free exchange of ideas between classes or more exclusionary sites in which "taste" were refined to buffer the aristocracy from the masses. The scholarship on salons mirrors what we see in the scholarship on writing workshops written by compositionists and creative writing studies scholars. The question is whether salons are inclusive and whether they cultivate intellectual and artistic collaboration. What is not in question is that women lead salon gatherings during the period and used them as sites for expanding educational opportunities for women. Salons became akin to

what we hear echoed in the composition scholarship on open enrollment during the 1960s, though it is most likely that salons served a dual (and paradoxical) purpose of expanding education while dictating taste.

The historical studies of salon are dominated by women and names like Jeanne Quinault, Marie Thérèse Rodet Geoffrin, and Françoise de Graffigny and provided a method for education, whether in serious intellectualizing or more socialization, for women who were excluded from the parlance of the public life of the age. Salons have continued to emerge as ancillary sites for women graduate writers in creative writing to supplement their formal training in workshop with often more informal gatherings to support women writers. These sites are sometimes hidden, sometimes more public spaces that program directors might encourage to sustain those writers that Kate Haake identifies as occupying the margins of writing programs. At University of Arizona, Southern Methodist University, or as part of New York University's author series, the name *salon* signifies an extra-institutional forum that moves beyond the writing workshop and creates an alternative space where craft can be discussed. Beyond the appropriation of the name "salon," the history of salons and more contemporary supplementary groups and work-in-progress reading series, might be part of the legacy of educational outsiders that parallels the American historical traditions of 19th and 20th century writing groups and underground literary societies. Anne Gere's *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications* (1987) traces the historical evolution of writing groups in America while also providing analysis of the social and ideological underpinnings that drive the discourse of contemporary groups. Gere's analysis of writing groups is significant in

composition scholarship because it frames the act of writing as a social-collaborative activity rather than a solitary practice.

Examining literary societies and writers' circles from the colonial period, Gere moves through the educational reform movements that have preceded contemporary writing advocates like Peter Elbow, Ken Macor, and Donald Murray. Gere's history of writing groups and literary societies provides a way to imagine educational workshops as extensions of the craftsman's workshop in the colonial and pre-industrial period of America. Benjamin Franklin's Junto group, like other colonial groups, was made up of acquaintances that gathered to discuss and write for each other. Franklin's original five cohorts were by profession: a glazier-mathematician-inventor, two men who were surveyors, a cobbler-astrologer, a cabinetmaker, a merchant's clerk, and a gentlemen. Though it did not share the rigor of creative writing workshops, Junto did bring together men in salon-fashion to discuss and write. Franklin wrote the rules for workshop submissions: "The rules that I drew up required that every member, in his turn, should produce one or more queries on any point of Morals, Politics, or Natural Philosophy, to be discuss'd by the company; and once in three months produce and read an essay of his own writing, on any subject he pleased" (Franklin 50). Junto was part of a larger culture movement in America that saw literary societies and associations form at Yale University, Harvard University, and John Hopkins University. As with declamation and salons, literary societies provided space for students and faculty to explore and produce work that was not confined to the specific genre fields dictated by graduate creative

writing programs. Gere writes about the manner in which literary production intersected with critical inquiry. She writes:

As much as current events, faculty participation, and libraries contributed to Intellectual stimulation, they took second place to literary exercises in most societies. These orations, compositions, forensic debates, disputations, humorous dialogues, essays, or music/drama productions constituted societies central activities (Gere 12).

D.G. Myers and Stephen Wilbers' history of creative writing workshops traces a similar line from Gere's primary study of literary societies and writers' groups at University of Iowa, and she writes that methods of responding are directly linked to non-academic writing groups and literary societies. She writes "the method of peer response was later to be called the workshop was adopted by the University when it was offered as a course" (Gere 15). It is pivotal to creative writing studies scholars to research the process by which procedures, beliefs, and practices among groups outside the university were institutionalized with the formation of creative writing courses and academic programs in contexts outside of Iowa City.

Writing workshops in the university continue, as Gere argues, to balance individual agency with the social elements of group work. More than tracing historical lineage of literary societies as they transformed into writing workshops, Gere's also identifies the workshop as a democratic institution that is similar to public libraries, with its own ideological and epistemological underpinnings. Gere argues that the Romantic Cartesian model (read through Jean Piaget's discussion of writerly egocentrism) of craft

isolates the individual writer from the group language dialectic she ascribes to Vygotsky and other social-cultural educational theorists. In Chapter Three "Theories of Collaborative Learning," Gere discusses the alienation of the author and argues that collaborative principles in craft came to the fore in the Romantic period. Gere focuses on the evolution of craft and differentiates it from the principles for artistic creation from previous centuries. She writes:

Up through the 18th century, writers were regarded either as artisans who manipulated traditional materials or occasionally, as inspired beings who carried out the dictates of a muse. In the artisan role, writers were seen as knowing and employing the rules of rhetoric and poetics, and if their accomplishments extended beyond the artisan concept, they could be explained, as Milton did his own work, in terms of inspiration. In neither case was the writer considered personally responsible for written creations (58).

Between inspiration and craft, a view shared by critics from Plato and Milton to the present, the artist does not keep possession of their craft. The concept of ownership like the concept of authorship did not reflect autonomy until the Romantic period in which authors established themselves as sources rather than conduits to the divine.

Writing workshops, as viewed by Gere, are sites in which author-centered criticism and theory give way to analysis that grounds the work in seeing a text as part of the cultural and social milieu. Writing workshop then fits in the work of cultural studies and social theorist such as Terry Eagleton and Lev Vygotsky. Gere observes the way

Vygotsky and others view writing groups and the ways these groups provide the individual writer with a method for internalizing the development of their craft. She writes that Vygotsky established proximal development as the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers internalization depends on social and group interaction (Gere 82). The "interactions" between peers and the workshop leader are determined in language or meta-languages, Gere argues, and she observes "as a result of this negotiation (between writer and readers) in writing groups, participants develop meta-language about writing" (94). The history of workshop language is the history of a contextual-determined craft language and Gere's *Writing Groups* views collaboration as critical to the development of the writer—a development that changes the writer and the language of analysis. She writes:

The linguistic transactions of writing groups foster development because they are primarily language about language. But the value of these transactions—and even the process by which they occur—becomes apparent only from the perspective of non-Cartesian thinking. Descartes says that language is conduit between mind and matter, but when language is conceived as a social construction central to knowing—as Vygotsky claims—then writing groups becomes essential (96).

In the meta-language of creative writing workshops, programs establish nuanced methods for talking about creative genres, and in the process have broadened the purview of craft

from the individual craftsperson to the collective workshop. It is possible then to imagine the craft models of Stephen King's *On Writing* or David Mamet's *Three Uses of the Knife: On the Nature and Purpose of Art* alongside those of institutions such as the Iowa Writers' Workshop or non-institutional artist collectives. The language of workshop changes across disciplines, and it is a wholly limiting view to see The Writers' Workshop as *the* source for either workshop or craft.

Creative writing workshop instruction is a form of governance that defines the role of the individual writer in relation to their community of creative writers. Workshop, for its Capitol centrality, functions to reify and perform the territory of craft—a careful balance of individual and collective enterprise. In the embodiments of craft performed in writing workshops, the tension between the individual and community has given rise to ritual protocol that attempts to encourage group formation and diminish tension through democratic processes. Total democracy (in the form of consensus) provides one extreme of workshop instruction while a dictatorship (power controlled by the workshop leader) represents the other extreme. The rigidity that surrounds traditional workshop protocol provides a hedge against the ultimate danger: the dissolve of the community of writers and the historical legacy they embody. By criticizing the inefficiencies of writing workshops (or any other artistic workshop), scholars are in danger of misunderstanding or under-appreciating how critical it is to preserve workshop community stability through ritual-democratic practice. Ritual embodies sacredness that craftpersons have practiced for centuries, and in addition to controlling the quality of the artifact produced, it must

have the compounding effect of providing an experiential knowledge and community cohesiveness—the meaning of workshop then is in ritual not in product.

The writer's (and artist's) process of creation is often entrenched in mysticism, lore, and fiction, and rather than reforming the idiosyncrasies, it may be more valuable to analyze the tensions between the governances, beliefs, and cultural practices that embody the field. In the historical studies of workshop that lead from declamation through salon and the literary groups onto writing workshops themselves, we come to understand how craft treatises by individual artists are less important to the whole than workshop. As the delivery mechanism for craft, workshop provides the systemic platform for discussions of aesthetics, authorship, and design. What would the designs of Charles Eames and Frank Lloyd Wright be without their workshops and schools for delivering on their principles of craft? Craft instruction in the context of workshop is governed by its conflicts and tensions. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss how the conflicts between democratic and occultic principles form one possible nexus for examining the cultural significance of workshop and its pedagogical and political bent. In an effort to understand the contradictions that form the foundation of workshop, I use Clifford Geertz's essay "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight" to examine "doubleness" and the "depth" of writing workshop discussion. From this analysis of writing workshop discussion, the chapter utilizes Joshua Gunn's *Modern Occult Rhetoric: Mass Media and the Drama of Secrecy in the Twentieth Century* (2005) as a complement to the histories of workshop written by Myers, Gere, and Wilbers. The last section of the chapter argues that conflict and contradiction are a source for teaching rather than an obstacle. The final chapter

expands the discussion of workshop protocol through the lens of the "nuclei of contradiction" and explores the concept of "craft consciousness" as it applies to the field.

Deep (and Double) Play: Notes on the Democratic-Occultic Practice of Workshop

Judgments of the effectiveness of writing workshops are easy to come by, and in the analogies to medieval guild, salons, or literary societies, there is always tension between the individual and the community in workshop. These tensions are reproduced in the contradictions between the public democratic process of workshop and the vision of the workshop as a more protected domain for mystical-occultic performance. I will discuss more specifically what is meant by the term "occultic" and its coinage by Joshua Gunn in *Modern Occultic Rhetoric* in later sections of this chapter, and I would, for the moment, like to turn to the workshop as a forum for reading creative writing culture. In this section, Clifford Geertz's landmark essay "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight" is used as a lens for understanding the "play" that takes place in writing workshop and how play performs the significance and meaning of a creative writing education. The boundaries of creative writing culture are demarcated through the play of contradictions that surface in discussion of submission pieces. Utilizing the close analysis of Geertz's essay on the Balinese cockfight, the chapter analyzes creative writing workshop as both a cultural artifact and communal practice that creates significant meaning for participants.

In Geertz's essay "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight" the anthropologist and his wife travel to Bali to document the culture and traditions of an Indonesia village. The method of Geertz's work is often associated with "thick description," a method that

establishes the anthropologist's ethos through a detailed rendering of the particulars of his subjects' behaviors. The significance of the essay defines the Balinese cockfight as having a "crosswise doubleness" that can be read as "rage untrammelled" and as a "sociological entity" (Geertz 5). Obviously, the writing workshop does not generally share the explicit and inhumane violence of a cockfight; however, it should be analyzed as a sociological entity that I argue produces an ideological framework that is simultaneously democratic and occultic. In Geertz's essay, the cockfight is at once forum and subject, culture and meaning, and the scholar presents the cockfight as a metonymy for the struggles for hierarchy (among males) in Balinese culture. The writing workshop, by comparison, does not position "animality" at the center of the event, but instead positions "authorship" at the center of workshop. Authorship is an objective and one could say the scaffolding that creative writing programs purport to build for its students.

The identity of author is more *and* less attainable in the present context for literary publishing. Aside from the proliferation of online markets for prose, and the increasing competition for space in print journals, authorship remains the contingent factor that separates peers and the teacher (often the uber-author) in a writing workshop. Geertz's analysis of the cockfight demonstrates the struggle for hierarchy that characterizes the creative writing workshop, and rather than determining whether a workshop submission is publishable, an editor's entitlement, the dialogue that takes place in workshop is a significant determinate of authorship. By determining a pecking order principled in craft, the workshop participants are vying for something perhaps more sacred than a publication, and in their dialogues, coalitions, and romances, they are determining an

artistic identity that is grounded in a *contingent* authorship. It is no wonder then that workshopping is associated with the exasperation and urgency Geertz associates with madness. He writes (with my replacements in brackets):

The madness has some less visible dimensions, however, because although it is true that [workshop submissions] are symbolic expressions or magnifications of their owner's self, the narcissistic male ego writ out in [authorship] terms, they are also expressions and more immediate ones-of what the [workshop peers] regard as the direct inversion of, aesthetically, morally, and metaphysically, of human status: [authorship] (Geertz 3, *bracket additions mine*).

By making slight manipulations to the passage, we can determine the degree to which workshop pieces act as stand-ins for author-status, a status that may be alluded to in writing workshop, but is actualized in a more public context. The right to authorship is heavily fortified with the insider politics of publishing, agents, fellowships, and conferences, what Shivani associates with "luck" and "in-crowds." These associations to authorship shade the discussions of workshop with an encrypted language and experience the workshop leader may or may not translate for students.

The Association of Writers' and Writing Programs presents a much more democratic and inclusive view when characterizing the more than 300 creative writing programs they represent. As with Anne Gere's characterization of writing groups, the creative writing guild (in the form of the AWP) often articulates its mission as giving voice to students and serving to democratize the education process. These democratic

sentiments are echoed in AWP President D.W. Fenza's essay "Who Keeps Killing Poetry?" in which the author argues with the president of the Poetry Foundation John Barr about the access (and decline) of poetry. Fenza writes that "Creative writing programs furthered this diversity by providing democratic access to an apprenticeship in the arts, as public and private universities, colleges, and community colleges helped to educate young poets from all economic classes and ethnic backgrounds" (Fenza). The question of access to graduate programs in creative writing is determined by admission procedures, often heavily or exclusively reliant on the applicant's writing sample.

Whether admission procedures are democratic processes is indeterminate at this point; however, the writing workshop in Fenza's characterization, and less often in Gere's historical study, determines the relationship between creative writing and democratic ideals. Do creative writing programs serve a public interest or do they have the effect of democratizing principles in art production for marginalized groups? Fenza argues in "What Keeps Killing Poetry?" that "one can only misrepresent the role of academe by misrepresenting it as a single remote place, when academe is really thousands of outposts, serving the rich, the middle-class, and the poor. Writing programs have helped to democratize the art of poetry; the audiences for poetry are larger for it, too (Fenza). Fenza argues against the misrepresentations of creative writing programs and workshops as aloof, aesthetically droll, and distinctly undemocratic. Throughout the essay, Fenza portrays creative writing as a humanist endeavor that highlights inclusiveness, cultural plurality, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, a continuation of the classical tradition that expands (rather than narrows) poetry's audience.

In the writing workshop, like the voting booth or public debate forum, AWP's ideals of democratic process are seen as fulfilled and even celebrated. Do teachers in creative writing programs see their work as demonstrating the toughness and rigor they embody and practice themselves? Are these convictions reflective of the depth of the play? A workshop of pleasantries or praise is worthless while a workshop that is ruthlessly critical is seen as the most powerful in educating the writer in their craft. The *de rigueur* of writing workshop is often reflected in the pride workshop students may take in deepening the significance event of workshop, a "deep play" that holds interesting parallels to Geertz's analysis of the Balinese cockfight. In "deep play," the bettors in a cockfight set up a double-layered structure of betting that pivots on the center bet that involves "coalitions of bettors clustering around the owner" and a second bet, an outside bet, that is "man-to-man"(6). The character of the opponents departs the central event, the cockfight, and moves toward the periphery where what is at stakes is more than money, but a sense of prestige and hierarchy in the ascension to authorship.

On the surface it may seem that writing workshops treat each submission the same; nonetheless, there is a palpable difference between those workshop proceedings that tend to be surface exercises and those that stake themselves in deeper encounters with the hierarchy of the writing group, the status of authorship, or the principles of aesthetics. Geertz identifies a similar phenomenon in the cockfight, and in the difference between superficial and more profound affairs, the scholar sees parallels with artistic interpretation. He writes:

Nearly half the matches are relatively trivial, relatively uninteresting—in my borrowed terminology, 'shallow' affairs. But that fact no more argues against my interpretation than the fact that most painters, poets, and playwrights are mediocre argues against the view that artistic effort is directed toward profundity and, with a certain frequency, approximates it. The image of artistic technique is indeed exact: the center bet is a means, a device, for creating 'interesting,' 'deep' matches, not the reason, or at least not the main reason, why they are interesting, the source of their fascination, the substance of their depth. The question why such matches are interesting—indeed, for the Balinese, exquisitely absorbing—takes us out of the realm of formal concerns into more broadly sociological and social-psychological ones, and to a less purely economic idea of what 'depth' in gaming amounts to (Geertz 7).

The submission piece and the accompanying protocol of workshop are the center bet and provide the backdrop for the depth that is reached through the performances of craft and authorship demonstrated by the workshop participants. Despite the fact that many writing workshop may be more shallow affairs that provide banal observations about the submission to the writer, Geertz argues that shallowness does not necessarily indicate insincerity or deficiency in method, but might reflect the opposite—a deep play that establishes village hierarchies and political affiliations. For workshop critique, it is not necessarily a matter of craft and its relation to the sample story, but a secondary depth that reflects craft as an enactment of authorship and the artistic process. Authorship then

is demonstrated through a tolerance to workshop, but the profundity of workshop is crafted in the enactments of conversation and engagement with aesthetics. Workshop is the center-bet from which student writers learn authorship and fit their conception of craft, a developing craft consciousness, into the verbal exchanges they have with peers and the workshop leader. Peripheral betting, as anyone who has been through workshop will tell you, is what makes the contest and provides its profundity. The rivalries and coalitions like the relationships and love affairs that frame any cohort of creative writing students makes the deep play, a dramatic rendering of authorship as it is contested in a communal environment.

Whether we consider the writing program to be a democratic institution or a more occultic enterprise, the writing workshop provides the rigorous testing that students and instructor ascribe to authorship. This authorship is contingent and more process-based than it is concerned with the object created: the workshop submission. Evaluations of workshop stories are then never objective and never object-only, or economic affairs as in tuition, but more appropriately associated with the "outside bet" observed in the verbal performances of craft. Workshop protocol enacts a means to create the dialectics of craft, but they also provide the specialized language for workshop discussion. No extensive investigation of the language of creative writing workshops exists to date, though it is important to recognize that workshop language acquisition serves to acculturate students into a ways of speaking about craft. These ways of speaking about craft provide the extremes of inclusion and exclusion identified by Shivani in this comparison of workshop to the medieval guild. Geertz's analysis of the cockfight establishes a similar hierarchy

between the cock owners and those bettors who are peripheral to the main event.

Hierarchies and separations between the strata of participants in a writing workshop, and their graduate writing program more broadly, bring up the question of whether the democratic processes and identity of workshop identified by Fenza are not more appropriately associated with the specialized training and exclusion of many of its members.

To be a trained artist, whether it is an actor or poet, requires that artistic practice and language be demonstrated in an interactive, communal space. In his book *Modern Occult Rhetoric: Mass Media and the Drama of Secrecy in the Twentieth Century* (2005), Joshua Gunn argues that the "occult" tradition of the 19th century, normally associated with magic and mysticism, has been transformed into the "occultic" (Gunn xxii). He writes:

[W]hat people term the 'occult' is best described as the occultic, a form that articulates an inchoate system of beliefs, images, attitudes, and texts together that, nevertheless, reconfigures from individual to group; its meaning is wholly dependent on expert and popular perceptions held in dialectical tension without resolution. Conceptually, we can understand the one end of as a temporal continuum and 'the occultic' as the other (Gunn xxiv)

Creative writing embodies this "inchoate system of belief" that traces its ways through historical of writing groups more broadly and in the studies of Gere and Myers. The "dialectical tensions" in creative writing culture are numerous and form a list of

paradoxes between: craft/talent, realism/avant garde, writer/community, and democratic/occultic. These tensions are perpetual and "without resolution," and in order to build upon the democratic ideological framework analyzed in this chapter, we turn to an investigation of those features that represent the occultic.

Gunn argues that the occult has been transformed into the "occultic." The occult, Gunn explains, "should be understood as the study of secrets and the practice of mysticism and magic, comprising a centuries-long dialogue between occultists and their detractors about metaphysical secrets, the role of the imagination in apprehending such secrets, and who has the authority to keep and reveal them" (Gunn xxii). Reframing the scholarship on the occult through the lens of rhetoric, Gunn argues that the occultic operates in terms of contemporary human experience, not just in a supernatural or magical context of the occult. In addition to defining the occultic "as negotiable, as a contingent and protean object," Gunn uses Kenneth Burke's *Rhetoric of Religion* to present the struggle of representation (and language) to capture the "ineffable." In describing this tension between esoteric language and ineffability of human experience, Gunn writes:

So our words for the...supernatural or 'ineffable'...are necessarily borrowed from our words for the sorts of things we can talk about literally...(the world of everyday experience). Burke's observations about the rhetoric of religion implicate a central, productive ambivalence of theological form: transcendent truths are ineffable, but people invest a lot of time and energy into trying to represent ineffability. In the broadest

sense, then, religious rhetoric seems to embody a conflict between representation and ineffability. 'Theological form' is my shorthand for this conflict (xxi).

The theological form of writing workshop may parallel the rituals and methods of religion or science, especially the author's silent devotion during workshopping, and it shares the challenge of finding a language to articulate the ineffability and truths of the object of analysis. The struggle to speak to the ineffable in the representations of art leads to the tangled and esoteric language of writing workshops. Workshop students perform this language through a contortion of language that has evolved from "show don't tell" to the more ineffable cues "I don't know..." or "I think that..." or the question "Is this [submission] working?" The exercise in finding a language to articulate the ineffable is why Aristotle's *Poetics* provides a seamless taxonomy of dramatic tragedy while also acknowledging that some elements of representation (*mimesis*) cannot be fully accounted for. Leo Tolstoy's essay "What is Art?" argues that much of art is "counterfeit" and that we can only recognize art by the chill that rises at the back of our neck. These struggles to account for the ineffable in sensory experience can be traced from the provincial feedback of some writing workshops to deeper craft criticism in Aristotle and Tolstoy.

Gunn discusses ineffability as the tension between *immanence* "inside" or "in the here and now" and *transcendence* "moving across or through" (Gunn xxi). Writing workshop may share the theological form of writing workshop in so far as peers provide testament to their experience with a text. Testifying to a secular experience, workshop students answer the question of immanence: Does this work? The qualities of immanence

become moot only when students move from a discussion of the functional elements of craft to the more sacred and philosophical question: Does this transcend? Much like the surface play of cockfighting, in which most contests are superficial and unmoving, the workshop pieces that move from the question of immanence to transcendence are impossibly rare. Oftentimes, writing workshop is characterized as the forum for vetting story or poetic "ideas," or as a determinate of a submissions publishability, but more often now, it is central for peers to testify to authenticity. Writing workshop tests contemporary functionality and immanence as it relates to transcendence and art.

In discussing the functionality of an art object in chapter two, Howard Risatti argues that craft arts is marginalized because it alludes to functionality in a way that fine art does not. Put in a similar way, craft presents the immanent and functional while art moves us toward transcendence and ineffability. How do we say what we can say? The answer: Craft. How do we say what we cannot say? The answer: Art. Traditional workshop conversations assess functionality despite the belief that art should target the ineffable and transcendent. Writing workshops, especially among inexperienced writers, may be caught in a shallow play and the assessment of functionality (grammar, plot, character, detail) while the deeper play occurs in discussing transcendence (authenticity, literary tradition, imagination, language). The depth of writing workshop is dictated by the variables including: the experience of workshop peers, the functionalism (or transcendence) of a submission, and the ethos of the professional writer leading the workshop. All these variables may demonstrate the strength and diversity of the writing

workshop, but the last variable, the role of the professional writer, is in my argument the most important determinate of the depth of play in the writing workshop.

Compositionists are familiar with debates about the substance of writing instruction. Do we teach grammar and mechanics or do we teach that writing is a means for expression? We know the best answer is both or a mediating position between expressivists and current-traditional rhetoric. In creative writing workshops, and graduate programs as a whole, concerns about the prevailing ideologies espoused in graduate workshops and programs leads to more public debates about aesthetics. The much-publicized debate between Jonathan Franzen and Ben Marcus about the language of fiction highlighted the degree to which writers disagree about the functionality of prose and its experience for the reader. The shifts between formalist and language poets that continue in contemporary craft discussions of poetry parallel those debates taking place between realist and experimental writers in fiction. In his October 2005 article for *Harper's Magazine* "Why Experimental Fiction Threatens to Destroy Publishing, Jonathan Franzen, and Life as We Know It: A Correction," Ben Marcus presents an ad hominem attack against Franzen while also arguing on behalf of experimental fiction. The rift, as characterized by Marcus, involves Franzen presenting historical and contemporary experimental fiction as eroding the desire of readers to have accessible prose. In his essay, Marcus presents Franzen's argument for functional or transparent prose as myopic, and the writer characterizes Franzen as being motivated by his own hubris and a desire for popular fame.

In Franzen's argument, experimental fiction further alienates the reader and creates a competitive disadvantage for literary fiction in a marketplace where the seductions of other technologies vie for the attention of readers. Partly a debate about aesthetics, and partly a straw man argument ironically similar to Franzen's, Marcus' essay places the issues of the functional and experimental at the center of the debate about what and how writing is being taught in workshop. Read in light of Gunn's principles of the occultic, Marcus's argument aligns with a philosophy that associates the experimental prose with Modernist definitions of art, a language read and practiced by a few artists. Marcus' position counters Franzen's argument that fiction should reflect an immanence and functionalism that invites rather than alienates readers.

Both in principles of aesthetics and in governance, the writing workshop presents contradictions, paradoxes, and tensions that provide, if they are recognized, the potential to reconfigure the traditional workshop. As discussed in the history and pedagogy of workshop, democratic and occultic ideals continue to inform the aesthetics and teaching of workshop. The basic questions and teaching objectives of creative writing pivot around the notion of how to mediate between the contradictions that form the foundation of creative writing. In the final section of this chapter, we turn toward the procedure of teaching in creative writing workshop. From discussing the mystical underpinnings that inform workshop, the section uses Freire's concept of the "nuclei of contradiction" to reconstitute the authority of the workshop leader. Following the discussion of procedural elements as they relate to the pedagogy of workshop, the final chapter turns toward the

concept of "craft consciousness" and an examination of the articulation between creative writing programs and the public readership they purport to reach.

CHAPTER FIVE

Manet Richard [*of Gloucester*]: I can add colors to the chameleon,
 Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
 And set the murderous Machevil to school.
 Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
 Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down
 (*The Third Part of Henry the Sixth*, 3.2.191-195).

CAPTURING PROTEUS: INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN CREATIVE WRITING AND THE FUTURE OF CRAFT CONSCIOUSNESS

Richard III's honest and vicious soliloquy in *Henry VI, Part III* instructs us as creative writing teachers who must analyze the function of power and authorship in the writing workshop. Creative writing scholars have analyzed these contradictory ideologies and artistic philosophies as evidence that the field is irrational, misguided, or unenlightened. Artistry will always express itself in terms of paradox, and by applying a rational heuristic to artistic practice and workshop pedagogy, scholars risk neglecting the foundation of creative writing culture. Creative writing is fused together by its paradoxes and the dualisms expressed between: democratic/occultic, rhetoric/poetics, individual/community, mysticism/rational, and functional/artistic. Gerald Graff argues in *Beyond the Culture Wars* (1993) that literature teachers "teach the conflict," and the purpose of this final chapter is to follow Graff's direction and provide an alternative model for workshop using Freire's concept of the "nuclei of contradiction." From outlining the dynamics of a critically conscious workshop, the chapter turns toward the concept of *craft consciousness* as introduced in previous chapters. In developing an interdisciplinary understanding of craft consciousness, the chapter also argues for a

reconceptualization of craft in workshop through an analysis of Foucault's author-function.

The historical examination of classical rhetoric and aesthetic theory in this dissertation presents the overlaps between representations of *techne* that bridge concepts of craft from the pre-modern to the postmodern. In order to develop upon these historical precedents, the dissertation argues for sustaining transdisciplinary perspectives on craft that displace those following a narrow track in material and formal limitations. Creative writing is fundamentally a field of artistic training and not a passage between literary criticism and critical theory. The field enacts humanistic principles through its embodiment as a site for artistic production and knowledge making. The classical rhetoric tradition provides an understanding for the division between *techne* (craft) and *episteme* (knowledge), and this dissertation has sought to unify the concepts through the examination of aesthetic theory and craft criticism. Craft knowledge is experiential and reflective of a tacit and corporeal knowledge that deviates from theoretical abstraction.

Historical scholars in creative writing studies must expand their examination of the field through explorations of the workshop methods, curriculum organization, and craft definitions from the performing, craft, applied, and fine arts. By identifying and building coalitions with other artistic academic disciplines and community directed arts' initiatives, creative writing best represents its position in the humanities as a field of practitioner knowledge. This dissertation provides historical, theoretical, and pedagogical frameworks for conceptualizing craft in the field of creative writing. In order to provide the education of future graduate writers, the present curriculum and programmatic design

will be insufficient. As a subfield of literary studies or composition studies, creative writing serves an outdated academic structure that does not articulate its value in the humanities or in culture. Creative writing students will best be served if they are encouraged to investigate concepts of craft from across mediums and technologies.

This chapter does not direct its analysis toward the structure of graduate programs and their curriculum, and it focuses on the function of *authorship* as it is performed in workshop in order to propose an alternative model for peer feedback and workshop leadership. The chapter follows its analysis of author function by providing a definition of craft consciousness as it applies to the rapidly shifting context for artistic production and consumption in public and virtual spaces.

The final section of this dissertation moves toward points of synthesis between creative writing studies and the burgeoning scholarship from theatre arts and craft arts. Theatre arts in higher education shares some of the contradictions that define creative writing, and the scholarship on the institutional history and pedagogical approaches to theatre arts will continue to present potential creative and scholarly connections. The craft arts are currently in resurgence in both practice and scholarship, and the transfiguration of traditional craft in virtual spaces will impact the mission of creative writing as both fields reconfigure in the 21st century. This dissertation has argued that craft forms the center of knowledge in the field and articulates the mission of creative writing as a discipline that should preserve its foundations in art practice.

Life After Symbolic Death: Determining Author-Function in Writing Workshop

Joshua Gunn introduces the concept of the "occultic" in *Modern Occult Rhetoric: Mass Media and the Drama of Secrecy in the Twentieth Century* (2005), and the scholar extracts its definition from its historical roots in the term occult. The occultic, as discussed in chapter four, provides a generative lens that opposes democratic principles in the creative writing workshop. This dualism ascribes itself in the significance of writing workshop as a cultural forum for artistic practice. Clifford's Geertz's analysis of the Balinese cockfight demonstrates how cultural meaning is at play in the cockfight, and the workshop displays both surface and deep play between its participants as they jostle for power and hierarchy during peer review. Both Gunn and Geertz allow for creative writing studies scholars to see the meaning and significance in the otherwise natural configuration of writing workshop. Building upon this grounding in the "inchoate belief system" represented in workshop practice, and the work of Geertz and Gunn, this section examines author function in the work of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. The publication of Barthes' "Death of the Author" (1967) and Foucault's "What is an Author?" (1968) coincides with the establishment and rapid growth of creative writing programs under the auspices of the Associated Writers' and Writing Programs (formed in 1967). From the analysis of author function in writing workshops, the section concludes by drawing from William Covino's *Rhetoric, Magic, Literacy: An Eccentric History of the Composing Imagination* (1994). Covino's analysis of "arresting" and "generative" magic provides a critical transition between pedagogical practice and a discussion of consciousness (or awareness) as it relates to concepts of craft.

Creative writing studies has been founded in large part on the argument that the traditional writing workshop (often referred to as "The Iowa Workshop") should dictate its procedures with the rigidity of a technical manual or a magician's alchemical code. And perhaps the writing workshop seeks a metallurgical phenomenon that turns lead of student submissions into the gold of publication. Under these procedural codes, student writers submit work for peer and teacher review. Students and workshop leader often produce a written document or marginal comments for the writer after one or more readings of the submission (with greater ethos being demonstrated by multiple readings). Variations of writing workshop exist, I believe, but the degree to which there are alternatives visible and practiced is a matter that is yet indeterminable. Qualitative research into the variations of traditional workshop method may prove that this model is not as prevalent as once thought, or, it may prove that variations have come to dominate workshop practice. This section treats the traditional workshop as the standard and baseline for proposing an alternative method. The workshop leader asks for submissions and manages the dialogue that takes place among peers in a workshop. This section turns toward the practicalities of managing a conversation and the role of the published author in this conversation. Before proposing an alternative called the critical workshop, this chapter provides further context through an analysis of author function in the scholarship of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes.

Roland Barthes' 1967 essay "The Death of the Author" coincides, ironically, with the formation of the AWP and its first thirteen graduate creative writing programs. The coalition of writers and writing programs represented by AWP presents an embodiment

that counters Barthes claims. Barthes argues in the essay against the intentional fallacy by removing the author from the focused interpretation of a text. In the essay, Barthes diminishes the author in order to elevate the language of a text as the site for interpretation. In executing this reversal, Barthes characterizes the author as the performative conduit rather than as the authority over the text's meaning. The creative writing workshop, for its part, presents the author as the least and most important figure in determining the interpretation and significance of a workshop submission. As the least important figure in the discussion of a submission, the writer is divided from their text in a way that emulates the way a literary journal reader or editor might review the work.

Authors are asked to be silent during this process because it gives peers readers and the workshop leader an opportunity to interpret the text without the subjective clouding of the author's opinion. Through this method, the text and author are separated in order to create the dialogue space for a more transparent and rigorous discussion of the text. The workshopped author, viewed in another way, is the most important participant. Their peers and the workshop leader must then participate in the illusion that both ignores and acknowledges the delicate paradox of an author who is and is not there. Participants must provide an honest assessment of the text while also maintaining a productive long-term relationship with the author. Oftentimes, a workshop peer's ethos is demonstrated through the judiciousness they may reflect as they sever the text from its author while maintain varying degrees of collegiality and good will. Rigor is an absolute calling in workshop, and more than maintaining the ethos of collegiality, the function of peer feedback is to perform one's own authorship from the distance and discipline of a reader.

The death of the author (embodied in their silence) is an inauspicious outcome for the author who has written a text; nonetheless, AWP President D.W. Fenza and other apologists have continued to laud creative writing's ability to celebrate cultural pluralism and the identity of AWP authors. As Fenza would argue, education reflects inhumanity when it suppresses self-expression in the name of testing or other cold assessment practices. Creative writing reverses educational trends in testing practices by continuing progressive educational philosophies. Progressive education is an embodiment in creative writing offerings, but there is some doubt as to whether writing workshop procedure reflects the humanism it espouses. AWP has tirelessly supported and sustained professional member-authors through its annual AWP conference, sponsored writers' conferences, a literary publishing press, writing contests, *The Writer's Chronicle* periodical, and other sites for author interviews and craft discussion. The professional interest of AWP may not fully reflect the procedural philosophies of writing workshop. As a result, Barthes ritual-death of the author is reproduced in the workshop and may unwilling harm the author. The workshopped author, for their performance, accepts their silence with a near religious devotion—and the penance is seen as their benefit—a dialogue that tests the authorship reflected in the text.

As discussed in chapter four, the workshopped author is the "contingent author" or the accused that is held for judgment by their peers as the class completes what Aristotle would consider a forensic rhetorical proceeding. Their evaluation of the workshop piece (and the authorship therein) is made more complex as graduate students form friendships and relationships while competing for the hierarchies of funding and

ranking. These mitigating factors change the degree to which we can apply Barthes' death of the author, and in writing workshop, this 'death' is likened to a symbolic-ritual death as performed in traditional cultures. For example, The Day of the Dead in Mexico reverses the belief of death as an end and instead positions death as a point to celebrate rebirth. The death of the author in workshop signifies obedience to ritual practice while it also signifies the student's potential birth into authorship.

As an apprentice class, workshop recovers students from professional oblivion by supporting their production and specialization in craft. Apprentices determine the attributes one of their fellow craftsperson's work and workshop peers seek to determine the *immanence* ("here and now") of a written piece. The *transcendence* ("moving across or through") of a piece of writing can only be determined by the workshop leader who has achieved by publication the status desired by students: an author. If there is an embodiment of authorship that counters Barthes' symbolic death, it is the professional writer who teaches in the university and symbolizes the potential birth into authorship. Student writers are not yet born into authorship or have achieved only a diminished or emergent sense of this identity. Writing workshop shares the "theological form" mentioned in Joshua Gunn's *Modern Occult Rhetoric*, and in the discussions of workshop, the published author affixes to the text as it separates from its original author.

The author is not dead in the workshop, and the text is repurposed and sewn to the published author who need not direct the conversation, but is the person for whom peers are looking obliquely, and even unconsciously attempting to emulate and embody. The significance of authorship in creative writing is then communicated less through the

relationship between the text and the author and more in the workshop leader and the workshop peers. Their dialogue on a submission piece functions to perform the text and provides past evidence of authorship (through the published author) and future potential for authorship (in the form of the peers). Identity is lost for the submission writer and simultaneously revived in the performance of other workshop peers. The workshop is based in a performance that enacts the writer's will through the sacred act of exegesis. The dynamic movement between performer and text is discussed in Barthes' essay, and Barthes characterizes the author as a conduit rather than as an origin for the text. He writes:

As soon as a fact is narrated no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins. The sense of this phenomenon, however, has varied; in ethnographic societies the responsibility for a narrative is never assumed by a person but by a mediator, shaman or relater whose 'performance'—the mastery of the narrative—may possibly be admired but never his 'genius' (Barthes).

In the context of writing workshop, temporality plays a key role in the ethos of the performers and is symbolized by the past, present, and future elements of authorship. The workshop leader symbolizes the transcendence of the author while the workshop peers provide the immanence of authorship. The workshop peers move through the text and the

workshopped author represents a future symbol—authorship-in-making—trademarked or "made" in writing workshop.

Creative writing provides a different concept of authorship than what has been reflected in literary studies, and as mentioned by Myers and Dawson, the authorship of creative writing provides a temporal extension from the past into the *present*. The writer is a living practitioner, and Barthes contrasts the idea of the past "author" and the present "modern scripter." He writes:

The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a before and an after. The Author is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern scripter [or writing student] is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written here and now (Barthes, *bracket mine*)

Between the "Author" and the lesser "modern scripter," Barthes argues that the author is always displaced from the text and should not be represented as the text's antecedent. Although Barthes attributes significance to the meaning making of text of the "here and now," it is worth noting that the "author function" is pivotal to writing workshop. The scholar Michel Foucault resurrects the author in his essay "What is an Author?"(1969).

Foucault defines author function and expands its meaning from Barthes analysis of their symbolic death. Whether it was written in direct response to Barthes, or part of an expanded discussion of author function in critical theory, Foucault identifies authorship as a marker and a creator of discourse. The author is likened to an explorer who vanishes and reappears in different contexts and with different purposes. Rather than pronouncing the death of the author, Foucault declares the author to be a social construct that produces discourse as they are simultaneously evaluated by the discourse they create. Foucault writes:

It would seem that the author's name, unlike other proper names, does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it; instead, the name seems always to be present, marking off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterizing, its mode of being.

The author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse in a society and a culture (Foucault).

The workshop leader embodies the author function as a form of iconography. The icon leads the workshop even when they are not formally leading, and as a lodestone to the conversation, the author assumes a function as the final and ultimate authority. Barthes separates the author from the concept of authority through using the term "modern scripter." For Foucault, the author is greater than Barthes' diminished representation, and Foucault represents the author as a figure that fades and reappears in different appearances and functions. Workshopped students experience these fluctuations between visibility (a holographic quality) as they receive and provide feedback. The ceremony and

performance of the texts (what brings the author *into being*) requires mutability across the context of workshop. Responding to texts brings their own authorship into being, and students "mark" their own author function by providing feedback to peers. Performances in authorship emulate the Q&As that authors perform to the public after their readings and in the author interviews published in literary journal and popular magazines.

Author function then is mapped and learned through workshopping. The ultimate function of workshop is not to determine the publishability of a text, but for students to perform as a rhetor making an argument for the interpretation of a text. The interpretative act is one function of authorship, and it stands in contrast to those more public functions of authorship in reading events, educational outreach, and work with editorial staff. The published author can also function as an icon in advertising a creative writing program and attracting talented students; however, in the classroom the published author must move, I argue, from their symbolic function to a more critical function. As an agent who provokes discussion of the contradictions in workshop discussion, the workshop leader may act as a facilitator rather than as a consensus builder. The discourse of workshop identifies itself with epideictic rhetoric, the rhetoric Aristotle defines as being used to praise or blame in ceremonial contexts in classical Greece. Epideictic rhetoric is analyzed in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and more contemporary historical studies such as Jeffrey Walker's *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*. This chapter turns to Walker's discussion of epideictic rhetoric in the conclusion, and for the moment, it is more important to further analyze author function as it relates to the elements of power and consciousness in workshop.

The Magic/The Mystery: Finding the Critical Function of the Workshop Leader

What is the function of the published author in writing workshop? We believe (or may be lead to believe) that authors perform their own craft behind the scene and under the possession or sway of an ineffable power. In the writing workshop, we must depart from viewing the author as a function of their more public persona or as the magnet for artistic identity or workshop critique. The function of the author as the workshop leader plays a crucial role in developing the craft consciousness of their students. I would like to propose that the workshop leader shed their role as the willing consensus-builder who embodies workshop practice as a democratic process; in the same vein, I believe we must also reject the workshop leader as the figure of the conjurer who provides visible proof of authorship and provides instruction through osmosis or the insistence that writing is an occultic practice known to few. The alternative to these extremes is an author function that envisions the author as operating as a critical agent who pushes students to articulate their own author positions. Far from being an oppressive force, or bystander in discussion, the critical pedagogue demonstrates the power to balance the forces of contradiction.

In order to acknowledge the contradictions that define the feedback on a submission piece, professional writers who teach must also recognize the contradictions that define the field of creative writing. Throughout this dissertation, the analysis has vacillated between the space of workshop and the institutional context of the field as a whole. It is the role of the workshop leader to turn these sites into opportunities for knowledge making and creative and critical inquiry. The creative writing workshop is

enmeshed in contradictions that define aesthetics and the enterprise of authorship. Rather than sweeping past these contradictions, or tidying up the workshop by sweeping these contradictions out of sight, teachers must support and develop methods for interrogating them. As with other artistic fields, creative writing generates non-traditional, irrational, occultic, and mystical beliefs about the role of the imagination in practice.

Beyond these contradictions, workshop must also be attentive to issues of power. Authority and power are central themes in Anna Leahy's edited collection *Power and Identity in the Creative Writing Classroom: The Authority Project* (2005). In her essay "The Value and Cost of Nurturing" for the collection, Leahy points to the fact that authority is not a matter of if, but *how* instructors wield it in writing workshop. Leahy writes that "we may too easily think 'I don't have any authority—it's a workshop.' I find, though, that even in a workshop circle, students tend to raise their hands or seek organization of the conversation from me and that students often address comments to me" (Leahy 18). The workshop leader functions as the primary power source for workshop instruction, and this fact brings forward the secondary question of how to manage such power in a teaching context. Published authors should be able to demonstrate a public ethos that functions differently than their ethos as teachers. As Foucault outlines author function, he emphasizes the term as it fluctuates and transfigures the author. By embodying a protean identity, one that morphs between multiple author functions, the creative writing teacher joins the tradition of artists and rhetoricians who have been labeled illusionist or magicians.

Proteus, the mythical son of Poseidon, may be the figure who best exemplifies the persona of the author. Proteus serves as herdsman to Poseidon's harem of seals and is referred to by Homer as the "Old Man in the Sea" because he changes forms in order to escape capture. When captured, Proteus assumes the form of an old man and prophesizes the future. Plato associates Proteus with the sophists and the actor Ion, among others, and the philosopher suggests that the sophists and others like the poet are manipulators of nature and illusionists of form. Plato argues that imitation like rhetoric favors illusion over the search for knowledge. This link between rhetoric and magic has important implications for the pedagogy of workshop. William Covino's analysis of magic and the "composing imagination" follows from the work of Jacqueline de Romilly and her book *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (1975). Covino and de Romilly point out that metamorphosis is often viewed as suspicious and inherently deceptive to an audience. Artists are either cast or embrace a similar role as trickster and illusionist, but "generative magic," as Covino calls it, may allow authors and their students to develop mutable skills and perspectives in craft. The scholar de Romilly also points to deception as a means for the "intellectual speculation" that Plato advocates for in the name of philosophy. She writes:

Plato views the figure of the dangerous magician as Proteus, 'the symbol of elusive transformation; for, instead of fighting in a direct and honest way, he used to change himself into a number of deceptive forms and shift from one to the other. The protean capability that seems a vice when associated with deceiving an audience is nonetheless essential to intellectual

speculation, and to the practice of rhetorical invention, as Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero attest (de Romilly 28).

"Rhetorical invention," as de Romilly mentions, is one of the five canons of classical rhetoric, and it may represent the service to which writers in workshop are called. Written drafts are both the *vision* of the writer and an *experience* for the reader. In these visions that "invent" the submission piece, writers are sometimes pushed into the terrain of the mysterious and mystical tradition of artistic practice. Invention has been made a private affair or been taught through craft handbooks and writing exercises. In both cases, creative writing teachers seem ill equipped or hesitant to instruct students in the task of invention. Invention is associated with voice and vision, and invention is seen as a matter in which the theoretical can obfuscate the experience. Flannery O'Connor speaks to the vision of the fiction writer by associating it with an "anagogical vision" rather than rhetorical invention. She writes in *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose* (1970) that the writer will "be interested in possibilities rather than probabilities" and that the impediments of reason hamper the vision of the writer and the experience for the reader.

O'Connor aligns her anagogic vision of the Southern-grotesque with a spiritual world. The author discusses St. Thomas Aquinas reference to *reason* as a poor substitute for the *act* of love, and in aligning her philosophy of craft with John Dewey's notion of art as experience, O'Connor argues that the artist shares their anagogical vision with the reader. Writing is not an abstract philosophy or meaning-making exercise and she writes "some people have the notion that you read the story and then climb out of it into the meaning, but for the fiction writer himself the whole story is the meaning, because it is an

experience, not an abstraction" (O'Connor). According to O'Connor, Catholics make better writers because they believe in the mystery of God. Beyond her transparent biases, O'Connor associates author function with the communication of a vision and an experience. The author provides, according to O'Connor, a footing in the earthly (manners) while seeking the mystical and inarticulate (mystery). O'Connor fuses the elements of craft between the terrestrial and the spiritual vision of the mystical.

In order to balance authority as a teacher, and provide support for the visions of student writers, the workshop teacher must be aware of their potential to exercise a generative or oppressive function. In *Rhetoric, Magic, Literacy: An Eccentric History of the Composing Imagination*, Covino distinguishes between arresting and generative magic. Covino associates arresting magic with articulate power sources, usually in the form of sanctioned institutions such as school and government. These articulate power sources arrest discourse and carefully control knowledge; in contrast, generative magic is associated with inarticulate power sources such as the imagination or mysticism. Covino argues that science and other fields arrest or limit the potential of discourse, and it is the responsibility of generative magic and the fields that support this discourse to disrupt these limits. He writes:

Magic is in another sense the practice of disrupting and recreating articulate power: a (re)sorcery spells for generating multiple perspectives.

As we will see, generative magic is a dialogical critique that seeks novelty, originating at a remove from the mass culture it would interrogate (Covino 8-9).

Generative magic uses "resorcery spells to generating multiple perspectives" and "dialogical critique" to experiment and play. Creative writing finds itself positioned between its commitments to an institution (an articulate power) and the inarticulate powers sources often aligned with artistic philosophy and craft practice. The workshop leader who recognizes this position may serve a generative function that encourages writers to explore their vision in an institutional context.

Magic provides another lens for understanding the contradictions that face creative writing. The challenge for creative writing is for it to support generative functions, and in some cases occultic practices, that preserve its inarticulate power as an arts field. Covino and Gunn's scholarship on magic and the occultic provide a lens for framing craft dialogues in workshop. The contradictions discussed in this and the previous chapters form the identity of creative writing, and it is essential that workshop and program classes attend to these contradictions. As students review a submission piece, they may build a consensus around revisions options for the writer. The workshop leader often provides summaries of the comments of the class, or is often the case, supplies the final judgment of the piece and anchors revision options for the writer. By staking their author function in a pedagogy of diplomacy or dictatorship, the teacher often misses the most critical step—challenging writing workshop participants to articulate their position.

Rather than arresting discourse by providing their absolute judgment or allowing for a loose democracy to form, the workshop leader should adopt the rhetorician's tact by providing a generative and strategic push. The contradictions that emanate from

discussion rise to the surface and provide case-in-points for the larger conflicts that reside in creative writing culture. If students are not challenged to face and articulate their position on a given submission piece, then they are more likely to give off-the-hip comments that reside in the noncommittal and non-intrusive language of relativism. Relativism arises in the shallow play—and in its opposite—the destructive extremes of what creative writers call a "poisoned workshop" in which personal combat displaces productive feedback. The deep play of workshop can only take place when the teacher challenges his or her own author function. In the next section, I discuss how author function presents student writers and workshop leaders with an opportunity to articulate the paradoxes that affect their vision and craft. The workshop leader, as they interrogate their own author function as a teacher, must see their role in the classroom as *mutually beneficial* to their own craft; the alternative to adopting a critical stance as the author-instructor reduces teaching to a service function. In order to resist a position as a vocational trainer, the workshop leader must expand critically and creatively their own author function while presenting their students with the opportunity to articulate their position on the philosophies and aesthetics of craft.

Critical Workshop as Performances in Craft Consciousness

Writing workshop can be a site of mutual benefit for author and student. In Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the scholar applies critical pedagogy to the power dynamics between student and teacher. Freire's political agenda is different than in workshop, and the scholar directs his criticism to the relationship between peasants and the power institutions that threaten to oppress them. Freire frames and outlines literacy

practices as a matter of consciousness, and in the case of illiterate peasants the scholar focuses on "raising consciousness" (35). Freire articulates an educational method for liberating both oppressed and oppressor. The scholar identifies this liberation as a "mutual process" between student and teacher. Writers in a workshop do not always think of workshopping as a mutual process of development, and it is often conceived as a function of service from published writer to apprentice writers, or, from experienced writer to inexperienced writer. In this conceptualization, the power moves downhill from the higher ground of the published author to the students below. Student writers perform their feedback in this arrangement as an act of subservience and their function serves to reinforce the author(ity) of workshop. The alternative, proposed here, is for students and teacher in workshop to pivot toward Freire's concept of *critical consciousness*. Critical consciousness serves as an awareness that replaces the arresting consciousness that allows for students to see their educational process as predetermined and not of their making.

The critical workshop transforms arresting discourse and consciousness into a site for craft discussions that move from the functional into the space where contradictions are the substance of dialectic. Applying critical pedagogy to the writing workshop might call for students to lead discussion, as is the case in some workshops, but what seems more critical is for the published writer to function much like a sophist who uses contradiction as the site for knowledge making. As a personal example, I have taken traditional writing workshops as an undergraduate and graduate student at four different universities and had only one workshop that used a critical lens. In that writing workshop,

Dr. Darrell Spencer often listened intently to our conversations about a workshop piece, and in taking notes, he documented the conversation as it took place. After we had created the scaffolding of workshop—the body of informal and formal comments—Dr. Spencer did not present his argument for the revision and instead turned his attention to *our* comments. In the second phase of workshop, Dr. Spencer articulated the points of contradiction in our discussion of the piece and asked clarifying questions that ushered in the deeper play of the conversation. The contradictions that emerged in the first phase were not revisited as points of conflict or combat, but as sites where peers might (re)present their argument for revision through craft that required them to adopt a rhetorician's stance and attend to contradictions.

From the functional elements that characterize craft in the first phase, the second phase moves students to investigate the contradictions in craft that will define them as they move from a *contingent* authorship into a more *established* authorship. The performances of workshop, as mentioned in the previous chapter, function to establish power hierarchies and authorship. Viewed through the lens of critical consciousness, the students and teacher serve as mutual agents in articulating their arguments. The dialectic is then organized between arguments about functional craft concerns in the first phase to deeper craft concerns that may involve aesthetic, form, genre, and ideology. The generative magic and transcendence of workshop is staked in conversations in which the deeper play displaces the play of hierarchical concerns or smaller functional concerns. The critical writing workshop may strike many teachers as intuitive, and it should serve as a scaffolding and structure for moving students from the functional to the artistic.

For the instructor, the workshop taught in this approach allows the published writer to direct class discussion toward the points of convergence that allow students to investigate concerns on the scale of public discourse. Some writers already present theme-based workshops or conduct workshops on specific literary forms, and the critical workshop will allow for further exploration of political and aesthetic concerns in craft. Workshop performs its function only as far as the teacher and student are mutual participants who see their readers as an audience for their work.

In the public debate on craft and authorship between Jonathan Franzen and Ben Marcus, workshop is staked in the dialectic between realism and avant-garde and the other contradictions that form creative writing and art practice more broadly. Craft knowledge develops in the student (and teacher) in large part because of the pedagogical choices made in writing workshop. In addition to Freire's concept of critical consciousness, it also useful to see Freire's analysis of the "nuclei of contradiction" as a way to envision writing workshop as a site for action rather than reaction. Freire discussion of the nuclei follows from the call for teacher and student to raise awareness of the position in education rather than assuming the magic of inevitability. Has the traditional writing workshop reached the point of inevitability from which other models cannot be imagined? Freire's nuclei of contradiction moves writers to examine workshop and may even set the agenda for future research in creative writing studies. Freire writes of the importance of the nuclei of contradiction in defining the mission and enterprise of education. He writes:

The more the group divide and reintegrate the whole, the more closely they approach the nuclei of the principal and secondary contradictions that involve the inhabitants of the area. By locating these nuclei of contradictions, the investigators might even at this stage be able to organize the program content of their educational action. Indeed, if the content reflected these contradictions, it would undoubtedly contain the meaningful thematics of the area. And one can safely affirm that action based on these observations would be much more likely to succeed than that based on 'decisions from the top' (Freire 112).

The whole of creative writing culture is embodied in writing workshop and the performances of authorship and craft therein. Freire's nucleus of contradiction traverses the workshop setting in which authorship and craft are performed into the wider contradictions that stake out the causes of the field. Craft seminars have been used as contexts in which concepts of craft are given fuller discussion and focus than in workshop; however, I argue that the consciousness of students is most influenced by the workshop setting and exposure to interdisciplinary sites for craft that move beyond genre specialization. Critical consciousness moves scholars to examine author-function and craft consciousness as it is performed inside and outside the writing workshop. The next section examines the development of critical consciousness as it transformed into craft consciousness. Both forms of consciousness are not mutual exclusive and should be part of the expansion of creative writing as a field of scholarship *and* as a field of artistic practice and knowledge making. The field of creative writing must develop an awareness

that allows its mission to support scholarship while it further establishes itself as a field of artistic practice.

Craft Consciousness and the Future of Interdisciplinarity in Creative Writing

Freire's critical consciousness argues for an awareness and action that liberates both the educator and student from arresting pedagogical practices and discourses. The workshop represents the site in which creative writing may test their awareness of pedagogical practice through a critical consciousness practiced and theorized in creative writing studies. In addition to applying a critical approach to workshop, creative writing studies scholarship must develop its own critical consciousness to its theoretical arguments. The study of creative writing today follows a path carefully laid through the critical lens of composition and literary studies. This dissertation argues for adopting a critical heuristic that uses rhetoric, aesthetics, and contemporary craft theory and criticism to reimagine the theoretical and institutional relationships of creative writing. Undergraduate and graduate students' experiences in creative writing are dominated by a voicelessness that must be expressed and examined. In order to understand the mission of creative writing as an educational institutional, and as a field affecting literacy practices, we must examine the relationship between the field and its cultural influence.

Qualitative and quantitative research into student and teacher experience in writing workshops, craft seminars, literature courses, and outreach initiatives will demonstrate the ways craft is understood and practiced; in addition, the expansion of creative writing programs abroad affects the context in which the field understands its mission as a field engaged in artistic practice and critical inquiry. Creative writing has

been underserved by the historical studies of its formation and these studies have affected the degree to which the field may move from the heavy shadow of literary studies.

Literary studies scholars have written histories of the field, and in the next phase of critical inquiry, creative writing studies scholars must further analyze graduate programs as individual sites for the formation of the field. In the cornfields of Iowa, we have established one source for the formation of creative writing. This dissertation has argued that other histories are possible, and in further investigation of the histories of individual institutions, we will see different relationships emerge. At University of Utah or Ohio University we can see the potential connections between critical theory and creative writing; furthermore, investigations of Brown University and University of California-Irvine will reveal the degree to which postmodern aesthetics and hypertexts have corroborated and rendered other histories. Additionally, and as evidence to the argument of this dissertation, arts colleges and independent writing programs have cultivated and generated interdisciplinary relationships at Bard College, Cal Arts College, Black Mountain College, and elsewhere.

Interdisciplinary collaborations will develop a critical and craft consciousness that will allow the field to develop new threads of scholarship that complement those currently grounded in composition or literary studies. These new threads have been initiated in this dissertation through an investigation of classical rhetoric and aesthetic theory and criticism in craft scholarship. Through Freire's call for a critical consciousness, this dissertation calls us to imagine the protean identities we take each day as teachers, scholars, authors, artists, and to conceptualize our work as an awareness to

these identities as students come into being and becoming. Authorship and artistry demonstrate themselves through our critical and pedagogical work, and the degree to which we are aware of practices that form these identities, the better creative writing can anticipate the changing contexts of publishing and art practice in online spaces. Beyond traditional writing workshop and graduate programs, the sites for critical inquiry are numerous and Tim Mayers' craft criticism provides a site for expanding the landscape of the field through interdisciplinary collaboration. Craft criticism bridges perceived gaps between compositionists and creative writers, and in this dissertation I argue that the craft criticism aptly applies to the connections between creative writers, craft scholars, and practicing artists.

Craft criticism is a written genre that is observable outside composition and creative writing, and in other academic and artistic contexts, the term craft can be ascribed to artistic techniques or more broadly as knowledge that is demonstrated through making. By creating an artifact, the artist is provided an experience that embodies a synthesis between the physical and the mental. Art making draws from separations between the mental and physical activities, and I argue that craft consciousness disrupts supposed dualism staked between mind and body. Creative writing demonstrates knowledge *through* the process of making in much the same way other arts fields conceptualize craft, and in this shared consciousness, artists are not the substance of their *artifacts*, but the substance of their *experiences* in art making. Craft consciousness is the light shining between practice and philosophy, and in the reduction of craft to technique, we scholars and artists are in danger of reducing art to an object. Representations of art

are often ascribed to objects rather than the performances (in *mimesis*) that embody creation as process.

Wendy Bishop's transactional workshop as defined in *Released into Language: Options for Teaching Creative Writing* (1991) seeks to provide a framework for the term craft consciousness as it might be employed in the writing workshop. As discussed in chapter one, Bishop advocates for developing students' "reciprocal, mutual defining relationships" as writers and readers. The mutual of the process of becoming authors and artists requires students to develop an awareness or consciousness, and in developing a craft consciousness, creative writing programs must shift their way of seeing and reexamine the methods for educating artists as an activity that increases vision rather than limits them through specialization and genre training. Craft consciousness is an awareness that may operate in current graduate program models in creative writing; however, as will be indicated through the conclusion of this dissertation, writers must turn to those fields that share in the enterprise of educating artists. The educational principles in artistic fields continue the progressive educational movement of John Dewey and the tradition of craftspeople through the centuries. In order to continue to bridge theoretical and practical methods for educating creative writers, it is important to see craft as moving from theoretical frameworks in aesthetics and the genre of craft criticism out into contemporary dialogues on craft taking place in online contexts. Creative writing is facing the moment in which its educational model must recognize the shift into international and online contexts, and it will be the responsibility of artists, teachers, and scholars to reconfigure conceptual and creative space to accommodate a

new future for the field. Historical studies of workshop and other forums for artistic and/or professional collaboration provide a window into the practices that can influence the future conceptualizations of the field beyond contemporary disciplinary models.

Craft Consciousness Performance(s) in Public and Online Contexts

Craft consciousness may be drawn into the framework of workshop through comparative studies of approaches in performing, fine, and craft arts. The scholarship on the performing arts workshops is even less developed than those found in creative writing studies. Without qualitative research into the experience of teachers and students in the performing arts in higher education or scholarship drawing connections between the craft criticism of both fields, the practitioner knowledge between creative writing and theatre arts is in danger of vanishing. In *Teaching Theatre Today* (2004), the editors Anne L. Fliotsos and Gail S. Medford point to the elements in theatre pedagogy (in acting, directing, and playwriting) and institutional history that parallels our conversations in creative writing studies. In a similar vein to the democratic and occultic practices identified in writing workshop in chapter four, Anne Berkeley writes in "Changes in Undergraduate Theatre Curriculum" about the manner in which theatre education in which higher education has evolved from its interest in public service and performance into a preparatory field for theatre professionals. Berkeley argues that theatre arts' focus on *social meliorism* began to dissolve when George Pierce Baker offered "English 47" at Radcliffe College in 1903. These first sites for craft experimentation in the form of laboratories gave way, in Berkeley's argument, to the contemporary manifestations of theatre arts as a site for professional training. Similarly, Anne Gere and D.G. Myers trace

the historical development of creative writing from populism to professionalism, and they discuss the fashion in which writing workshop and craft concepts were absorbed into institutional contexts across America.

The "rise into institutionalism" discussed by Mark McGurl has followed theatre arts and creative writing as they resist those workshop practices (in the form of the Iowa and Stanislavski workshop) that have become dominant in universities. The resistance to traditional Iowa workshop method associated with the University of Iowa has its doppelganger in the Stanislavski method practiced by theatre arts programs. In "The Teaching of Acting in American Colleges and Universities, 1920-1960," Patti Gillespie and Kenneth Cameron propose alternative methods for teaching acting workshops and these recommendations echo the larger question of how democratic or occultic practices reflect the of educational practices in theatre arts and creative writing. Theatre arts has fragmented into professional training in acting, directing, set design, lighting, and sound while creative writing has developed specializations in fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and playwriting. Both artistic fields now face the question of whether they wish to continue as professional training grounds and/or whether they wish to commit to public outreach and craft dialogue from outside their specializations?

This dissertation argues that creative writing (and other arts disciplines) need not cast off civically engaged or populist approaches to craft in favor of specialized practitioner knowledge. The development of craft consciousness extends the site of knowledge into spaces of academic and artistic practices in the public just as they may extend more and more into professional collaborative forums. Anne Berkeley portrays

this mediating position as she traces the development of theatre arts into a professional training ground. She paraphrases Robert Spiller:

To this end, scholars adapted the 'laboratory' from the new sciences as the matrix for a pedagogy that would unite experimentation and amateurism: We must, it would seem, have acting courses in our colleges if we are to include the drama at all, but these courses must not aim at perfection; they must remain amateur, imperfect, and experimental. They must cultivate the capacities of those who partake [...] to a finer appreciation of art as a living function (Berkeley 12).

Contemporary art engages audience and artist in the living function of art. Creative writing and theatre arts must understand that professional training requires an audience outside the workshop. In order to enact the movement from private to public performance, the rhetorical tradition and public arts provide a lens that offers a counterbalance to the occultic practices and languages that threaten to divide writers from their audience. The rhetorical tradition, like the craft tradition, synthesizes writers to civic and professional engagements that save the artist from their isolation. The function of the author is a private and public affair, and in the shared heritage of rhetoric and poetics, there is opportunity to synthesize fields in a contemporary context.

In *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity*, Jeffrey Walker reverses the argument of many historical studies and argues that rhetoric stems from the poetics and lyric tradition of pre-classical bards such as Sappho. The lyric (as enthymeme) operates as the pre-theoretical form of argumentation, and in the sophistic educational tradition of Isocrates

and Protagoras poetics and rhetoric may be said to be institutionalized in their educational forms. Walker writes:

The sophists are credited with having been the first to theorize and teach the principles and practice of suasive discourse, thereby raising it or at least claiming to raise it to the status of a disciplined "art" or methodology, a *techne*, as opposed to an *empeiria* (a knack) or skill in some traditional practice that is simply picked up from experience or learned by imitation (the adjective *empeiros* means experienced or practiced). (Walker 26).

In transforming epideictic rhetoric into a practice and *techne* (craft) that students might be educated in, the sophists transformed the private practice of the artist-rhetor into an educational practice. The artists' workshop succeeds (in its ideal form) as a forum for moving students and teachers into a recognition of craft practices and technique that have a public function. As an educational process, the development of a craft consciousness will lead writers and artists to articulations between private and public. Craft consciousness articulates between arts disciplines and the public, reader, and audience they serve to engage through outreach programs. Developing a sense of craft as both an artistic, professional, and cultural practice, creative writing studies must investigate and expand spaces where craft collaborations can take place.

Craft consciousness moves creative writing into dialogues in institutional and department partnerships such as theatre and craft arts. These partnerships have the potential to offer an artistic reciprocity in which craft develops as an inclusive and interdisciplinary focus. In the craft arts scholarship by Glenn Adamson, Howard Risatti,

and Sandra Alfondy—the question of where craft will go next—is a question of how traditional and digital craft will be transformed in virtual spaces. From Benjamin's description of the craftsmen workshop, the intimacy and tactile nature of craft instruction seems to be lost in the evolution of virtual spaces. Forms of craft and the method for their instruction are transformed and accelerated in virtual worlds in which the relationship between craftsperson and object has changed. Glenn Adamson observes in *The Craft Reader* (2010) that "craft" as in "handi-craft" did not exist until 19th century industrialization and the Craft Arts Movement. Craft exists in its nostalgia for a pre-industrial age in which the machine was a less influential to modes of production. In a post-industrial context, the term craft has applications that will be redefined again in virtual spaces.

Craft can now be commodified and sold as "handcrafted" and "artisan" objects that are marketed for with the assumption that they are born simultaneously of a pre-industrial and non-virtual process. The body authenticates an object or process in ways that machine and computer often cannot. In virtual spaces for craft production and interpretation, the artist must account for a sensory experience that deviates from the writing workshop, and in hypertext navigation or applied craft software, the craft artist develops interactions and metalanguages that will change the function of craft in the 21st century. Frank Lloyd Wright argued that the machine was the "handmaid of art" and the question of how craft will be integrated or opposed with craft will dictate the way author function and art practice will change. In her essay "Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft,"

Esther Leslie discusses the way in which spatial transfiguration will bring artists from isolation to interfaces that will affect writing workshop and definitions of craft.

Virtual spaces will "remodel" craft spaces, as Leslie says, and may revitalize those craft practices that are in danger of vanishing. In her essay "Otherwise Unobtainable: The Applied Arts and the Politics and Poetics of Digital Technology," Tanya Harrod identifies the pattern in which craft tradition has remained static or unexplored. Harrod discusses Malcolm McCullough's *Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand* and McCullough's description of the "inarticulate tradition of craft." She writes of McCullough:

This inarticulacy encompasses any making, tool-using activity—from wielding a paintbrush to raising a piece of silver—that draws on tacit knowledge. Currently, the wordlessness associated with confident artistic creativity is perceived as highly problematic. As McCullough puts it, the crafts, on the whole, have lacked notation (Harrod 232).

The inarticulacy of craft is endemic to creative writing as it is in all artistic disciplines. Mayers' identification of "craft criticism" provides a voice for creative writing as it seeks coalitions with writing and art, and the next phase of craft research and practice will be founded on experiments that test the dualism of a pre-industrial past and a virtual future. Technology promises future innovation while craft promises authenticity. The advantages of technology and craft are not oppositional, and as we see in new media applications in science or the applied arts, technology can extend the reach of art practice and experimentation. Video documentation of craft artists in their workshops may provide a

glimpse into experience that would not be possible otherwise. We may be reaching the moment in which new revelations about craft practice will speak in new ways.

Global spaces are reconfigured in the virtual and regional. In *NeoCraft: Modernity and the Crafts* (2007), Sandra Alfondy argues that craft connects to the nexuses and conversations in modernity. Alfondy moves the conversation from the traditional to the virtual and argues "there is no doubt that the future belongs to the virtual spaces of craft (Alfondy 215). Both Alfondy and Adamson envision craft as a site in which interdisciplinary study "connects contemporary writing on the crafts—regardless of whether it relates to craft, design, art history, anthropology, philosophy, history, women studies, or fashion" (Alfondy xiv). Craft consciousness posits in an awareness that is more expansive than the disciplinary distinctions we have come to perceive as the boundaries of craft. Craft consciousness expands the boundaries of knowledge making just as craft criticism serves to expand awareness of written forms. This dissertation has argued for definition(s) of craft that serve to expand the knowledge of the field of creative writing. Knowledge is often associated with scholarly inquiry, and it has been my argument in this dissertation that creative practice embodies and demonstrates a form of knowledge that must be defended and represented in our educational coalitions and practices.

Craft provides a metalanguage for artists to speak to each other. The objective of this dissertation has been to present craft (and rhetoric) as a heuristic for understanding and articulating the future potential of creative writing studies. Craft histories and theories will provide one possible language for articulating the ways in which we may

identify the commonalities in our artistic practice. This dissertation does not make curricular and programmatic recommendations for graduate programs in creative writing; however, as this dissertation evolves beyond its present form, it will attempt to observe and document the practices of studio and crafts workshops with the objective of influencing creative practice. As part of my qualitative research, I will be documenting the craft practices taking place in workshops across art and professional disciplines and making recommendations based on conversations with practitioners who teach and participate in workshops and collaborative forums.

The mythic figure of Proteus escapes capture through a prophetic mutability. Creative writing, like craft and artistry itself, escapes simplified description and calls for its assimilation to an institutional function. We may not make easy prescriptions for the field of creative writing or any other arts field, and instead must shift forms and languages as scholars and artists in order to find the articulations that form our unique knowledge. This dissertation has focused on rhetoric and craft as languages and practices that link our work as artists, and it will be in the interest of creative writing to remain elusive and uncategorized. In the form of Proteus there is the potential to adapt craft practices and philosophies that empower creative writing in its own direction and cause.

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