

‘Finding a Fit: university writing courses and the publishing sector’**Abstract**

There is considerable discussion about the quality, merit and outcomes of creative writing courses: from the side of the universities is a degree of questioning the intellectual rigour of the discipline; from the professional writing side is considerable questioning about the role of writing programs in preparing graduates for the field. This paper traces the position of creative writing in this context, with particular reference to a recent research project into publisher attitudes. I ask about the focus of curricula and what issues might be considered when shaping the intellectual, technical and professional content of creative writing courses.

Keywords: writing courses; professional training; publishing sector; critique

Introduction

Creative writing has existed in universities for as long as literature courses have been taught, and longer. It was present in the very early versions of European higher education institutions, the scholarly monasteries, where it took the form of personal essays, hymns and illuminated writing. Although not named as a discipline as such, its identity in the university system has paralleled that of literary studies, particularly the tradition of teaching that encourages creative responses to established literary texts. Its presence is demonstrated by the many important poets, playwrights and novelists who have held academic positions over the past decades (and centuries) – though in most cases they were teaching English or philosophy or philology, rather than writing.[1] By the nineteenth century creative writing was found in courses of rhetoric, and in 1884 it was established as an actual discipline at Harvard University.[2] A number of excellent histories of the rise of university-based creative writing exist; I do not intend to supplement them here, but only to point out that those of us involved in the teaching of writing have a place in a long and worthy scholarly tradition.

Despite this long history, creative writing academics often tell me they feel they are the outsiders: members of the discipline that does not have a scholarly face, and that is in the university under sufferance.[3] In this paper I trace what writing seems to have become, in the university system, since the 1970s; what complaints are made of the discipline and its programmes; and what our future might include. Certainly writing has changed its character substantially in recent years. From being not much more than a splinter of something creative inserting itself into the foot of the Arts faculty, it has become part of the shoe.

In the 12 years from 1992 to 2004, the number of UK universities offering postgraduate degrees in creative writing increased from 8 to 85. Student numbers have risen at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels: one commentator estimated that in 2004 there were around 110,000 people enrolled in some kind of writing course in the United Kingdom. Australia has witnessed a similar burgeoning of interest and enrolments: 31 of the 39 universities offer creative writing courses, 20 of them at all levels from undergraduate to doctorate.[4] It is difficult to estimate the numbers enrolled in Australia because national statistics collapse writing student numbers into literature or arts student numbers, but good estimates suggest that there is in the order of 3,000 to 5,000 people studying undergraduate creative writing: a significant number in a nation of 21 million people. Across the Anglophone world similar expansions of courses and student numbers are being experienced, as Marjorie Perloff points out,[5] and writing is also growing in popularity in universities across Europe, Asia and the Pacific. No doubt some take creative writing electives or majors because they see it as an easy option,[6] or a pleasurable break from the demands of other courses; but many undergraduates I have spoken with are serious and passionate about their studies in general, and their creative writing in particular. Some think, with their eyes starry, that they will become rich and famous from writing, but most just want to be in an environment where writing is valued, where they can hone their skills and develop knowledge of the form and the field.

Contemporary contexts

Along with the increase in student numbers is an increase in scholarship. In the ‘early days’ (the 1970s and 1980s), writing in Australia and the UK was comparatively invisible in intellectual terms, with those universities that offered the subject focusing more on craft than on the ontological, axiological or epistemological underpinnings. Since the 1990s, though, writing academics have published volumes of material that reflects on our creative and pedagogical practice. Perhaps not surprisingly, given that we are writers, a considerable body of writing on the discipline is now in circulation, with several excellent scholarly journals dedicated to the writing discipline,[7] and a growing list of books and monographs. Many of these keep their attention on pedagogical matters – *How do we teach writing? What is really involved in an exegesis?* – but increasingly there is serious theoretical and research attention being paid to the discipline. Current research projects I know about focus on: defining the nature of the discipline and its aims; exploring its potential and its outcomes; analysing the axiological issues involved in writing; pursuing the phenomenological aspects of writing in the world; cognitive effects of writing; histories of the field; legal aspects, including copyright and moral rights legislation; and also blue sky research into questions such as ‘What is the nature of creativity?’, ‘What constitutes research in the creative arts?’ and ‘What good can writing do?’

The growth in scholarship is pleasing to anyone involved in the teaching of this form; and university administrators typically applaud the increase in both effective student units and research outputs. However, those of us employed as teachers of creative writing at university level are working in a field where the gatekeepers, both university and media commentators, frequently show a degree of hostility towards us. The views expressed on the content of courses, and the quality of both teaching and its outcomes, are less pleasing than we might expect, given the sustained and growing demand for student places. For instance, the headline for an article by journalist Ciar Byrne read *UNIVERSITIES CASH IN ON CREATIVE WRITING COURSES AS ASPIRING NOVELISTS ABANDON THE LONE STRUGGLE*. The article went on to cite a writer as saying, ‘The universities see [writing courses] as useful cash cows.’[8] Publisher and academic Hilary McPhee wrote, similarly: ‘Creative writing courses are the cash cows of humanities departments at many universities and colleges’;[9] and,

continuing the theme, a senior academic at a research university (named here by the pseudonym ‘Hannah’) said:

I’m in favour of teaching creative writing at undergraduate level for universities purely to make money, for English departments to make money in a situation where access to other sources of money is, as you know, precluded in so many cases now, and where just about every second member of the general public regards themselves as potentially a creative writer. I think that’s a cash cow that we should all be using.[10]

The notion that creative writing’s curriculum content, student and staff publication outputs, contribution to universities’ community service, and general capacity to enrich the academy should be reduced to a purely economic effect – and an economic effect identified with primary production, cash *cows* – is easy to read as pejorative. Even if I could frame as sour grapes the touch of disdain directed at the success our programmes enjoy, I find it difficult to accept the sometimes explicit, frequently implicit, naming of writing as academically inferior. This emerges variously in the commentary. Sometimes it is as direct as ‘Hannah’s’ view of writing as having value only because it makes money. Sometimes it is dismissive: that creative writing is popular with students because it is easy; or because it offers a way of expressing oneself in an academic context where the stakes are not as high as in, say, literary theory or philosophy. Sometimes it is found in the suggestion that writing is merely ‘professional’ and hence not scholarly; or, in a reversal of this, that it is ‘avocational’ and thus has no productive outcomes (writer and some-time university teacher Frank Moorhouse writes, ‘the joke goes that when someone says they’re a writer the next question is, *Where do you teach?*’[11]). In any event, embedded in much of the commentary is the suggestion that creative writing, as taught in universities, lacks scholarly, intellectual and professional rigour.

The gatekeepers speak

I experienced this at first hand during a research project I undertook that involved my interviewing a number of publishers. The nature and quality of creative writing in universities had nothing to do with my research project,[12] and I had no questions on that topic listed in my interview schedule, but when my respondents discovered that I was (then) the director of a writing programme, they almost without exception took it upon themselves to set me right about what we are doing wrong. Below is a handful of comments I recorded – comments that were rehearsed by many of my respondents:

[journal editor] You can almost tell someone's in a creative writing course. The markers are, well, the sort of attempt to be inventive with narrative that doesn't always come off: really, a straight third-person past tense would have done the story much more justice but no, they'll write it in the second-person singular or something, or they'll use the present tense. I'm almost allergic to the present tense now. And you feel that that's been some directive or exercise that they've been given in a creative writing class. Look, they're experiences worth having, but they're not always going to work. To be honest, I would have to say that up to 80% of what comes in [from writing students] is just not publishable.

[book publisher] Writing is good for the students and they should just use that as an experience. The university experience, where you learn about things doesn't necessarily ... mean you're going to be successful ... It's just practice.

[journal editor] I have a fairly negative and cynical view of writing programmes and their profusion. I don't think that writing can be taught, but for those who do have talent I do think it can be a great discipline and provides them with networks. ... My worry is that creative writing programmes have been set up by floundering English programmes who are not getting the enrolments that they want in their literature courses.

[book publisher] If someone is setting out to write, especially a capital L literary novel the first time, they shouldn't really expect to get published. ... I mean if you're going to get published, you've got to write for a reader. About 5,000 readers. ... Students want to write for themselves and they love their writing ... and so do academics, and their peer group. So the publisher turns out to be the bad cop.

[journal editor] Despite the increased interest in the field, there has been no corresponding lift in the quality of manuscripts.

In short, the overwhelming message I was given is that students and graduates are submitting work that is not publishable; and, by extension, we writing academics are not teaching them properly. This attitude is echoed, and even amplified, by the community of writers who have emerged in print to complain about the bastardisation of their art form by universities that are 'flooding the country' with inadequate or uncommitted writers. Many of these commentators insist that the best training for writers is to 'get out in the real world'; that those who study in tertiary institutions are 'stifling' their talent, vision and voice, or (in another reversal of logic) taking an 'easy road' to writing. This is despite the fact that many internationally recognised writers such as British Poet Laureate Andrew Motion, prize-winning novelists Tim Winton, Kate Grenville and Tracy Chevalier, and Man Booker Prize winners Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro, are all graduates of creative writing programmes; and despite the fact that most of the publishers I interviewed had – I discovered, on checking their catalogues – included a number of writing programme graduates in their lists.

I suspect there are several issues that are raising the ire of the gatekeepers. One, the offhand commentary offered by university gatekeepers, is probably is an effect of the nature of the form. Our cousins in the visual or performing arts are also within

universities under advisement, but are not treated in as dismissive a manner, probably because they are involved in a practice that is not considered to be a universal skill. Many people will say, without a blush, ‘I can’t sing’; ‘I can hardly draw a straight line’; ‘I’ve got two left feet’. Consequently visual and performance art, and the scholarship behind those practices, are understood to be specialised. Writing, though, is something that people in developed nations learn from the day we start at school, and it is something most people do pretty much every day. From this, I suggest, emerges the enduring notion that anyone can write. As Hilary McPhee again puts it: ‘Fiction is perhaps the most difficult kind of writing to do well – yet the number of people who wake up one morning and decide to write a novel seems to increase every year.’ Other academics in particular are skilled in writing, yet many of them seem not to recognize the complexities involved in creative writing – its own specializations, its own and radically different use of the medium of language, its own traditions, knowledges and philosophical underpinning. There seems to be limited understanding of the fact that there is considerably more to creative writing than the argument and exposition that are taught throughout the curriculum.

The problem of the perspective held by publishers and professional writers emerges, I think, from a different logic. Much of the complaint is almost certainly part of the normal thrust-and-parry in any professional field. The rest may well be a product of the lack of clarity about how, what and why we teach writing. We are not all, or not all necessarily, training students to become famous novelists. Many of us are training students to be more sensitive to language and better communicators, to be better readers, more effective thinkers, and more creative professionals in any field of practice. Of course we want them to be skilful writers too, but few creative writing programmes in universities operate according to the approach that is advertised under slogans like *Become a published writer in six weeks, or your money back!* There are other, and often competing, imperatives embedded in the curricula of most creative writing programmes.

The economic context

But given the fact that the main value placed on us by universities is our economic contribution, and the main criticism that emerges from the publishers is our failure to deliver graduates ready to produce for the creative industries, I would like to take a little time to attend to the issue of professional quality. After all, creative writing is part of a highly professional field, one that contributes to the national purse, and where many people make a very good living.[13] Even in Australia, a nation with a small population and a well-recognised passion for sport rather than (quote/unquote) culture, people spend a great deal of money on reading material: in the past decade, the (average) total household spending by Australians on books alone, in one year, was \$1,155 million.[14] This puts the lie to the continual complaint that people don't read any more. But it fails to specify what they're reading, and the years these promising figures emerged were also years marked by the dominance of writers like Dan Brown and JK Rowling, which must skew the results. Those excellent sales figures also fail to indicate the poor level of authors' incomes: the 2000-01 mean earned income of Australian writers from writing was \$26,400,[15] and the median income was considerably lower. In Britain, a study commissioned by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society shows similarly poor returns to writers: some 90% of British authors can expect to earn on average only £4,000 per annum from their writing.[16] Indeed, as James Michener famously said, you can make a fortune as a writer, but you can't make a living.[17]

Given this context, perhaps it is reasonable to build into our programmes some specific training in the industry of writing: to prepare students to be more professional, to treat themselves as small businesses, and operate more effectively in the market. There is some support for this in the literature: UK author William Boyd says, 'My feeling is that writing can't be taught, but you can learn about the business. ... You can learn the tricks of the trade ... you may learn about agents and submitting work.'[18] I would suggest that there is considerably more to most writing programmes than training in *the tricks of the trade*. Nonetheless, ensuring that students are aware of the shape and structure of the industry, and of what is involved in getting published and making a living, wouldn't go astray. For instance, consider the issue of unsolicited manuscripts. Despite the fact that most publishers have on

their websites the statement that they will not read such submissions, of course they do (maybe there'll be a gem in the slush pile!). But as part of the process of training students not just in the production of a good sentence, a good story, we might also train them in the process of good professional practice. Teach them, for instance, ways of connecting with a potential publisher rather than sending manuscripts off in the post like letters to Santa. Because despite the fact that publishers typically do look at unsolicited manuscripts, they rarely if ever put them into production, as my publisher-respondents make clear:

[book publisher] I can only think of two novels we've published over twenty years from the slush pile ... perhaps it was three. We publish very, very few, from the totally unsolicited pile.

[book publisher] Last year we didn't publish any new writers because there was nothing that I felt was worth tearing trees down for. You get one or two manuscripts where you think, 'oh this is really interesting, the writing is good, it's a page turner', but for the majority I can look at a manuscript and within three minutes reject it ...

[book publisher] We receive about 2000 unsolicited manuscripts a year; in the past two years we have published only one book from the slush pile; and it wasn't a fiction book.

It doesn't hurt students to know this: not as a way of demoralising them, but as a way of forearming them for the context in which they will be practising. And indeed, it is possible to inform students about this context in a very encouraging way: yes, publishers receive thousands of submissions; but the vast majority of those are unprofessional, and both badly written and badly presented. This means that a

graduate who knows not only their form, but also the field, starts off several steps ahead of the pack. If they have been trained in the techniques of presentation, have made contacts in the industry, and have learned how to connect with and compete for a place in the field, they are well on the way to achieving at least a measure of success. Then too, if they are aware from the beginning that fiction and poetry are not ways to make a living, they will be able to take majors and minors of study likely to position them for the job market, while ensuring their passion for aesthetics and craft is supported and developed.

Like it or not, publication and the economic aspects of the writing industry are central to our lives, in a climate that has been dominated by neoliberal thinking, the globalisation of markets and the US hegemon. Paying attention to this, and ensuring students receive some training that will set them up for the field, is a way of satisfying students – or, more often, their parents – that there are careers waiting at the end of the degree road. We no longer (if we ever did) have the luxury of indulging in a purely autonomous practice – ‘art for art’s sake’; and nor does anyone else. Even the chief executive of the Australia Council for the Arts, the peak national body committed to generating artistic practice, said: ‘We’re seeing worldwide that economies ... that encourage and emphasise creative talent are winning, and those without creative talent are slipping behind’.[19] It is not clear, in the article I cite here, whether she said this because she believes that creativity equals economic development, or because she wants to hitch the art wagon to the star of economic growth. But certainly, this is one of very important contexts framing and shaping our discipline – a context that is trending towards a future where we are entirely colonised by the economy.

The professional context

Having said this, though, let me resile from any impression that I am suggesting professionalism in practice is equivalent to financial potential, or that it should be a foundation stone in curriculum development. Certainly if we are able to sell to

potential students (and their parents) the notion that a creative writing degree has a direct career trajectory, we may be able to increase enrolments and hence generate income for our institutions. But probably only in the short term; the queues of novelists at the unemployment offices will soon disabuse people of that notion. And besides, the *professionalism equals income earning capacity* future is one fraught with difficulties, not least because writing is not a *professional* profession. If anything, at least in the literary world, it is a nineteenth-century profession. Consider this exchange, for example – another quote from my research project:

Interviewer: Do you have an identifiable body of readers out there? Has your market research team gone out to people who listen to, say, the national radio station, and asked who among them reads [your] books.

Publisher: Um, market research is something publishers are very thin on because it's just not viable to do market research on an individual book. Our best market research really is talking to booksellers – talking to our representatives particularly – talking to the people on the ground ...

Interviewer: Mmh.

Publisher: I mean I think if you asked everyone who bought and/or read the more literary of our fiction, you'd probably find 75 per cent of them are [the national radio] listeners.

Interviewer: Yes. Eight per cent of the country listen to that station, and buy your books.

Publisher: That's right. We're separate classes.

This is just one publisher, but I have heard a similar line from a number of other publishing houses: and it is, I suggest, a naïve perspective, and one that is under-professional. Most industries spend money on their industry. Publishers do not. Many publishers admit that they are out of touch with the potential buyers, that they do not market their writers, and do not maintain their backlists. For example, I asked my publisher-respondents for whom they produced their titles, and one response included:

[book publisher] What we publish – I have to admit – is totally out of touch with the vast majority of the population to be honest ... I mean I don't know who 'the people' are because I don't meet them, so obviously I'm living in a totally different universe from the majority of the people and it's very disconcerting because I feel that in a way what we're publishing has no relationship to their reality.

[book publisher] For poetry, I think there's only about 300 people in the whole of country who read poetry ... because talking to other publishers, you sense that's an average that you manage to sell of poetry books ... It's a small audience. The literary fiction market seems to be getting smaller so we go out of our way to try and make [our titles] look more middle-brow rather than literature. The more literary they look, the smaller the market.

These comments – which are very typical of my findings in this research project and in research conducted by others – indicates that the publishing industry is not really very 'industrial': not entirely committed to what is known as good business practice,

despite the recent moves by mainstream business organisations to purchase publishing houses and attempt to force them into the production of high returns.

It is not only literary publishers who fall down in the professional stakes. Booksellers, the public face of the publishing industry, are insufficiently organised, and can be intractable – at least in the opinion of publishers who have wrestled with them over the meaning, genre and saleability of a title. I experienced an example of this when I attempted to purchase a title on the teaching of writing, Bill Manhire's *Mutes and Earthquakes* (1997),^[20] at a major bookstore. The catalogue showed that the book was in stock; but it couldn't be found. Eventually a bright young thing joined in the search, and found a copy shelved under Geology (well of course: it has 'earthquake' in the title!). My publisher-respondents made similar comments about how their books are treated by booksellers; for example:

[book publisher] We did a novel which was about a young girl's sexual adventures and the author rang me up to say it was filed under health. I mean they couldn't even get that right. So I called the bookseller, and she said it's really difficult to change the category now because it's in their records.

Even if the booksellers manage to categorise a title accurately, there are still immense problems associated with the marketing:

[book publisher] There are far too many things being published. Books have a shelf life – you know the joke – shorter than that of yoghurt, so there's six weeks for a book to make it or break it and it's finished, and then there's another book to take its place.

Some conclusions

What this indicates is that while we should, in the interests of good pedagogy and responsible curriculum, provide our students with the skills necessary to navigate the world of publishing and production, it is important to remember that creative writing is not a career path, however professionally we might conduct ourselves within that field. If we use, as our main selling point to students, the idea that the future is found down the professional route, our arguments will quickly become unconvincing in the light of the structure of that field itself. And, after all, making a living is not a particularly good reason for writing: or at least, not for writing that has an autonomous aspect to it. All the same, I do think it incumbent on us to provide students with professional training in aspects such as: *what is the field? What are the positions within the field? How does one compete for a position within that field?* Because of course they are going to seek publication, and the better prepared they are, the easier it will be for them, and the less likely it is that publishers will harass us, the teachers.

But it can't just be about that. We don't train people for professions the way law and engineering courses train them. We are in a different game. And we can't ever fully prepare students because we can't second-guess the market or the industry. At the moment, for instance, fiction is not selling well, even though it is the bulk of what most of us teach. Back to my publishers:

[book publisher] When you think about the literary fiction, marketing has shrunk and shrunk and shrunk.

[book publisher] Generally people aren't making a lot of money on fiction. And because of the welter of fiction we can't ... [pause]. I don't know anyone who's publishing a lot of fiction. It does make you think....

[book publisher] For every book that succeeds, five or more fail in commercial terms, however worthy they may be in literary terms. There are very few writers who are both, if you like, qualified literary and also commercial in the sense of, dare I say it, being a very good read.

Yes I know, but as Salman Rushdie has said so poignantly, ‘literature has perhaps never had a future’.[21] And he cites the many pronouncements of the death of the novel, including one by a major British writer that goes like this:

It hardly needs pointing out that at this moment the prestige of the novel is extremely low, so low that the words ‘I never read novels’, which even a dozen years ago were generally uttered with a hint of apology, are now always uttered in a tone of conscious pride.

That was George Orwell, writing in 1936. *Le plus ça change le plus ça le même chose*. The words ‘I don’t read novels’ were uttered by the literary editor of an important newspaper in Australia not too long ago, and can be heard in many important venues. ‘Everyone knows’ that literary fiction doesn’t sell; ‘everyone knows’ that poetry doesn’t sell. In fact, as one of my respondents put it:

[book publisher]: Books don’t sell. But they need to be published, all the same. ... It’s worth it, even if it takes twenty years to begin to make a mark, even if it never makes a mark beyond a handful of people, still ideas are circulating in the agora.

What routes might we take in our courses that are not about business, while retaining an intelligent professionalism in our curricula and engendering it in our students? There are many. One route emerges from the recognition that in most cases we are the offspring or offshoots of English courses, and therefore might usefully teach students not only to write well, intelligently and perceptively, but to become intelligent and perceptive readers as well. Teach them to read, and to love reading. Milan Kundera points out that: ‘The novelist’s ambition is not to do something better than his predecessors but to see what they did not see, say what they did not say’.[22] If we can generate this attitude and practice in our students, they will be better equipped to write effectively, intelligently, and in a way likely to invigorate the field. In addition, of course, they will be more effective readers – and buyers of books, thus satisfying publishers on two accounts.

Another route emerges out of the philosophy or communication studies background that also informs many creative writing courses. Taking this approach, we would teach students to regard the literary world as a space for ideas, for connection with others, for critique. John Carey points out that of all the art forms, only writing has the real capacity to critique because it is only in writing that a developed argument can be articulated: it is, he insists, ‘the only art capable of reasoning’.[23] So perhaps we should spend more time teaching students to use this capacity in their own creative writing and reading: provide them with skills of analysis; with models of reflective and reflexive practice; with knowledge about logic and argument.

A third is the route that engenders good research practice in writing students, at undergraduate or postgraduate levels. Here we can provide training in phenomenology (teach them how to know and evaluate what they experience); in observation (what do they see and hear? how do they establish the terms for seeing and hearing?); in social research (who do they talk to, and how do they listen?); and in archival research. The gathering, analysis and interpretation of data is as much a part of fiction writing as of any social sciences or humanities disciplines. Though writers

do something different with the data, it still needs to be collected intelligently and ethically, and this is a learned skill, one we can usefully provide our students.

Finally (though of course there are many other approaches, these are the four I address here), take the route that results in graduates who are highly literate with regard to their own field: writing. Train them in where we have come from, as evidenced in the insights offered by writers from Aristotle to Arnold and beyond. Expand their idea of ‘the book’ by exposing them to forms of creative writing beyond the published volume: web-based writing, performative writing and artist books are just a few of the ways in which ‘book’ operates and circulates. Show them how to identify the imperatives, values, discourses and positions that operate in the field of creative writing, and how one might be a ‘good citizen’ of this field.

In these ways, it is possible to help students prepare themselves for a future that is full of economic imperatives and technological possibilities, and to engage in this while building an intelligent, reflexive, embedded attitude to writing, the grounds on which it is built, and the space in which it operates. Engender in this an appreciation for some of the values of the neoclassicists, who treated the literary sphere as a space for conversations and debates about the nature of society and responsibility, and not just a space to talk about *my place in Tuscany* or to solve a murder. Personally, I would like to see us do the lot: teach professional creative intellectual critical financially successful students. If we can’t do it all, go as far as we can, and, most importantly, give students the tools that will take them into their own futures, whatever those may be. Teach students to write. Teach them to read. Teach them to think. Teach them to be engaged members of society.

Let me finish with the words of one of my publisher-respondents:

Everyone’s writing novels instead of buying them and they have no time to read them. ... There are words and words all over the place and I think there has to be some thought about what’s the purpose of it all.

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Endnotes

1. It is noteworthy that Oxford University instituted a Chair of Poetry in 1708, however loosely this position was connected with instruction in poetry.
2. David Myers 1996 *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall: p.47
3. This impression is based on my reading and on talking with many writing academics in several countries, Britain, US, Australia and New Zealand, and from reading drafts submitted to the journal I edit with Nigel Krauth.
4. See list of courses at <http://www.aawp.org.au/courses>
5. Marjorie Perloff 2006 'Creative Writing among the Disciplines', *MLA Newsletter*, Spring, 3-4: p.3
6. This is, of course, expressed by students taking any number of subjects as electives: I have heard it said of drama, literature, psychology and history, and no doubt it is said of other areas too.
7. A short list would include *TEXT: the journal of writing and writing programmes* in Australia <<http://www.textjournal.com.au/>>, *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* <<http://www.multilingual-matters.net/nw/>> and the new journal, *Creative Writing: Teaching, Theory & Practice*, in the UK, and a rich variety in the US, including *College English* <<http://www.ncte.org/pubs/journals/ce>> and *College Composition and Communication* <<http://www.ncte.org/cccc/pubs/ccc>>
8. Ciar Byrne 2004 'Universities cash in on creative writing courses as aspiring novelists abandon the lone struggle', *The Independent* (London) 15 April: p.13
9. Hilary McPhee 2003 'I've read it all before', *The Age*, 14 June: p.8
10. Cited in Sue North, 2005, *Relations of Power and Competing Knowledges Within the Academy: Creative Writing as Research*, PhD thesis, University of Canberra;

'Hannah' 2001: F, 3-4; this thesis can be accessed online from the Australian Digital Theses Program website, <http://erl.canberra.edu.au/public/adt-AUC20051025.121424/>

11. Frank Moorhouse 2004 'Creative Writing Classes', *The Australian*, The Forum B02, 23 October: 6

12. The project explored the relation between creative writing and human rights; results are reported in several publications, most recently in the essay (co-authored with Jordan Williams), 'Writing/rights: creative practice and political action', *TEXT* 12.1, <http://www.textjournal.com.au/april08/williams_webb.htm>

13. Most of those making a living, of course, are publishers, editors, indexers, book distributors, and booksellers rather than writers; but let's not go there!

14. Australia Council for the Arts 2003 *Some Australian Arts Statistics*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra: 30

15. This was then in the lowest bracket of incomes.

16. Reported in *Writers' Magazine*, 24 March 2008, http://www.writersservices.com/mag/a_news_arhive08.htm#top, accessed 9 August 2008

17. The attribution may be apocryphal: I have been unable to find a really convincing source; however, it is such a good sentence that I choose to use it anyway.

18. Cited Ciar Byrne 2004

19. Jennifer Bott 2004 Speech to the Canberra and Region Focus on Business Conference, Canberra

20. Bill Manhire (ed) 1997 *Mutes & Earthquakes: Bill Manhire's Writing Course at Victoria*. Wellington NZ: Victoria University Press

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