The Anxiety of Confluence:

Theory in and with Creative Writing

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Abstract

The Anxiety of Confluence is the first truly concerted attempt to theorise some of the major issues facing the discipline of Creative Writing today. Taking as its basis the meta-Creative Writing discourse – that body of texts written by Creative Writing academics reflecting upon their own discipline – it identifies three significant points of anxiety which have arisen as a result of Creative Writing's relatively recent entry into the academy: authorship, the supplementary discourse, and research. A chapter is dedicated to each of these issues, each time beginning with a broad analysis of the discourse in order to identify the specific locus of the anxiety as represented by Creative Writing's own practitioners, and then re-approaching that anxiety through the theoretical work of Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gerard Genette, in order to find new ways of thinking about and understanding what happens when Creative Writing is undertaken as an academic discipline. While this discourse analysis is wide-ranging and interested in finding commonality, the theoretical response restricts itself to one or two texts at a time, as rather than instituting points of contact between Creative Writing and theory as whole bodies of work, the aim in each chapter is to develop in some detail a theoretical account which resonates specifically with the discipline. At the same time, however, it comes to be seen that much of Creative Writing's anxiety is presaged by analogous tensions in literary theory and criticism, and that the barrier between these terms is not as strong as people on either side of it may believe. The fourth chapter therefore breaks with this methodology in order to performatively explore, in a creative critical mode, the potential interfusion of Creative Writing, criticism, and theory which the previous three chapters have created a space for.

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Introduction

What is creative writing?

> Like "English" it is a term that may not be universally admired, but it is
> pretty widely understood. "It is called 'creative writing' in most places,"
> Richard Hugo said with some impatience. "And you know what I'm
> talking about."
> But do we? Creative writing refers to two things: (1) a classroom subject,
> the teaching of fiction- and verse-writing at colleges and universities
> across the country and (2) a national system for the employment of
> fiction writers and poets to teach the subject. (Myers xi)

So runs the opening definitional statement, from the preface to *The Elephants
Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880* (2006), for what D. G. Myers considers to be this
thing called creative writing. Writing a history of American creative writing
which is now so well-regarded as to approach canonicity, Myers chooses to
problematise the subject as one operating under 'academic *and* literary' pressures,
running like a river through the history of twentieth-century American literature
banked on one side by the pedagogic concerns of the academy and on the other
by the social, economic, and intellectual needs of the writers who staff it (xi).
That *The Elephants Teach* is, in his own words, 'history proper: history in its
traditional form', intended before anything else to 'establish the series of events',
necessitates this definition of creative writing as a 'two-backed thing', in that
telling its history in this way depends upon the histories of everything and
everyone it came into significant contact with over this period (xi-xii).

This is not, however, the only way to define a thing: if we want to define a
table, we are unlikely to begin with the ur-history of tables, with early man
placing items on the surfaces of relatively flat rocks. Partly because *The Elephants*

Teach and other scholarly works have illustrated at some length and detail the history of the subject, my concern in this thesis will be with creative writing *now*, creative writing as it exists in the academy today for thousands of students and academics. Do we, in fact, know what Richard Hugo is talking about? Beyond Myers' two-point definition, the term 'creative writing' always carries a serious risk of confusion between process and product: it is easy to elide the difference between the work of creative writing (attending contact hours, administrating modules, applying for grants, writing impact reports) and works of creative writing (novels, poems, plays, and all the variegated manner of literary work besides). To indicate the specifically disciplinary aspect of this topic, the process side of that equation, I will be using the capitalised Creative Writing, as in 'an MA in Creative Writing', in distinction from creative writing, the broader category of all that that term might indicate. It is reasonable, then, to ask the question 'what is Creative Writing?' without necessarily expecting the response to fully incorporate the ancillary concern of 'and how did it come to be this way?' – though some brief, indicatory comments regarding that history are necessary. To begin again:

What is Creative Writing? If it has a single feature which makes it itself, an identifying mark which sets it apart from the various subject areas it intersects with, it is the workshop. The workshop is, for Michelene Wandor, 'the institutional distinctiveness of CW as an academic discipline [...] the *sine qua non* for creative writing itself' (120). Myers suggests that the key importance of writers' colonies in the history of creative writing is in the fact that they became 'a model for subsequent attempts to devise an artists' alternative to professionalism - including the writers' workshop' (82). Andrew Cowan writes in an article on the workshop that in 'certain recent critiques, the term 'workshop' has been used to

describe almost every aspect of our discipline's pedagogy' ('A life event').[*] Dianne Donnelly reports of a survey of American Creative Writing teachers that, out of 167 respondents, 'only 10% define their [pedagogical] model to be markedly different than the traditional workshop' (3).

And yet, even though the workshop has been the discipline's 'model of instruction [for] over a hundred years' (Donnelly 6) – and so since before the University of Iowa officially adopted the term 'Writers' Workshop', thereby baptising it into the academy (Wandor 41) – none of the above writers give a precise definition of what the contemporary workshop actually consists of. Although Myers suggests that the 'method of communal making and communal criticism *is* the workshop method' (118), there is a fair distance between this and an explicit statement of normative pedagogical practice, of which Donnelly says that 'there is little agreement as to what constitutes the workshop practice in creative writing classrooms internationally' (2).

There is therefore something of a paradox here, in that the very thing which is held to constitute the *sine qua non* of Creative Writing seems to lack a *sine qua non* of its own. One might object that the identity of the workshop is held in its common sense meaning of students coming together to discuss their writing, but on these grounds the workshop model becomes distinguishable from the standard academic seminar only on the basis of topic; one might as well hold the sociology seminar and the English seminar to be separately formulated pedagogic tools. In short, there is something more, or at least something else, at work in the workshop. After supplying a list of varying 'workshop praxes and teacher

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[*] *TEXT*, the journal which published Cowan's article, is an online-only publication which will be referred to frequently in this thesis. Along with certain other online journals, its articles are presented without pagination, and so will be cited throughout without page numbers.

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perspectives', Donnelly suggests that some of the inherent difficulty here lies in the fact that 'the workshop is a process, and as such, its 'plasticity' conforms to individual manipulation' (8-9). Perhaps the workshop thus indicates an outlook, or a set of principles, rather than a certain praxis of set behaviours.

Part of the reason for the workshop's lack of precise definition might be the variance and complexity of the history of Creative Writing. *The Elephants Teach* covers a narrative from around 1880, through the founding of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, to the discipline's contemporary incarnation. Along the way Myers covers the rapid expansion of the U.S. College system at the turn of the 20th Century, the shifting tides of Classics, Philology, Rhetoric, Composition and English as academic subjects, the post-World War II G.I. Bill, the founding of writers' colonies in the first half of the twentieth century, William Hughes Mearns' progressive education movement, and the views and voices of writers from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow to Saul Bellow, amongst other things. Wandor's book *The Author is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else* (2008) also constitutes a history of Creative Writing, although this time from a British perspective and – as the subtitle 'Creative Writing Reconceived' suggests – with more polemical fervour than Myers' historical account. Even so, Wandor's history takes in a largely dissimilar set of historical influences with a similarly broad range: the Workers' Educational Association, the Open University, the Oxbridge tutorial system, gender politics, writing as therapy, the new British universities of the 1960s and 1990s, the music conservatoire, and more. What Jacques Barzun suggests in the foreword to *The Elephants Teach* also pertains to Wandor's account: the history of Creative Writing seems to involve 'the story of a great part of our culture since the turn of the [twentieth] century' (ix). Between them, these histories suggest something of the enormous variance in preconceptions a Creative Writing tutor might bring to bear on the inherent 'plasticity' of a workshop which is held at the confluence of a centuries-long academic narrative, of economic eddies buoying the academy up and down, of extra-academic

political considerations of voice and identity, of a transnational trans-germination of ideas, of the progress of literary history, and of other factors besides.

This complication in positioning Creative Writing is reified in the shelves of a university library. In the University of East Anglia's library, organised by the Library of Congress Classification System, there are at least three major locations in which Creative Writing books aimed at students might be found: PE1404-08, PN145-175 and PN3355-3365. At each shelf mark these books are collocated with books on Creative Writing pedagogy aimed at academics and books about writing creatively aimed at non-academic audiences, but also with books less related to the discipline. PE1404-1408 features books on improving academic writing, style guides, and reference works, as well as works of research on composition and rhetoric. PN145-175 likewise mixes style guides and works on rhetoric in with Creative Writing handbooks, but also features volumes of interviews with writers (PE designates English language, PN English literature). PN3355-3365 contains the greatest density of Creative Writing material, but here again the variance in the types of book present is notable. Guides intended to work in tandem with university curricula are joined by works for a general audience on becoming a writer, works aimed at specific generic writing like erotic and horror, theoretical works by the likes of Roland Barthes and J. Hillis Miller, literary reflections on writing by the likes of Umberto Eco and Milan Kundera, books on the practical aspects of publishing literary work, and critical volumes with titles like *Theory and the Novel* and *The Spatiality of the Novel.*

Of course, the simple reason that there is no dedicated Creative Writing shelf mark is that the LoC system was first devised at the turn of the 20th Century, whilst the term 'creative writing' was first used in its modern sense, according to Myers, in the 1920s (101). However, what these shelves, along with the sundry other odd places where relevant books might be found, show at a glance is some of Creative Writing's intellectual and social heritage. Moreover, they underline

the fact that this history still pertains today, that the student arriving in the contemporary writers' workshop is still affected by, albeit perhaps subtly, the knock-on effects that rhetoric and composition, theory and postmodernism, popular fiction and progressive education have all had on the subject.

This history is not, of course, Creative Writing's heritage exclusively. Just as a particular view of literary history might influence a tutor's idiosyncratic interpretation of the workshop, the factors suggested at the end of the preceding paragraph are all also elements in the institutional history of English. Indeed, these two histories are complexly intertwined in a way that can form the basis of an argument for seeing Creative Writing primarily as a component of English rather than as an academic discipline in its own right. Seeing it in this light allows us to see it as another in a long line of paradigms in English, each displacing the last, which Gerald Graff identifies in his institutional history *Professing Literature* (1987). In his introduction, Graff sketches out a series of moments of change within English wherein each new approach has been met with a similarly suspicious reaction and suggests that it is 'worth pondering that traditional humanists of [an earlier] era indicted research scholarship for many of the very same sins for which later traditionalists indicted the New Criticism and present day traditionalists indict literary theory' (4). That was in 1985, and the position of Creative Writing in the academy today is similarly fractious, with Paul Dawson in his 2005 study *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* depicting the current relationship as 'a major source of consternation' and as a kind of stand-off between 'the garret and the ivory tower' wherein neither Creative Writing nor English wants the other (14).

However, if placing Creative Writing squarely within English's ivory tower is a source of consternation, it also enables an approach to its definitional anxieties which operates via arguments already developed in the debate around the place of English in the broader academy. In 'Literary force: institutional values' (1999), Timothy Clark suggests that

One of the distinctive features of literary criticism is that its status in the university has always been controversial, if not precarious. Throughout its history it has tried to answer accusations of being little more than a professionalised hobby, a dilettante subject, the poor man's classics, or an amateurish cultivation of taste and connoisseurship. If one reads the various histories of English that are now available, such as the work of Franklin E. Court (1992) or Brian Doyle's *English and Englishness* (1989), one is struck by the way in which changes in conceptions of the subject and of ways of teaching it are invariably driven by internal, university pressures, especially the need to conform to models of disciplinary knowledge regarded as established in other areas. [...] There is no history of English with the same inherent rationale as the history of physics or sociology, working out various theories and conflicting claims around a common object.

As an exercise, reread the above paragraph whilst making the appropriate substitutions to make it about Creative Writing. If you start by reading 'Creative Writing' for 'literary criticism' or 'English', and then replace Court and Doyle with Myers and Wandor, you will find that there is little else to be done: Creative Writing is accused of dilettantism, is under pressure to conform to external models of knowledge, is without inherent rationale, just as English was and still is. Wandor performs a similar exercise in the epilogue to *The Author is Not Dead*, weaving the language of Creative Writing into a quote from Terry Eagleton in order to form an 'intertextual manifesto':

'Like all the best radical positions, then, mine is a thoroughly traditionalist one. I wish to recall literary criticism (*creative writing*) from certain fashionable, new-fangled ways of thinking it has been seduced by – "literature" (*creative writing*) as a specially privileged object (*separate from the study of literature*), the "aesthetic" (*self-expression, genius, inspiration, the imagination*) as separable from social determinants, and so on – and return it to the ancient paths (*the study of the histories of*

literature, the close study of literary texts and their contexts, the study,
understanding and practice of language through different forms of writing,
literary and non-literary, discursive and imaginative, figurative and literal,
fiction and non-fiction) which it has abandoned.... I do not mean that we
should revive the whole range of ancient rhetorical terms (*or deny the*
relative autonomy of creative writing and other writing studies, or merely use
writing as an adjunct to literary studies, although it can clearly be that too)
and substitute these for modern critical language (*which would consist of a*
study and understanding of the history and concepts of literary criticism and
literary theory; a writerly study, understanding and practice of discursive and
imaginative writing, alongside usefully traditional and reader-based literary
studies, effecting a rapprochement between them all)....' (229-30)

Wandor's increasingly intrusive parenthetical emendations here speak to
something about the relationship between Creative Writing and English. Trying
on the one hand to maintain the point of contact between Creative Writing and a
capacity to study literature which has long been the domain of English, and on
the other to maintain for Creative Writing a sense of autonomy and specificity,
her insertions rewrite themselves even as they rewrite Eagleton, denying that the
subject is separate from 'the study of literature' even as it is forbidden to be 'an
adjunct to literary studies', and then, in the same breath, saying that 'it can clearly
be that too'. While *The Author is not Dead* is, in many ways, a meritorious study of
the discipline, what this exercise speaks to above all is an unresolved anxiety
about the discipline's status.

This may be in part due to the fact that, as Clark states, English itself does not
enjoy an 'inherent rationale'. His argument moves through two significant stages,
first analysing the study of literature in terms of various conceptualisations of the
university which have circulated during the history of English (these being the
'institutional values' of his title), and then suggesting that the particular
sensitivity which English seems to have to its institutional context is a necessary
consequence of its object of study (that being the 'literary force').

In the first half of this argument there are three major 'ideas of the university' in play. First is what he terms, following Bill Readings' monograph *The University in Ruins*, the 'University of Reason'. Here, in a formulation established by Immanuel Kant in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, the university is given absolute freedom to 'legislate in all matters of knowledge', such that it constitutes an institution in which 'reason gives itself its own law' in indifference to external political and cultural pressures. However, it is nonetheless 'subordinate in power to the state' in that this freedom is permitted on the basis that the university trains a professional class of workers and therefore 'enables a peaceful diffusion of enlightenment throughout the state'. When the legislation of knowledge is an entirely intra-university affair, the recognition of certain work as being 'of' a certain discipline can only be performed by those who are already 'of' that discipline, and therefore there is a felt pressure for a discipline to 'discern or isolate some object able to underwrite or guarantee a self-contained disciplinary space' which justifies that recognition. While this task is performable in relatively simple ways by history or biology – disciplines with 'inherent rationale' – literature's quality as something which crosses disciplinary boundaries, which can concern, in principle, any topic, makes this a problem for English.

The second idea of the university in Clark's account has its source in Wilhelm von Humboldt's University of Berlin, established 1810, and is termed the 'University of Culture'. This model, 'distinct in idea if not in practice' from the University of Reason, simultaneously integrates the work of teaching with the work of research whilst also integrating the principle of reason with a principle of 'custom'. Rather than enjoying a fiefdom over reason and knowledge for the ultimate benefit of the state, this model directly attends to the culture of the state; it is 'the embodiment of culture (*Bildung*) as an archive or repository and the agent of *Bildung* as the process of individual and communal self-development'. This creates for English a potential situation where, instead of trying to pin down 'literature as literature' or finding some other way of making-exclusive its object

of study, it can look to the development of people more broadly as 'the site for a liberal education, specialised but not specialist, academic but not narrowly technical, addressed not just to the intellect but to general cultural skills'.

Between these two ideas Clark sees an explanatory model for much of the controversy in the history of English, with that long line of paradigms which were identified by Graff now being viewed as a negotiation between Reason (which might be indicated by drives towards formalism) and Culture (which might be indicated by broadly historicist schools of thought). The third idea, the 'University of Excellence', I will not take up in detail just now, save to say that it interrupts both of the above models and seems to have attained dominance over the contemporary university scene.

Having demonstrated how the constitution of English is highly responsive to its institutional context, the second half of Clark's argument takes up this idea of 'inherent rationale' and shows how the discipline's lack of such is not down to a weakness or a vagueness, but is in fact inherent to the study of literature. Through four topic headings, he shows how literature resists being rationalised, such that any study of it forms 'an unstable and invaluable place of intersection and contestation between various other disciplines, and spaces outside the academy'. To gloss just the first of these: Clark suggests that literature generates an 'aporetic relation between the singular and the universal', in which the 'difficulty is that of distinguishing the 'conceptual' from the 'merely verbal'. Using *Hamlet* as an example, he lists every use of the word 'visage' in the text and asks if it is possible to decide whether each of these is 'to be taken under some more general conceptual framework', or whether each 'is relatively insignificant', just a repetition of a word with no greater import. Concluding that this question 'puts to work an undecidability about the status of [the text's] language', he argues that if no 'procedural rule can be formulated as to how to read it' then ultimately the study of literature can neither be held down to a distinct object of study, nor

attend to the holistic, liberal education of its students, for the text always contains the capacity to be read otherwise.

If English is thus conceived of as a discipline in which the object of study at every moment turns against its own disciplinarisation, Creative Writing's definitional anxiety is twofold. First, it too is (and I hope this is an uncontroversial proposition) a means of studying literature. That it is concerned with a practice of writing over a practice of reading, and will therefore feature a distinct body of concerns and principles, is clear, but teaching and research regarding the writing of literature must be concerned with identifying the literary to the same degree as teaching and research regarding the reading of literature. Second, even while it negotiates its own definition internally in terms of literariness and externally in terms of the university more broadly, it must also negotiate, in an odd mid-space between those two sites, with another discipline which it is at once aligned with (in terms of subject) and orthogonal to (in terms of approach). Indeed, the fact that that difference in approach is displayed by the workshop, and that literature's quality of undecidability makes the workshop no more stable a construction than that of the study of literature in English, may explain why Creative Writing so persistently turns to it as a source of definition in spite of its instability. To even speak of Creative Writing as having a *sine qua non* is to ignore its doubly-undecidable institutional context.

We have arrived, in a manner of speaking, at defining Creative Writing for the purposes of this thesis as the specifically institutional and disciplinary aspects of the subject, but with an awareness of the deep difficulties which the phrase 'institutional and disciplinary' smuggles into the conversation. Having thus excluded much of what might accumulate under the phrase 'creative writing', it is worth taking a moment to outline something of what else this thesis is not concerned with.

First: history. The work of historicising Creative Writing is by no means over: in a 2016 article, 'Myth maker: Malcolm Bradbury and the creation of creative writing at UEA', Lise Jaillant explodes in fine style many of the misconceptions which circulate around the genesis of Creative Writing in the UK – it did not start in 1970, it did not start at UEA, Ian McEwan was not, in any real sense, the country's first Creative Writing student – and shows how this traditional narrative was constructed and reinforced by the university's PR department and Bradbury himself as a way of gaining students for one and status for the other. Challenging the slightly misty-eyed view of Creative Writing as a meteoric literary success in the face of an increasingly indifferent or even hostile culture is, I think, vital for the future of the discipline. However, as this thesis proceeds towards its object via a different method, which I will argue lends itself to a clearer illustration of what Creative Writing is *today*, to flag up in endless asides the historical valence of certain issues would be more distracting than enlightening.

Second: interviews. In the process of doing this research at the University of East Anglia, finding myself in inevitable social proximity to Creative Writers at MA, PhD and staff levels, what I have been asked more than any other question is 'why haven't I heard of you?' – or sometimes, more bluntly, 'why aren't you talking to us about it?' – with the implication that the first person to ask for insight on Creative Writing should by rights be a Creative Writer. To gain insight on the discipline through a process of surveying and interviewing those who are engaged in it directly is, again, important work which must be pursued. I would like to briefly offer two slightly conciliatory justifications for why this is not that work. The first is that there is now, as we will see, a very large corpus of work written by Creative Writers about Creative Writing; composed thoughtfully over time, and published via refereed journals and academic publishing imprints, I am taking this corpus to be a fair representation of Creative Writing's self-conceptualisation which does not carry the risk of self-misrepresentation which

on-the-spot responses to questioning might generate. The other is that my aim in this thesis, as the above definition of Creative Writing shows, is to consider the discipline institutionally, with the contexts of criticism and theory made present, and as my access to those subjects is (obviously) textual, the written expressions of Creative Writing academia lend themselves to this study more readily than their spoken equivalents.

Third: geography. Which is to say, if an additional reason for largely overlooking history and avoiding field work is that the breadth of my topic necessitates delimitation somewhere, another way of doing this is to identify a particular geographical area. Academic work on Creative Writing as a discipline tends to happen in three main areas: to list a few examples, *The Elephants Teach* and Mark McGurls' landmark book *The Program Era* (2012) both emerge from the American context; Wandor's *The Author is not Dead* and the journal *New Writing* from the British context; and Dawson's *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* and the journal *TEXT* from the Australian context. In terms of work coming out of Creative Writing I draw freely from these contexts, but in my analysis I am predominantly concerned with the British scene of Creative Writing. There are any number of comparisons and distinctions to be made across these zones – Jaillant shows both how American Creative Writing had a formative influence on its British counterpart and how the British university system necessitated major changes in how Creative Writing operates (352-6) – but broadly they are not so different as to make thoughts from one irrelevant to another. In this way, I hope that my analysis of specifically British institutional pressures – such as the Research Excellence Framework – has valence in other contexts. There has been, as far as I know, no truly thorough and rigorous work conducted on Creative Writing as a global scene of production; Harry Whitehead's 2016 article 'The Programmatic Era: Creative Writing as Cultural Imperialism' shows us that this is important work which must look beyond the borders of the 'Global North' if it is to avoid inadvertent cultural imperialism (359).

Having outlined some exclusions, we might turn back to the argument presented above about the definition of Creative Writing, this time not for its content, but as a model for this thesis's methodology. My opening position, that the workshop is broadly seen as Creative Writing's key marker of differentiation, was drawn from four academics who write from or about Creative Writing: D. G. Myers, Michelene Wandor, Andrew Cowan, and Dianne Donnelly. Texts like theirs constitute what this thesis refers to as the meta-Creative Writing discourse; writing which is generated by Creative Writing, but which is about the discipline rather than being itself the creative product of the discipline. The production of this writing in large quantities is, even by the standards of Creative Writing in Britain, a relatively recent phenomenon: two major sources of it are the journals *TEXT* and *New Writing*, which were founded in 1997 and 2004 respectively, and a large number of meta-Creative Writing monographs and anthologies are put out by the British publishing house Multilingual Matters, which began its Creative Writing Studies list in 2007. Similar work has been published in lower concentrations by larger publishers including the Cambridge University Press and Routledge, as well as in various other (usually literary studies-oriented) journals. The usefulness of this work lies in the opportunity it provides to read across the positions, opinions and analyses of large numbers of people working in Creative Writing, allowing an analysis to be performed in which commonalities around the kinds of anxieties which Creative Writing experiences as a discipline may be identified. Each of the first three chapters begins with such an analysis.

That those four examples of the meta-Creative Writing discourse were set against a single, fairly short critical-theoretical text, 'Literary force: institutional values', is also to be taken as indicative of my methodology. This thesis is, in part, undergirded by a belief that theory can engage in a mutually beneficial relationship with Creative Writing, but that the way to do that is not to attempt to overpower the meta-Creative Writing discourse with a more illustrious, more

canonical mass of theory. To merely draw connections wherein this Creative Writing thing is reminiscent of that theory thing is not a persuasive move for workers on either side of the divide when they each already have their own distinct methods of doing work. Instead, theory must be shown to have the capacity to deliver substantive and transformative insights into what Creative Writing is and what it does, just as it has for the literary criticism it developed alongside. Therefore, each of the first three chapters engages with one or two particular theoretical texts slowly, patiently, and at length, in attempt to arrive at a detailed and complex response to the anxieties identified in the analysis of the meta-Creative Writing discourse.

Finally, my definition of Creative Writing ultimately consisted not of a concrete statement, in the style of Myers' 'two-backed thing', but with a new understanding of why the question is difficult to answer. As we will see, the topics dealt with in this thesis are similarly not squared away: there is, each time, complication and nuancing of the issue, but if we are taking the meta-Creative Writing discourse as indicative of the discipline's constitution, then it can only be through that discourse that full responses to the questions I raise here will arrive. As we will see, the anxieties found in the meta-Creative Writing discourse have, in important ways, antecedent representations within English, and the conversation about what English is and does is certainly not squared away. I, meanwhile, am not a Creative Writer: my disciplinary position, in training, in outlook, and in method, is critical and theoretical, and as such, *my* anxiety is to speak as far as I can, but no further, and I do so on three main issues.

Chapter one concerns the issue of authorship. Beginning with some observations regarding Creative Writing's proximity to English, and therefore to theory, it then finds in the meta-Creative Writing discourse a repeated move whereby (a) theory is represented in synecdoche by Roland Barthes's essay 'The Death of the Author', and then (b) dealing with that essay is taken to be sufficient for having dealt with theory as a whole. It then examines 'The Death of the

Author' in some detail, alongside Michel Foucault's 'What Is an author?', in order to elaborate a theory of how authorship operates and why this operation might present a particular challenge to Creative Writing. Finally, it broadens this theorisation of authorship to include writers of criticism as a means to suggesting potential directions towards resolving Creative Writing's author-anxiety.

Chapter two is interested in the supplementary discourse, those texts which are written by Creative Writing students, usually for the purposes of summative assessment, and which have a relationship to their creative work, but which are not themselves creative. If this seems to be a somewhat round-about way of describing the chapter's topic, it is only as a reflection of the chapter's opening position, which reads the meta-Creative Writing discourse in order to identify the various instantiations of this text and the many, many names it goes by. The chapter then argues that the closest analogue for the supplementary discourse outside of Creative Writing is the preface to a literary work; Gerard Genette's *Paratexts* and Jacques Derrida's 'Outwork', which is the preface to his *Dissemination*, are introduced in order to think in detail about prefacing and supplementarity, leading to a theoretical clarification of the supplementary discourse's status as a text.

Chapter 3 turns to the idea of research as something potentially particularly vexing to Creative Writing in its apparent discordance with the idea of literature; the contemporary British academic is compelled, at various points, to justify their work as constituting research, leading to anxious questions along the lines of 'what knowledge does a novel contain?'. This chapter, therefore, puts alongside the meta-Creative Writing discourse on the topic a detailed analysis of Creative Writing submissions to REF2014, the most recent governmental research assessment exercise, in order to find out what work is being submitted as research and how it is framed as such. The chapter then turns to Derrida's 'Psyche: Invention of the Other' as a way of turning this problem away from one of

knowledge towards one of invention, and thereby suggesting something about the peculiar dynamic of Creative Writing REF submissions.

Each of these three chapters also features an ulterior argument that, as is shown when we try to define Creative Writing via Timothy Clark's account of literary force, the relationship between Creative Writing and English is not simple, is not reducible to the kind of mutual antagonism which Dawson depicts. To observe the co-implication of these two disciplines is nothing new: one of the significant interventions made by Myers in *The Elephants Teach* is to locate a shared point of origin for them in the late-nineteenth century academic scene, in which the sudden and explosive growth of the university system made possible new and disruptive forms of research, scholarship, and teaching (15-34). My analysis, by contrast arriving at this co-implication via a theorisation of Creative Writing, suggests that the two disciplines must reckon with one another *in principle*, and not just due to the happenstance of shared histories. I therefore try to perform something of this reckoning in the fourth chapter, in which my methodology is substituted with a fragmentary form of writing which intends to erode any sense that I, as critic and theorist, have any analytical mastery over the discipline of Creative Writing, in a way which also provides an opportunity to think forward, beyond the limits of my own methodology.

Confluence: a flowing-together, a meeting point, especially of two streams and/or rivers. Heraclitus notwithstanding, a river strikes me as a much more stable, identifiable thing than either English or Creative Writing, the streams of work which my title suggests are meeting. Arguments abound regarding the appropriate delimitations of the study of literature; standing on London Bridge, you can see no river but the Thames.

The confluence itself, however, is much more difficult to locate. Where do two rivers begin to meet, and at what point along the watercourse can we say that they have now met? Does the confluence change shape with the strength of the

rivers' flowing, growing when snow melts, shrinking in times of drought? Can we do anything but identify a convenient centre point and make a gesture towards its instability?

A confluence is a chaotic thing, responsive to the changing of the seasons and the changing of the climate, forming at every moment an unrepeatable configuration of whirls and eddies. Tomorrow, under a new government, or an alternative academic paradigm, the anxiety of this particular confluence may show a fresh face; to restructure the funding of British universities on grounds other than centralised assessment, or to move the study of literature finally beyond what we today think of as theory, would change it in unknowable ways.

The intention of this thesis, however, is to apply serious, extended thought to the confluence as it seems to exist today, in today's university, through the *loci* within it which seem to garner and merit particular attention, Balkanising the disciplines at hand only to the extent that it helps us to understand their interaction, and then creating space for a cross-disciplinary thinking, in a way which has not been done before.

We will begin, however, with an afterword.

Chapter 0: Afterword

0.1: Making Trouble

The paperback edition of Nicholas Royle's first novel, *Quilt* (2010), announces on the back cover that the volume also contains an 'AFTERWORD: Author essay 'Reality Literature''. This afterword begins self-reflexively, observing that there is 'at once something comforting and strange' about afterwords before qualifying this by saying that

> A number of questions nonetheless linger and complicate this enterprise. Does the afterword truly come after the novel or before, especially given its apparent concern with why or how the work came to be written? Is the author of the afterword simply *the same* as the author of the novel? What happens if he begins by solemnly declaring that he *is not*? (I hereby promise: I am not.) What happens if he starts talking or writing like one of the characters or narrators in the book and gradually convinces us that this is in fact who he is? Or if he steadily persuades us that he (or she) is a quite new and different being, but no more or less real than anyone we encountered in the preceding pages? Are we so sure, after all, that what we were reading *was* a novel? And is it so certain that the afterword is not a peculiar continuation of it? (152)

This barrage of questions ultimately proves to be Royle's way into the announcement of a project: 'the strangeness of the afterword as a genre', it turns out, 'might even seek to inaugurate a new kind of writing and give it a name: *reality literature*' (153). From this point forward the afterword drops the question of its own genre and attempts to perform that inauguration, but a lot is raised in the two pages it spends coming to this point. Of course, while *Quilt* is Royle's first

novel, it is not his first book: he is the co-author (with Andrew Bennett) of two undergraduate introductions to literary theory and criticism and the author of a prominent monograph on the theory of the uncanny, among other things, but the novel form constitutes new territory. It is then unsurprising that in writing an afterword (which carries, according to 'Reality Literature', the 'expectation of a certain earnestness and authenticity') he begins by exercising concerns which are, broadly speaking, theoretical (153).

A range of issues is raised in this paragraph of seven questions and the page-and-a-half of discussion which follows it, all of which derive from the simple fact that *Quilt* by Nicholas Royle is being followed (in the now of the reader's reading) by 'Reality Literature' by Nicholas Royle. First there is a problem of temporality. He observes that in the eighteenth century novels were typically accompanied by prefaces rather than afterwords and that we now 'tend to take the playfulness of such prefaces for granted', whereas in the modern preference for afterwords the 'potential of a preface to mislead the reader is dispatched; the afterword seems a more restrained, less worrying genre' (152-3). Of course, the key word here is 'seems', and Royle is here questioning whether the afterword really comes after the novel given that it discusses things – the whys and hows of writing – which seem like they might come chronologically prior to the writing of the text. For both the preface and the afterword, the chronological relationship between it and the text might not necessarily correspond to the chronological relationship between a person's writing of a text and the point at which they explicate that writing.

By the same note, the apparent unplayfulness of the afterword is also queried. The eighteenth century preface is now taken as playful insofar as nobody today would take its truth-claims at face value – any assertion regarding the factuality of the ensuing novel is taken as a transparently fictional conceit. Royle suggests that the afterword is interpreted in a precisely inverse manner: in addition to coming at the end rather than at the beginning, any truth-claims it might make

(for instance, regarding the circumstances of, manner of and reasons for the novel's composition) are by default taken at face value. However, there is no necessary reason for the afterword to behave in this way, and such assumptions about its sincerity suggest only that 'we have not yet really begun to think about the strangeness of the afterword as a genre [...] a quite crazy thing in which anything could happen' (153). This, then, is the second issue being raised: if we know that these two adjacent texts were written by the same hand, why should we take one as reliably fictional and the other as reliably factual?

The third issue might be developed from this by underlining the phrase 'by the same hand'. Whilst the note on the back of the book assures us that 'Reality Literature' is an 'Author essay', the author of the essay himself does not seem so sure. The bracketed performative regarding whether or not the author of the essay is the same as that of the novel – '(I hereby promise: I am not)' – raises the possibility that there is some difference between the figure to whom a reader ascribes the origin of the text and the person who gets the royalty checks in the mail. In this case the latter person is, for both of these texts, Nicholas Royle, but the afterword seems to claim an origin distinct from that of the novel. This difference is not fully elucidated – this section is, after all, only a few hundred words long – and the very act of making a promise in the first-person which assures us that the very first-person seemingly making the promise is not who we think it is is loaded with irony. Even so, the suggestion of an afterword written in the voice of a character while still being signed by the author briefly sketches out one possible way in which such a difference could work. In fact, the potential for a difference in the origin still holds if the afterword is not written in a fictional voice – when indicated by a promise, perhaps, or even when not indicated at all. Placing this kind of question mark over the author would have the effect of destabilising our relationship not only with the afterword but also (in terms of its fictionality) our relationship with the novel itself: this apparently factual text written in what turns out to be a fictional voice might conversely imply that the

voice being imported from the novel is itself only apparently fictional, and so querying the origin of one must also query the origin of the other. This problematisation corresponds with the type of writing Royle calls reality literature: that is, literature which exists not as a discrete artistic object but something which aims to 'make trouble *in and with*' the language we use on a daily basis (155). Between them, these issues raised by Royle's 'Author essay' form a matrix in which the stuff of this thesis might be found.

The literary-theoretical base camp for this kind of thinking about the author – and the one theoretical text Royle makes reference to – is Roland Barthes's 'The Death of the Author'. The afterword's treatment of Barthes's endlessly referenced 1967 essay plays on a suggestion that there is a popular scepticism about 'The Death of the Author' and its ramifications: 'we like to suppose the author recovered. False alarm, folks – and, if you want evidence of the author's vitality and genuineness, one of the first places to look is the afterword to the novel!' (153). Of course, the strangeness of the genre of the afterword which 'Reality Literature' tries to convince us of would also suggest that things are not quite as settled as all that. Even while he is ventriloquising this light-hearted dismissal of Barthes, Royle is providing us with all of the prompting we could need to reply *which author's vitality?* and *what kind of genuineness?* and *should we really be looking at the afterword first?* One common response to 'The Death of the Author' is to assert that the very fact that a text exists means it must have some kind of source, and so the very concept which Barthes's essay works to introduce is a complete non-starter. We will come onto this debate in more detail later, but what the opening pages of 'Reality Literature' suggest is that turning to the afterword (and, by extension, any other peripheral output from an author such as essays and interviews) as evidence of the author's vitality is really no better than just turning to the work itself, and that turning to such peripheral output might in fact confirm that there is something non-simple about our idea of the author. Either way, problems of authorship remain.

Even so, there is no definite stance on those problems to be found in 'Reality Literature'. Here, where the theoretical problems of authorship would seem to be at their very keenest – in an afterword written by a theorist who has also just entered the category of literary author – Royle instead chooses to let the problems and possibilities float. He suggests that an afterword might 'go anywhere' or 'turn out to be *longer than the work preceding it*', but in 'inaugurat[ing] a new kind of writing' his afterword has its own agenda, and so turns out to be very much shorter than the novel, and going to a very specific place (153). Likewise, it does not turn out to be written by one of his characters, or written in any obvious way in some unexpected voice. What it does turn out to do is remind us that this book is not, in any straightforward way, an inauguration for Royle at all. While *Quilt* is his first novel, the playful qualities of its afterword reciprocate the style of writing found in *The uncanny*. There, a work which is framed as an academic monograph – its blurb proclaiming that this 'is the first book-length study of the uncanny' – turns out to be something which seems to want to 'go anywhere'. By stretching the possibilities of bullet points, by enclosing sections of text in the outlines of coffins, by renaming certain notes sections 'Closing Credits' and 'Side Tunnels', by taking as his subject for one chapter a novelist who is also called Nicholas Royle, *The uncanny* arrives at something like an uncanny resemblance to academic writing (112-32, 155-7, 82, 252, 187-202). Against the idea of an afterword which is longer than the work preceding it, here is a monograph featuring a chapter which is easily excerptible in its entirety:

> – Did you say something?
> – I heard a voice.
> – In your head?
> – No, in yours. (107)

The fact that 'Reality Literature' has a stylistic precedent in *The uncanny* as well as a chronological precedent in novel portion of *Quilt* does little, however, to dispel its difficulties. *The uncanny* is, for all its disruption of the genre, a work of

criticism, and as such it proceeds always via readings of texts: using small black stars in place of bullet points speaks to the Research Assessment Exercise's notion of research as 'starred items'; coffins enclose readings of 'a literary preoccupation with being buried alive' from Chaucer to Beckett (112, 155). In *Quilt* the difference is immediately obvious: the textual origin of this critical work is by the same writer as that work, and bound in the same volume, and this strange collocation also drives what Royle says in the afterword, even after it drops the question of its own genre. A two-page discussion of the role of the telephone in literature, for instance, which takes in the work of Frank O'Hara, Shakespeare, and Lewis Carroll, ends with two paragraphs of one short sentence each:

> When do you get the call?
>
> These things happen from time to time. (157)

The first sentence here refers to the first sentence of the novel, in which a telephone rings, and the second is the novel's first line of dialogue. As such, they suddenly disrupt the relatively 'safe' feeling of criticism which the preceding two pages provided: we are now made aware that all of this telephone-talk returns the body of the novel back to us, to be further explicated or understood in a new way or, possibly, to be understood for a first time. Of course, authors writing about their own work is nothing original (this is, after all, an afterword), but here we have a critic and theorist bringing the manner of his acclaimed academic work to bear on his own text. What does it mean for a critical writer to write about their own creative writing under such an academic aegis, and what is the relationship – chronological or otherwise – between the various creative and non-creative works that are thus produced?

Finally, then, the issues raised at the beginning of the afterword are kept present, and in a potentially more troubling way, by the afterword's performative quality. Whereas an obviously signalled deviation such as the use of a character's voice would at least give the reader an interpretive toehold, performativity makes

this afterword strange without giving much away: in a manner akin to the phrase 'I hereby promise: I am not', the afterword as a whole is made ironic, ambiguous, problematic by its intersecting with the preceding novel. Having recalled to the reader the line 'These things happen from time to time.', the essay closes with 'a final parenthetical pouch' which discusses the title of the book – which is 'perhaps the true afterword here' despite being the text's absolute first word. Dipping back into the punning, linguistic texture of the text of the novel, this 'pouch' discusses the title's 'meanings, associations and sounds (*quilt*, *quill*, *will*, *kill*, *ill*, *kilt*, *wilt*, *quit*, *it*)' – one might add that in all of these there is also an *I* which may or may not correspond to the author – before, finally, it asks us to 'turn and begin again, this time without stopping: In the middle of the night the phone rings, over and over...', thereby returning us to the opening line of the novel (159, 3).

In this way, problems of fictionality, problems of supplementarity, problems of authorship float through the afterword, rubbing up against a drily-raised idea of the novel as 'a mere product' of either 'the creative writing workshop' or 'the inexorable machine of the publishing industry'. When it announces a new genre, 'Reality Literature' turns out to be, as well as an afterword and an 'Author essay', something of a manifesto. Every manifesto must have some notion to set itself against: here it is the novel as 'part of the ubiquitous programme', only acceptable 'so long as it doesn't interfere with the running of the programme [...] so long as it passes through without making any real trouble *in and with language*'. The programme, as is in the television programme which floats into our homes on unerring radio waves whether we want it to or not. The programme, as in the computer program composed of instructions which permit the operation of silicon just so and in no other way. The programme, as in the Creative Writing programme, the programme of Mark McGurl's *The Program Era*, the programme delineating methods and modes of creative composition to travel along or aspire towards. From Bennett and Royle's *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*: 'Look at me, come and write literature here, come and experience the

literary, it'll be fun! This way to the creative writing class!' (88). The programme which tells of what will happen before it has happened, as though it were possible to preordain an experience, the programme which through its power of managing expectations very often *does* preordain an experience – at the theatre, at a concert, at a funeral.

Is a Creative Writing programme programmatic? Here I will not take up the obvious problem which this question implies, which is one of the relative quality or dullness of work which enters the world precisely when it is peeled out of Creative Writing's mould; that question has taken up before, explicitly by McGurl, but also by Michelene Wandor, and by D. G. Myers, and by, at some level of subtlety or another, much of what is written about Creative Writing. I am interested in Creative Writing as a discipline, with all the qualities of discourse, praxis and activity that word can imply, and not as appellation, origin, or symptom of some body of literary work. Even while *Quilt* tries to make trouble in and with language, its afterword tries to make trouble in and with our idea of creatively written books. Perhaps there is also, then, an implication that, along with the afterword as a genre, there is a zone in which Creative Writing itself is unexamined – specifically that, in its failure to make trouble, Creative Writing itself has a strangeness which is 'effectively neutralised' and ignored (154).

There is, in truth, a degree of hubris in *Quilt*'s afterword in that, as this thesis will demonstrate, there is an extensive literature examining Creative Writing as a discipline and as a phenomenon which it chooses not to respond to. Nonetheless, in its serious play, in its performative dislocation of expectation, in the stream of questions which seem to emit from the slight gap between it and *Quilt* itself, it efficiently sets in motion the conversations which this thesis will trace, even as 'Reality Literature' steps ahead of them and invents something new.

Chapter 1: The Creative Writing Author

1.1: A subheading involving some kind of pun referring to 'The Death of the Author'

Nicholas Royle is (to simplistically employ the very kind of formulation which 'Reality Literature' queries) an academic who has turned his hand to writing literature, and one who has done so in an institutional context – the University of Sussex – with a vigorous culture of Creative Writing. While this might not be an uncommon occurrence, there is a greater and growing number of people either making the movement in the other direction, or else establishing themselves from the outset as residents of both camps. The discipline of Creative Writing is an academic subject which, while it has been present in the academy in one way or another since at least the second half of the twentieth century, has emerged in the last decade or two as a significant growth area within the field of English Studies. In the UK this growth has been marked by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in its 2007 'Subject Benchmark Statement: English', which says that 'The marked increase in the number of creative writing courses, strands, and modules since the original subject benchmark statement was published [in 2000] provides an excellent example of the vitality of English and its related disciplines' (2). A look through the prospectuses of the UK's top fifty universities according to the 2018 Guardian university league tables will reveal that forty-six of them offer either credited modules or whole degree courses in Creative Writing, and that thirty-nine of those place Creative Writing in the same school or department as English. In the introduction to *Key Issues in Creative Writing*, published in 2013, Diane Donnelly and Graeme Harper report that '79 undergraduate and graduate creative writing programs recorded [in the US] in 1975 pale in comparison to the

reported present figure of 813 [...] tens of thousands of students enter and graduate from the programs each year [...] what began as a 'single, experimental course' in the UK, has developed 'in the space of 40 years to 139 institutions" (xiii). In 'The Rise of Creative Writing' (2018), Andrew Cowan surveys statistics on Creative Writing's growth from a number of sources before identifying as the starkest data the fact that 'in ten years in the UK the number of HEI's offering BA courses (in a variety of combinations) rose from 24 to 83, while the number of MA courses rose from 21 to 200, and the number of PhD programmes from 19 to more than 50'.

One could continue listing evidence for the rise and rise of Creative Writing for some time, but it seems reasonable to take it as read that the subject is now a core component of the modern English department which attracts funding, publishes work and teaches students. More interesting than what this evidence shows, however, is what it does not address. Creative Writing is now part of the academy, but we might ask in what manner it is part of the academy, given that this influx, if we may call it that, is coming into contact and interacting with an already well-established field of study. A much fuller account of the growth of Creative Writing in the American academy (it is a complex and convoluted history) is given in D. G. Myers' book *The Elephants Teach* (2006). The title of the book comes from a possibly apocryphal anecdote in which, upon hearing that Vladimir Nabokov was to be appointed as a Professor of English at Harvard University, Roman Jakobson replied 'What's next? Shall we appoint elephants to teach zoology?' (vi). Whether or not the story is true, the stance it displays is clear: before Creative Writing, novelists and poets were the subjects of a study, not the studiers of a subject. Of course, this is not entirely true: plenty of those subjects of study – Edgar Allan Poe; E. M. Forster; Eliots both George and T. S.; Nabokov himself – could fairly be described as conscious studiers of the subject, but the implication of Jakobson's response here is that the academic subject of English writes *about* literature, but does not *write* it.

As a phrase, 'the elephants teach' neatly encapsulates a shift which occurs when we consider removing the preposition *about*: it marks the collapse of an ontological differentiation between the subject and the object of study. Even where academic critics of literature have also written it, activity in the academy has historically been one of writing-about, whilst the writing-of has been an extra-academic affair which has taken place (for at least as long as English has existed as an academic subject) primarily in the context of the commercial publishing industry. This industry and Creative Writing are raised in 'Reality Literature' as the contexts in which literary production typically occurs, and in these three zones (academic writing, Creative Writing, and publishing) we might see a kind of schema for both the move which Royle makes by choosing to write a novel and the inverse one which those in the field of Creative Writing make. If academia and literary publishing are typically distinct institutional contexts, then Creative Writing is a potentially awkward middle ground between them in which there is always a *but also*. Whether that is thought of as 'literary author *but also* academic' or 'academic *but also* literary author', a situation is created in which practice and study coincide and, as with Royle's afterword, it may become unclear which comes first.

More importantly, at least for my concerns in this chapter, it also raises a potential question around the identity of the author in each aspect. Again we can paraphrase 'Reality Literature': is the author of the academic paper simply *the same* as the author of the novel? What happens if he begins by solemnly declaring that he *is*? And what difference does it make when, as is often the case for students of Creative Writing, the academic and literary work is bound together in the same document with one referring to the other, like a novel and its afterword? All of this production, whether academic or artistic, is textual, and in this way Creative Writing might be distinguished from other professional artistic training: a visual artist's exegesis on their own work at least holds the comfort of arriving in a different medium. Perhaps even worse, what difference does it make

to our idea of the author when a single text is positioned as both academic and literary output? Jeri Kroll's article 'Uneasy Bedfellows', published in *TEXT* in 1999, suggests that at an undergraduate level it is common for 'the creative product [to be] weighted at 60% and the critical 40%' whilst higher levels of study are likely to be weighted more heavily towards the creative portion, which suggests that rather more than half of Creative Writing students' academic output is in a literary mode. In the context of our current concerns regarding the nature of the author in Creative Writing, this state of affairs raises certain questions. How does this hybrid author fit into the traditional models which establish a gap between production and reception? And what kind of author are they? One way of approaching this is to look at the way in which Creative Writing academics have adapted or worked with or responded to literary theory.

In order to do this, we can draw on the extensive and growing body of academic material which has emerged alongside Creative Writing's establishment of itself as an institutionalised, self-reflective, and increasingly mature discipline: the two major journals of Creative Writing, *TEXT* and *New Writing*, and monographs and essay collections from various publishers, most notably Routledge and the Creative Writing-centric *New Writing Viewpoints* series. In looking for points where this work touches literary theory, the immediate conclusion is that Barthes's 'The Death of the Author' looms extremely large. One can spread a wide net in the sea of meta-Creative Writing discourse and come up with rather more references to Barthes, largely regarding 'The Death of the Author', than to any other theorist.

This pattern seems to have been instituted, in fact, before Creative Writing even came close to the current condition in which it enjoys its own, bespoke meta-discourse. In the British context, the discipline arguably arose as a phenomenon contemporaneously with the so-called 'Theory Wars': certainly the predominant (though not entirely accurate) narrative is one in which Creative Writing was born in 1970, at the University of East Anglia, under the inspiration

and guidance of Malcolm Bradbury (Jaillant 350). In his introduction to *Class Work* (1995), an anthology of short stories published to commemorate twenty-five years of Creative Writing at UEA, Bradbury repeats this time and place as being the genesis of British Creative Writing and outlines some of what it was that he and fellow UEA academic Angus Wilson were responding to in their decision to establish the MA course. Alongside factors such as the decline of the literary magazine and the widely-announced 'Death of the Novel' was the fact that to him and Wilson, who were 'both novelists as well as teachers of literature, it seemed somewhat strange for us to be announcing the Death of the Author in the classroom, then going straight back home to be one' (vii-viii). He also describes how 'criticism, stimulated by the new thoughts of France, was undergoing a vivid resurrection, emerging in the new guise of Literary Theory', before naming Roland Barthes and Marshall McLuhan, seemingly as representative examples of the trend.

This observation of a disjunct between 'The Death of the Author' and the clear existence of very much not dead authors is repeated when Jeri Kroll argues in 'The Exegesis and the Gentle Reader/Writer' (2004) that it is theory which has, more than anything else, abrogated the author's 'authority to speak for their artform as well as for themselves', and for her argument it is this essay (along with Barthes's 'Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers') to which she turns, without mentioning any other theorist. While the latter essay is presented as a neutral exposition of those three categories, which Kroll suggests are simultaneously inhabited by the Creative Writer, 'The Death of the Author' is presented as the origin of an ultimately malign force which 'excludes authors' and drives Creative Writers to seek 'sanctuary'. Another essay by Kroll is actually called 'The Resurrected Author' (2004) and similarly employs Barthes's essay in terms of its role in making Creative Writers seek sanctuary in the critical portions of their work, whilst briefly also mentioning 'What Is an Author?', Michel Foucault's 1969 response to Barthes. Likewise, Michelene Wandor's 2008 monograph on Creative

Writing is called *The Author is not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else*. In this book she attacks Barthes's ideas (along with those of other, sympathetic theorists) as 'ridiculously manipulative' in their de-emphasisation of the role of authors in the creation of literary work (164). When arguing that 'cohort-based supervision further dislodges our idea of the unified author', Stuart Glover reaches out to 'Barthes' enunciation of the death of the author and Foucault's elaboration of the author function', finding in them an ally for the 'critique of Romantic discourses of literary production' which is implicit in 'group processes of review, discussion, commentary and revision' (134). 'The Death of the Author' is also the sole citation Robert Miles employs when discussing how 'creative writing finds itself paradoxically situated in relation to contemporary theory' (35).

Whilst Annette Comte's essay 'Hyperfiction: A New Literary Poetics?' (2001) refers to a number of theorists, she opens her argument by saying that the idea of 'a fixed immutable message, the author's, has been losing favour since Roland Barthes' 'Death of the Author' and Derrida's dichotomous oppositions of 'différance'', thereby positioning these as the origins of a theoretical consensus which hypertextual writing particularly responds to. In 'The Robust Imagination' (2006) Enza Gandolfo also covers various thinkers other than Barthes, but only after first feeling the need to disclaim that 'Barthes' announcement of the death of the author [...] is not one I want to take up here'; that Gandolfo feels the need to explicitly put Barthes to one side in this way demonstrates the insistency with which his essay makes its influence felt within Creative Writing. Mike Harris follows a combative line in his essay "Shakespeare Was More Creative When He Was Dead': Is Creativity Theory a Better Fit On Creative Writing Than Literary Theory?' (2011), which follows its titular reference to Barthes by dismissing his 'celebrated (if silly) announcement of the author's 'death'' as part of a broad project to entirely eliminate the role of the writer and install a 'Readerist' theory of literature (173). Here, 'The Death of the Author' is presented at the midpoint of a line of thought stretching from 'the 'New Criticism' of the 1940s, 50s and 60s' to

J. Hillis Miller, thinking to which Harris responds with a blunt 'Reading *isn't* writing' (173). Creative Writing's impulsive identification of theory with Barthes is parodied in Paul William's fictocritical piece 'The Absence of Theory' (2012), where a Creative Writing tutor's discussion of the authorial 'I' is interrupted by a student: 'This is theory, isn't it? [...] This "I" and "cultural perspective" and "author is dead" business. Barthes. Derrida. That stuff.' (221). The list could go on.

So there are occasional theoretical notes being struck beyond 'The Death of the Author'. A little Foucault or Derrida, or maybe other texts from Barthes, are not so uncommon, while Mike Harris, for one, reaches out to the creativity theory of Mihaly Csikszentmihayli. But with occasional exceptions – Milly Epstein-Jannai, for instance, brings a diverse crowd of theorists into an article about automatic writing while avoiding 'The Death of the Author' (2010) – the idea of the death of the author is omnipresent, and its dominance in Creative Writing discourse which approaches theory seems fairly evident. To ask why this might be the case is to ask a complicated question. One aspect of the answer might simply be that Creative Writing academia, when it engages with theory at all, tends to engage with a relatively well-known and apparently digestible instance of it; Gayatri Spivak refers to 'The Death of the Author' as an essay so well circulated that its contents have turned 'metropolitan aphorism' (104). This would be to view 'The Death of the Author' as a kind of synecdochic statement standing in for the genre of theory as a whole, where to reference it is to pay lip service to an established body of work. But, putting aside any slight against Creative Writing this might constitute, it seems that there must be more to it than that, for there is no obvious reason why the lip service would so consistently be performed via one text. If the academic merely wishes to make some brief reference to theory, that reference could just as easily be Derrida's 'différance' or Stanley Fish's reader-response theory or Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome or whatever. What might it be about the death of the author specifically?

A further thought might be that there is something especially needling about an essay which appears to be calling for the personal deaths of authors who are now a part of the academy, which seems to be the stance taken by Harris and the one implied by the title of *The Author is not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else*. However, I would like to suggest that there might be a deeper reason for this fascination which is mirrored in 'Reality Literature', a reason stemming from the fact that crossing the wires of literary production and literary criticism does something strange to our sense of what it is to be an author. When a writer transgresses the boundary between literary and academic production they threaten to collapse any sense of ontological distinction between the-writing-of and writing-about literature, and insofar as these are different kinds of writing produced by different kinds of writer, one of the central tensions or anxieties produced by this transgression is around the status of the author and the idea of authorship. When Creative Writing approaches theory, therefore, the most insightful or inciteful material is that which pertains to the question of authorship.

Of course, the history of the question of authorship goes back rather further than mid-twentieth century literary theory. In his 2005 monograph on the subject, *The Author*, Andrew Bennett asks 'Who was the first author in the Western or European tradition? Was it Homer or Hesiod (both living in c.700BC, if they really existed)[?]', before sketching out a line of potential answers through Pindar, Virgil and Petrarch, and discussing ancient Greek theories of authorship (29, 31-38). However, his book does not begin here: after an introduction which draws on the 1999 film *Shakespeare in Love*, the opening chapter discusses 'The Death of the Author'. Likewise, the introduction to the anthology *What is an author?*, edited by Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller, argues that there is 'nothing new in the idea of the disappearance of the author', citing Biblical scholarship for its lack of dependence on 'a monolithic authorial source of meaning', but nonetheless begins with the sentence 'Roland Barthes announced the 'Death of the Author' in 1968' (1-2). In this way, Barthes's essay constitutes a kind of ground

zero for the modern debate about the author. Authorship is today a fundamentally theoretical issue: regardless of whether Creative Writing sees literary theory (like Comte) as an ally or (like Wandor) as an enemy, one cannot speak on a topic like the author, in the university, amongst English academics, and feign unawareness of theory. If 'The Death of the Author' really has become a metropolitan aphorism, it has done so by enjoying a perpetually current position in the conversation.

In which case, is there anything particularly wrong with Creative Writing's theoretical monomania? Is to focus on 'The Death of the Author' not to strike at the heart of the debate rather than skirt around it? Are there better ways of interrogating the issue of authorship in Creative Writing? To answer this, we must ask questions about what Barthes's essay actually is, what the essay actually says, and how the essay is utilised in Creative Writing.

1.2: Synecdoche twice over

Before discussing what 'The Death of the Author' actually is, it is worth saying that it might be almost easier to state what it is not. In '1967: The Birth of "The Death of the Author"' (published in 2013 with yet another title which puns on Barthes's) John Logie helpfully clears up a number of misapprehensions about the text. For one thing it was not, contrary to popular belief, published in 1968: first appearing in the American avant-garde magazine *Aspen: the magazine in a box* in 1967, it also handily predates the events of May 1968 to which the essay is often connected (see Burke 20). This also means that, perhaps uniquely in Barthes's bibliography, the essay's first publication was not in French; Logie argues that 'Despite the misplaced emphasis on the 1968 French publication date, the urtext is, in this case, the English text. [Richard] Howard's translation of Barthes in *Aspen* 5+6 is–unequivocally–primary. In terms of "The Death" in publication, Barthes's own French text is both chronologically and contextually secondary.' (510). It is partly on this basis that Logie argues that the best version of the essay to read, study and teach is not the later translations in *The Rustle of Language* or *Image-Music-Text*, or even the French version, but the original English translation as reproduced, along with the rest of the contents of *Aspen* 5+6, on UbuWeb.

Of course, in suggesting the primacy of the initial English publication Logie is implicitly raising a whole raft of questions around authorship and translation, the implications of which are both numerous and, in the present context, besides the point. However, even if we put questions of chronology and language to one side, the context of the essay's initial publication is significant. *Aspen* was not an academic journal but an avant-garde art magazine; other contributors to issue 5+6 included William Burroughs, John Cage and Marcel Duchamp, whilst other issues featured input from John Lennon, Andy Warhol and Timothy Leary. That this was not quite a typical academic milieu is made more significant by the fact that, according to Gwen Allen, 'The Death of the Author' was 'Commissioned

specifically for *Aspen* 5+6 [and] must be understood as a deeply site-specific piece of writing, informed by and meant to be read alongside visual art, music, performances, and texts' (qtd. in Logie 502). Commissioned to be placed within a collection of avant-garde artwork, it seems reasonable to suggest a further negative: 'The Death of the Author' is (maybe) not even a theoretical text in any strict sense. As Logie has it, it was never the academic essay it is often presented as – it 'was an essay, to be sure, but one calibrated to the specific context and artistic culture that Aspen cultivated over the course of its preceding four issues' (509).

Returning to the actual text of 'The Death of the Author' can confirm that impression. It is less than two-and-a-half-thousand words long, split over seven paragraphs, each divided from the next (if UbuWeb's rendering is to be believed) by three dots. The essay was published in a pamphlet with two other essays on unrelated topics: a similarly short piece by George Kubler and a rather longer one by Susan Sontag. Within the essay the paragraphs themselves are sufficiently brief and self-contained that one might reasonably be excerpted in its entirety, with the dots marking clear a disjunct between the paragraphs in a way which reprinted versions such as that in *The Rustle of Language* fail to do. Several things might be adduced from this scholarly excursion. First, the marked tendency in the meta-Creative Writing discourse is to use the synecdoche of 'The Death of the Author' to stand in for an abstract 'theory', and so to juxtapose this with a lived, existentially attested-to 'practice'. To consider the circumstances of the writing and publication of Barthes's essay calls that tendency into question; this is a text with a material history, a specificity of time and place and production – the result, in short, of practice. Second, and relatedly, it invites us to consider the text of the essay itself not simply as a purveyor of ideas, but as writing, which therefore needs to be understood not only in terms of its 'content' but also in relation to its performance and the workings of its style.

It is worth briefly outlining the concerns of each of these seven paragraphs in order to bring the essay, and not just its title, more fully into view. In the first paragraph Barthes discusses a quotation from Balzac's *Sarrasine*, which he would later analyse with at length in 1970's *S/Z*, and asks of it 'Who is speaking in this way?'. This opens the question of authorship and voice, to which question Barthes replies that 'writing is itself this special voice, consisting of several indiscernible voices'. The second paragraph is a potted history of the 'modern figure' of the author, moving from what Barthes casually calls 'primitive societies', through the invention of the author in 'English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation', to the contemporary magazines, manuals and monographs where the 'author still rules'. The third suggests a rough chronology of anti-authorial sentiments in Mallarmé, Valéry, Proust, Surrealism and linguistics and, although a little longer, it shares with the previous paragraph an absence of evidence or argument to underpin its historical outlook; instead, Barthes merely presents it as 'doubtless' that Mallarme originated this anti-authorial sentiment, that Valery 'unceasingly questioned and mocked the Author', and it 'is clear that Proust himself' picked up this line of thought. The fourth establishes a relationship between the absence of the Author and a new conception of literary chronology which 'utterly transforms the modern text' by replacing a 'a before and an after' in which 'the Author is supposed to feed the book' with a situation where 'the modern writer (scriptor) is born simultaneously with his text'. The fifth paragraph features some of the more popular quotations from the essay – 'the "message" of the Author-God', 'the text is a tissue of citations' – in a passage which touches on ideas around intertextuality which might be traced in contemporary work by others (Hird 296-7). The sixth discusses the relationship between the Author and the critic, arguing that, as the figure of the Author implies that the text might have a stable meaning, it functions as a boon to critics who make it their work to uncover that meaning, suggesting that there is a degree of complicity between critics and the Author-figure. Finally, the

seventh returns to the Balzac quotation and links it to the 'constitutively ambiguous nature of Greek tragedy' where multiple meanings are allowed to stand, before concluding with a proclamation that 'the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author'.

To run through a précis of the essay's contents in this manner underlines the fact that this is not an essay with a strong core argumentative line running through it. Rather, Barthes chops and skips through various ideas which together form a kind of constellation orbiting around his concerns regarding the idea of the author. This lack of a single, well-elaborated theoretical argument perhaps explains why Creative Writing typically takes a fairly light touch when engaging with the essay. For instance, despite referencing Barthes in the title, Kroll's essay 'The Resurrected Author' makes only a few references to his actual text, stating early on that Barthes 'announced that authors were dead, or irrelevant, which is the same thing in cultural terms' (which misses the essay's future tense), then quoting a little from paragraph five, then asking of Creative Writing students 'How do they conceive of themselves as authors if their position has slipped away in Barthesian terms?' (90, 96). Whilst the last one is actually a rather good question, this does not constitute sustained engagement as it is typically understood. Elsewhere, Michelene Wandor claims that 'the central contradiction in Barthes' thesis' is that the author's 'necessary presence was reaffirmed by the very theory which sought to abolish him/her', essentially on the basis that the existence of the theoretical text implicates an originating author, and later refers to 'Barthes' disingenuous intellectual embroidery which plays with the idea of no text at all' (160, 188). This kind of criticism pulls even further back than Kroll, working essentially with the title of (or one might even think of it as the meme of) 'The Death of the Author'. Of course, such issues are easy to resolve: Andrew Cowan manages to do so neatly in one shortish footnote in his 2011 Creative Writing handbook *The Art of Writing Fiction*:

In announcing the death of the Author, Barthes was writing figuratively. He meant a particular concept of the Author (hence the capital A) rather than individual, empirical authors. After all, he himself was an author and very much alive when he wrote those words. What he meant was that we couldn't take the author as the sole source of a work's meaning. The reader had a role, too. And the social and historical context will produce different readers, and different readings, at different times. This wasn't such a new idea, just expressed more provocatively than previously. (148)

But, what such comments suggest most of all is that engaging with 'The Death of the Author' often means engaging with the concept rather than the text, and neither concept nor text comprise a thorough argument regarding authorship. Strike one against approaching the issue of authorship purely through 'The Death of the Author' is simply this: even if the essay/idea is the cultural ground zero of the modern authorship debate, it is not its alpha and omega. Whilst it might be made to operate as a synecdoche for theory, it is in itself barely a theoretical statement, never mind a sufficient stand-in for the entire field.

This is not to say, however, that the essay is also slight in all other regards. Indeed, part of its vitality lies in the very fact that its paragraphs chop and change in their focus, for through their variegation Barthes reaches out to and gathers together a range of influences and ideas which were present in the mid-sixties, and which to a large extent also form the backdrop for theory as a whole. In his introduction to *What is an author?* (1993), Maurice Biriotti suggests that the 'success of the declaration of the Death of the Author can be traced to a number of interrelated but different, and not necessarily complementary, developments in late twentieth-century thought' before breaking down six of those developments (2). First there is the breaking down of authorial intentionality performed by Wimsatt and Beardsley's 1954 essay 'The Intentional Fallacy', which worked against 'Romantic notions of the individual and of the creative genius of the author'. Second is the structuralist project which followed the work of

Ferdinand de Saussure, which 'insisted on' the arbitrariness of both linguistic signs and social structures, both of which 'had obvious implications for approaches to authorship' in that such arbitrariness must also destabilise any direct causal link between authorial intention and reader interpretation. Third, the essay can 'be read as part of a general move towards reader-based studies of texts' wherein 'the processes of interpreting the text' become the focus of critical attention. Fourth is another move in which the reader (or, in Barthes, the critical reader who asserts a certain reading) is also bracketed, leaving a writing which is 'slippery and evasive of any one stable meaning' as the focus – this move relates especially to Derrida and deconstruction. Fifth are the political concerns which accompany the debate, given that 'Authors come to acquire authority', and so an attack on the author might also constitute an attack on authority. Finally there are the 'problems thrown up by contemporary debates in psychoanalysis' in which the 'notion of a single intending psyche [i.e., an author] which exists before and beyond language now seems hopelessly inadequate' (2-5).

This set of concerns is, as Biriotti qualifies, a 'not exhaustive' list of those present in the essay – the already-mentioned issue of intertextuality would be another. But just from this we can see that 'The Death of the Author' might be thought of as an extraordinary crossing point for numerous strands of the intellectual milieu which bore theory. In this way, the essay is really synecdoche twice over: as well as being a motto which can be made to stand in for the theoretical scene, it gathers in 2500 words the intellectual preconditions for that theoretical scene. This aspect also contributes to the essay's vitality in another way, in that its chopping, changing, weaving, ducking fashion functions as something of a performative demonstration of the very kind of writing – decentered from the individual author, deeply intertextual – which the essay seems to either prophesy or demand. Barthes's views in this essay ultimately look forward to a 'new writing' and a belief that 'to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of

the Author', and the nature of that new writing might be that 'the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture' – a phrase which might be questioned in the abstract, but which aptly describes 'The Death of the Author' itself.

However, all of this does not quite answer the question of why *this* synecdoche is used with such consistency amongst so many potential alternatives. On the one hand, 'The Death of the Author' appears to be, in a number of ways, the perfect synecdochic object, operating as origin, crossroads and figurehead all at once. On the other hand, the point at which Creative Writing experiences its anxiety most deeply – the issue of authorship – is also the point at the heart of 'The Death of the Author'. Just from this the marriage between the two seems perfectly natural, and any given interaction between a Creative Writing essay and 'The Death of the Author' might be well explained by looking at how that essay figures its concern with authorship and how 'The Death of the Author' is used to justify that concern. But the sheer frequency of reference to 'The Death of the Author' suggests that authorship is not the concern of a merely coincidental cluster of Creative Writing essays, but a broader institutional anxiety. Whilst Barthes makes intimations regarding an institutional basis for the way in which the author operates – referring specifically to the genesis of modern authorship in the intellectual movements of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries – he does not attempt an analysis of how and why authorship changes with regards to its context; for that we must turn to Foucault and the concept of the author-function.

1.3: What is an author-function?

So 'The Death of the Author' can be seen as a vital text which, regardless of its overall worth in the Barthes canon or that of theory as a whole, still has the power to fascinate and incite reaction nearly fifty years after its initial publication. For all its merits, however, one thing which it does not constitute is a coherent theoretical position on authorship; rather, it lays out much of what might be at stake in any such theoretical position. It does so within a polemic which works against what Barthes seems to regard as the given or de facto position or positions on authorship: for instance, he identifies the concept of the 'Author' with a belief in 'God and his hypostases, reason, science, the law', or else as 'the Author-God', and asserts that 'recent criticism has often merely consolidated' the concept, with 'the reign of the Author [being also] that of the Critic'. In other words, in 'The Death of the Author' Barthes is working with popular, inherited ideas of what an author is – or, at the very least, what seemed to him to be the popular conception of the day. Indeed, the very title 'The Death of the Author' rhetorically casts the author as something which, if it might die, can reasonably be construed as sufficiently stable and unified enough to be thought of as alive – a singular, monumental idea which might be counterbalanced or countervailed with that of the reader.

In this way the titles of the texts mark a difference in the approach of 'The Death of the Author' as against Michel Foucault's 'What Is an Author?' (1980). Where Barthes assumes some degree of common understanding of what is meant by the word 'author' – a type of person who came to be named in the English empiricist and French rationalist periods – Foucault begins by saying that 'the "author" remains an open question' (113). In other words, while Barthes carries out a polemic against the category of 'author', Foucault is interested in probing that category itself.

His motive for doing so is quickly announced: the second paragraph discusses how his previous book, *The Order of Things*, aimed to 'analyse verbal clusters as discursive layers which fall outside the normal categories of a book, a work, or an author' but, while it performed an analysis of some such discursive layers, it 'neglected a similar analysis of the author and his works'. As a result, Foucault feels that the book used authors' names 'naively', 'allowed their names to function ambiguously', and as such opened itself up to criticisms of handling authors' works inadequately or reading disparate authors together in a counter historical way (113-4). As such it is clear that, despite a series of allusions to Barthes in its opening paragraphs (see Wilson 344-8) 'What Is an Author?' is not, contrary to how it is popularly presented, a response, rejoinder or even companion piece to 'The Death of the Author' – or at least, not in any simple way. Logie both repeats and debunks this stereotype, calling it 'Michel Foucault's 1969 rejoinder', but also quoting Jane Gallop saying that Foucault 'insists that the theme of the author's death is not his' (494, 509).

This is important because, as with 'The Death of the Author', context informs the direction and tenor of Foucault's piece in a significant way. Early on he places to one side some of the concerns of 'The Death of the Author' – 'sociohistorical analysis [...] how the author was individualised [...] the conditions that fostered the formulation of the fundamental critical category of "the man and his work"' – in order to focus purely on 'the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text', and in doing so answer some of the criticisms of *The Order of Things* (115). As such, Foucault's piece is in some ways the inverse of Barthes's: where the latter is short but expansive, the former is rather longer but much tighter in its scope. This, along with the essay's thematic and temporal closeness and its passage regarding 'the link between writing and death' 117), may explain why it is generally regarded in such close proximity to Barthes's essay. However, in attempting to 'reexamine the empty space left by the author's disappearance' (which may or may not be taken for granted, depending upon one's proclivities),

Foucault provides a theoretical attention to the category of author which is absent in Barthes (121).

In pursuing a project of analysing 'discursive layers', Foucault rests his analysis of the author principally upon observations regarding how an author's name is used. In doing so, his marks a distinction between the name of the author as a historical personage and the name of the author as the designated origin of a text. The former of these operates in a manner similar to any other name, whilst the manner in which the latter operates is mediated by what Foucault terms the 'author-function'. In his analysis he arrives at the four 'characteristics of the "author-function"' which to him

> seemed the most obvious and important. They can be summarized in the following manner: the "author-function" is tied to the legal and institutional systems that circumscribe, determine and articulate the realm of discourses; it does not operate in a uniform manner in all discourses, at all times, and in any given culture; it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a text to its creator, but through a series of precise and complex procedures; it does not refer, purely and simply, to an actual individual insofar as it simultaneously gives rise to a variety of egos and to a series of subjective positions that individuals of any class may come to occupy. (130-1)

To take each of these observations in turn: first, the author-function is a legal and institutional phenomenon in that it represents a 'form of property', meaning that the author has a freedom to control and benefit from the text they own. However, that freedom comes on the condition that the author might be subject to punishment as a result of the text, depending on its position 'in a bipolar field of sacred and profane, lawful and unlawful, religious and blasphemous'. Whilst punishment has always been a potential consequence of discourse, its attribution to the author-function came about through the establishment of 'a system of ownership and strict copyright rules' at the turn of the nineteenth century, before

which the discourse was an 'action' rather than 'a thing, a product, or a possession' (124-5). The second observation strikes a complementary note: just as a legal institution transformed an act into a product, literary work was once 'accepted, circulated and valorised without any question about the identity of their author', whilst the authority and authenticity of a scientific text was marked by an author's name in statements 'on the order of "Hippocrates said..." or "Pliny tells us that...". In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this formula was reversed, with scientific texts being verified and 'accepted on their own merits' and literary discourse being 'acceptable only if it carried an author's name'. In this way, the type of author produced by the author-function may vary over time (125-7). Third, the author-function is not a simple linkage between text and name, but 'a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author', and this operation varies 'according to the period and the form of discourse concerned'. As such, the author-functions of philosophers and poets will be constructed differently, as will those of eighteenth and twentieth century novelists. The author-function constructs a 'rational entity' in that it groups multiple texts under a single name; Foucault uses the example of the Christian exegesis of Saint Jerome, who attempts to validate or invalidate certain texts as being by a particular author via criteria other than the name written on or associated with the document, which may mislead in various ways. Foucault sees in Saint Jerome's criteria, which include coherences of quality, doctrine and style, the antecedents of contemporary literary criticism (127-9). Finally, the author-function gathers not only various texts under a single name, but also 'a variety of egos' and 'a series of subjective positions'. By this Foucault is referring to the fact that 'personal pronouns, adverbs of time and place, and the conjugation of verbs' – aspects of a text which refer to the context of the text's composition – 'have a different bearing on texts with an author and those without one'. For example: in a letter, the composer of which might properly be called the writer rather than the author, they refer to the actual circumstances of composition, whereas in a

novel 'they stand for a "second self" whose similarity to the author is never fixed'. If it is understood that the 'I' in a novel does not refer to a historical personage, it 'would be as false to seek the author in relation to the actual writer as to the fictional narrator'; the rational entity constructed by the author-function 'operates so as to effect the simultaneous dispersion' of the plural subjective positions indicated by the text under a singular author name (129-30).

The dramatic usefulness of Foucault's formulation of the author-function to a discussion of how authorship functions in Creative Writing lies in the fact that it ties any thinking of authorship to a consideration of the institutional context in which the individual author is operating. In doing so, Foucault opens up a space for thought which is flexible and reactive without being chaotic or ungrounded. Even while he maintains that there are trans-historical aspects which guide the author-function, his attention to how changing institutional contexts affect the nature of authorship allows room for precisely the kind of shift we might see as Creative Writing confronts the distinction between critical and literary modes of authorship within the specific institutional context of disciplinarity within the academy.

1.4: John Locke: critical darling/international bestseller

Just as it would be naïve to take 'The Death of the Author' as theory's last word on authorship, 'What Is an Author?' is by no means an all-encompassing and self-sufficient statement on the issue. This is attested to by the fact that people have continued to think and write about authorship in Foucault's wake, and often building on Foucault's work; as Adrian Wilson puts it, 'Foucault posited the author-figure as a construct of the reader; and the interpretative space which he thereby opened [...] only became thinkable thanks to Foucault's essay' (343). This space has since become occupied by work specifically aimed at the issue of authorship – Wilson cites Alexander Nehamas, Gregory Currie and Jorge Gracia – as well as those stances on authorship as developed in discussions of literature by any number of theorists and critics, and an increasing amount of secondary analytical work on the subject, including that of Seàn Burke, Andrew Bennett and Wilson himself.

The ongoing nature of this debate suggests that there is much that is contestable in Foucault's formulation of the author-function, and Wilson in fact views 'What Is an Author?' as 'a radical failure, at several levels' (360). His analysis of the essay runs on twin tracks, examining both its rhetorical style and its philosophical content, as Wilson attempts to show how the former masks failings in the latter, and his critique, while not always convincing, is instructive. At the heart of his contention with Foucault are two issues: what he terms as the 'aporetic quality' of Foucault's usage of the figures of 'the text' and 'the author's name', and the lack of definition given to the author-function, which he views as having 'no consistent meaning' (356, 360). Wilson constructs his argument by tracing how the implied meanings of these terms mutate over the course of the essay and ultimately contradict one another.

For example, in looking at the relationship Foucault constructs between the text and the author, Wilson perceives four successive formulations: (a) Foucault

marks his area of interest as 'the singular relationship that holds between an author and a text' (Foucault 115), suggesting to Wilson an implication that all texts have authors; (b) Foucault asserts that 'the name of an author is a variable which accompanies only certain texts to the exclusion of others' (Foucault 124), contradicting the reading of the first formulation; (c) Foucault states that, for all that it 'is assigned a 'realistic' dimension', the author-figure's qualities are 'projections [...] of our way of handling texts' (Foucault 127), making the author '*an interpretive construct*' which derives from reading rather than from the text, such that 'the link between text and author has been broken' (Wilson 350, 352); and (d) Foucault refers to the grammar of a text as bearing 'a number of signs that refer to the author' (Foucault 129) in a way which 'restor[es] the bond between text and author which had just been dissolved' (Wilson 353), albeit now with the caveat that these signs operate differently 'on texts with an author and on those without one' (Foucault 129).

Wilson's similarly patient analyses of other aspects of the essay suggest that the concepts of the 'work' and the author's name undergo similar shifts, whilst the author-function is presented variously as the cause or the consequence of the qualities of authorship which Foucault is analysing. This tension may have been felt in the summary of Foucault's essay in the previous section of this chapter, in which the author-function is variously possessed by institutions, authors and texts. At the centre of Wilson's essay both chronologically and conceptually is a passage in which he re-presents what he sees as the signal success of 'What Is an Author?' – the observation that the named author and the historical originator of a text are non-identical – in terms which make no recourse to Foucault's essay. This he achieves by suggesting that, because one is a work of political philosophy and the other is a work of philosophy of knowledge, the 'Locke' named as the author of *Two Treatises of Government* and the 'Locke' of *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* are two differently-construed authors, and therefore neither can be identical to the historical and undoubtedly singular John Locke (351).

To persevere, for the moment, with the four points summarised above, it must be said that one could begin to rebut Wilson's analysis on his own terms. For instance, if formulation (a) is taken to mean that all authors must have texts and not the other way around, then it is perfectly congruent that only some texts have authors. However, I would suggest that there is a deeper reason for Wilson's disagreement with the essay which stems from a misreading. The upshot of all of this for Wilson is that analysing the aporia of Foucault's essay supports the argument of Seán Burke's *The Death and Return of the Author* in that it 'bears out Burke's principal thesis: 'the principle of the author most powerfully reasserts itself when it is thought absent'; 'the concept of the author is never more alive than when thought dead" (Wilson 362). Of course, this conclusion relies on a belief that Foucault's essay holds the author to be absent or dead. It appears that for Wilson this assertion of absence comes when Foucault 'replac[es] the conventional figure of 'the author' with what he called 'the author-function" (341). In fact, it is not at all clear that Foucault intends to perform such a replacement. In discussing his third characteristic of the author-function, Foucault says that it 'results from a complex operation whose purpose is to construct the rational entity we call an author', suggesting in reasonably clear terms that there is a non-identity between the author-function and that 'rational entity' which might carry a name like Locke (127). By holding this non-identity in mind we might begin to clear up some of the contradictions Wilson finds. For instance, formulation (c) might be glossed as suggesting that whilst qualities of a rational authorial entity are projected by our reading of texts, the author-function, which pertains to that process of projecting, pre-exists the moment of reading and therefore the text-author link is not truly severed. Moreover, the apparently contradictory relationship between author and text might be brought into line if we understand that, while all texts have an origin, the author-function only operates to create the kind of rational entity Foucault is describing in relation to certain texts at the expense of others. Whilst he may not explicitly provide a clear heuristic for

delimiting texts-with-authors from texts-without-authors, he does make a number of intimations regarding the two categories: the category of 'all discourse that supports this "author-function"' includes texts we would describe as literary, but also scientific papers and mathematical treatises, whilst texts such as 'a private letter [...] a contract [...] an anonymous poster' do not, for Foucault, have authors (130, 124). From the claim that 'the function of an author is to characterise the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society' we might broadly surmise that texts which support the author-function are those which circulate publicly, and which are necessarily read and understood with reference to the name attached to them (124).

Wilson is justified in paying close attention to Foucault's rhetoric: as a model of philosophical clarity the essay leaves something to be desired, and there is, in truth, expansive room for confusion regarding the precise natures of and relationships between the various terms it employs. However, to suggest only *a* reading and not the *definitive* reading, Foucault's formulation of the author-function might be rephrased as follows: texts which have an author only do so within the context of broader institutional frameworks, and the negotiation which must occur between text and institution in order to establish the author may be termed the author-function. Note that this abbreviated rephrasing does not stipulate precisely how the author is established – though much of 'What Is an Author?' may be read as an attempt to interrogate that negotiation – because what the phrase 'author-function' identifies and names is not the nature of that negotiation but the fact of its existence. The final sting in Wilson's argument is a version of the aforementioned idea that the anti-authorial essays of Barthes and Foucault are undone by their having and referencing authors: because 'named authors were invoked at the strategic sites of [Foucault's] exposition' (359-60) the argument therefore calls on the very thing it is attempting to absent. On the contrary, in invoking the names of authors Foucault is calling on the very thing he is attempting to explicate the existence and nature of. Indeed, Wilson's own

attempt to clarify Foucault's observations through the test case of John Locke relies on an author-function. If we accept that the Locke of the *Two Treatises* and the Locke of the *Essay* are construed as two different authors, the only possible cause for that fact is the differing institutional contexts of those texts.[*] They share an origin in the historical personage of John Locke (albeit at slightly different points in time), and the names of their authors are identical; the only difference marked by Wilson is that one is a work of political philosophy whilst the other is a work on the philosophy of knowledge. That being the case, there must be a process via which the nature of the author attached to those texts is affected by, in this case, the philosophical institution which holds these to be separate disciplines; this process is what Foucault names the author-function.

This distinction is worth elaborating in the present context because it underlines two things about Foucault's approach to authorship in this essay. First, it makes clear that the key variable with regards to how an author is constituted is the institutional context in which the text is circulating. The mutability of the author-figure comes only as a consequence of changing context, whilst the author-function is constituted in the fact of the negotiation between text and context, which itself exhibits certain qualities. Second, it makes clear that there is no substitution or suppression of the individual, historical author at hand in this discussion. Rather, what is being discussed is the grounds of possibility for the

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[*] In fact, it seems doubtful to me that people do commonly treat these two author-figures as being separate entities, and there are surely better ways of illustrating the non-identity of historical origin and author-figure. One of the qualities of the author-function outlined by Foucault – as illustrated by the example of Jerome, as well as a brief discussion on the authorship of the works of Shakespeare – is that it gathers under a single name multiple texts of potentially differing types.

author *qua* author, for the way in which the name of a writer of literature becomes attached to a text and codified as the author's name.

With regards to Creative Writing, this then clarifies our line of inquiry. The question is not about what kind of author-function is at play in Creative Writing for, as Foucault suggests, the author-function is that negotation which makes authorship possible. If the Creative Writers within the Creative Writing classroom are operating as authors in the sense of authorship which Foucault constructs, then the author-function must (already) be in play. And it seems impossible that Creative Writers are not also authors – or, to state it with a little more nuance, that the texts produced by Creative Writing are not also engendering author-figures whose specific function we might analyse. If we recall the schema earlier suggested wherein Creative Writing obtains an awkward middle ground between the academy and commercial publishing, each of those feature a structure of text-and-institution which creates the space necessary for the author, and it is hard to see how that space might evaporate simply because the demands of both are simultaneously in play. Or, alternatively, one might identify a series of points at which Creative Writing texts circulate publicly as authored entities, whether that be with the historical originator present in the workshop, amongst examiners for assessment (where authorial identity may be hidden, but the fact that the text is singularly-authored is vital), or (a potential endgame for any creative work emerging from Creative Writing) in the realm of commercial publishing.

1.5: Interregnum

As we have seen, antagonistic responses to 'The Death of the Author', especially in Creative Writing, often rely upon a naïve reading of the essay in order to construct a riposte in which an author might insist upon their own fleshly, corporeal nature, beat their chest and ask if they do not bleed, and thereby prove themselves uncut by Barthes's guillotine. It is no great hyperbole to see in this position a sense of Barthes (or his critical inheritor) as executioner, a malign influence stalking the author and waiting to see them off. When 'The Death of the Author' is taken as such an existential threat, it is one thing for a literary critic to casually, aphoristically assert that the author is dead, and has been for fifty years. The claim starts to feel rather more pointed if the critic sees authors in the corridor every day, or even shares an office with one. It might therefore come as some relief to all concerned (if mutually assured destruction is comforting) to hear that if the author is dead, then so too is the critic.

When Mike Harris, in his article 'Shakespeare Was More Creative When He Was Dead', sets out the stall of 'readerist' literary theory, he identifies readers, critics and theorists as sharing space on one side of dichotomy, arranged in opposition to writers on the other side. There can be no productive relationship between the two sides, according to Harris, because theory does 'not seek an alliance with writing but rather *Anschluss*'; from the New Criticism of Wimsatt and Beardsley to the 'poststructuralism' of Barthes, Stanley Fish and J. Hillis Miller, 20th Century literary studies is presented as a concerted effort to rob authors of the credit for their creative effort and grant it to the critics (173).

However, Barthes's essay (once again) turns out to be more subtle than all of that. While he does indeed conclude that 'the birth of the reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author', and while one can see how someone like Harris might interpret this less as a philosophical statement and more as a regicidal call to arms, the reader Barthes wants is not on the same side as the

figure of the critic. Rather, the idea of the Author 'perfectly suits criticism' because

> once the Author is discovered, the text is "explained:' [sic] the critic has conquered; hence it is scarcely surprising not only that, historically, the reign of the Author should also have been that of the Critic, but that criticism (even "new criticism") should be overthrown along with the Author.

For Barthes, observing the literary-critical landscape in 1967, the Author and the Critic are not warring factions, but allies on the wrong side of the debate.

The death of the Critic, however, along with the overthrowing of criticism, must be subjected to the same interpretive asterisks as those of the Author and authorship. The suggestion that criticism must be overthrown is the more immediately unstable of the two. 'The Death of the Author' begins by offering upon a line of Balzac five possible answers to the question 'Who is speaking in this way?', ranging from the narrative voice of 'the story's hero' to the ideological voice of 'romantic psychology'. Barthes immediately qualifies that 'It will always be impossible to know' and that the voice which speaks the line is 'several indiscernible voices', but to suggest possibilities – even a casual list of those which seemed most readily apparent at the time – is already an interpretive act and so, by being written, a critical one.

This is not to hoist Barthes by his own petard: to return to regicide for a moment, when a monarch is overthrown they are done so (nine times out of ten) in readiness for the next one, and there's no hypocrisy in overthrowing criticism by means of criticism, but by drawing attention to the position 'The Death of the Author' takes with regards to criticism we might reorient how we read his final clarion call for the birth of the reader.

We have already seen how, broadly speaking, 'The Death of the Author' is taken by Creative Writing to be emblematic of literary theory as whole, often as a rhetorical means for putting it to one side and moving forward without it. It is

therefore interesting that literary criticism has such a different relationship with the essay, even though Barthes calls for the Critic's downfall in the same breath as the Author's. Again, one reason why Creative Writing can use 'The Death of the Author' in this way is that the essay has such currency in literary criticism and theory and was already synecdochic for a broader set of texts and ideas. Of course, the essay's reception was far from one of universal agreement, though it would be impossible to discuss its place in the history of criticism without opening up what are often called the theory wars of the Seventies and Eighties, which is beyond my present scope. Instead we might ask, for those critics who broadly agree with the body of thought that 'The Death of the Author' has come to represent, how does one continue to write criticism in its shadow?

Or rather, how does one continue to write criticism without the Author? Because this is the heart of the challenge Barthes lays down to criticism as it stood: 'the explanation of the work is always sought in the man who has produced it', and so without 'the "message" of the Author-God' to uncover, 'the claim to "decipher" a text becomes quite useless'; without an Author, the man who the critic seeks in the text is no longer there – and what then can they look for?

In light of Foucault, Barthes's capitalisation of 'Author' suddenly becomes radically useful in its inaudible signification of the fact that, not only should we not take this word to denote the historical personage who produced the text, we should not even take it as an abstraction of author-figures in general. Foucault's four characteristics of the author-function make clear that there are any number of potential instantiations of the author-figure, each taking on some combination or other of the possibilities indicated under the domain of each characteristic. For instance, the first characteristic, in which the author-function creates a property-relationship between a text and its author, could indicate at one extreme the author's right to control who might have use of the text, while at the other extreme it could indicate the author's right to be identified in connection with the text, but not necessarily to have any more substantive ongoing control over it.

The real world existence of the former possibility is demonstrated by the film industry's activity (under the guise of being a proxy for filmmakers) regarding copyright law and piracy, while the latter is found in copyleft institutions such as Creative Commons, which aim to minimise obstructions to intellectual property sharing ('DMCA', Electronic Frontier Foundation; 'Arts & Culture', Creative Commons). For 'The Death of the Author' we might therefore gloss, albeit quite anachronistically, that the target is the author-function as Barthes saw it operating at the time of writing, in which the property rights granted to the author extend beyond control over dissemination and the accrual of reciprocal benefits and into an ownership of the very meaning of the text.

The same argument has significance for the inaudible capitalisation of 'Critic'. While Barthes uses the word 'author' thirty-one times and capitalises nineteen of those instances, the essay's only two uses of 'critic' appear in the phrase 'the critic has conquered; hence it is scarcely surprising not only that, historically, the reign of the Author should also have been that of the Critic'. With one instance of the word capitalised and one not, what separates the two critics here is precisely the moment of conquest: once the critic has 'conquered' the text by discovering the Author within it they become the Critic, who operates in terms of an author-function which makes the meaning of a text as much a matter of property rights as the text itself.

However, if the meaning extracted from a text (in this model of criticism) therefore remains the property of the author, then that necessarily has a consequence in terms of the critic's own instantiation under the author-function. For critics, as much as authors, operate under the author-function's four characteristics: they have property rights with regards to the texts they produce; their discourse undergoes an interesting combination of being verified by the writer's name and on its own merits in the spheres of public circulation and academic refereeing respectively; they have been variously construed at various points in the history of criticism; and they have the option of writing in a

subjective position (just as I have been using 'I' or 'we') which is understood to be non-identical to the historical circumstances of composition. In short, the critic too is an author-figure.

Moreover, the critic is an author-figure whose construction under the author-function depends, at least to some extent, on that of the literary author-figures whose texts they discuss. This we have just seen: if Barthes's phrase 'Author-God' is taken to imply an author-figure who, in an omnipotent fashion, continues to exert control over a text's meaning even as its reader is reading it, then that ownership continues into the meaning as reproduced by a critic. Conversely, for critics to function in the way we now commonly understand them to function, providing readings and interpretations which can and even should cut across both the received opinion around a text and its author's stated intention regarding it, there must be a contestation of the site of meaning, in terms of who is responsible for a text's meaning and who has rights over it. A literary author-figure free to assert meaning and a critical author-figure free to unboundedly interpret cannot co-exist.

Framed as such, this contestation is not so much theoretical or moral as it is legal. In extreme examples this is strictly the case: in 2018, Mark Meecham was tried for hate crime after posting a video online in which he repeatedly uses the phrase 'gas the Jews' while teaching a dog to perform a Nazi salute. His defence was one of authorial intent, in that he wanted to make the dog 'seem like the least cute thing he can think of'. While this position was accepted by many, for some of his critics this intent was less important than the interpreted fact that broadcasting the phrase 'gas the Jews' to millions of viewers necessarily incites hatred. The judge, ultimately, decided that 'the context was irrelevant' and found him guilty (Baddiel). In effect, with both media commentary and the law itself being a matter of written record, this was a legal decision which hinged on deciding how to allocate ownership of meaning between the creative author-figure and the critical (or reading, or interpretive, or hermeneutic) author-figure.

It would perhaps be a far-fetched hypothetical in which the judicial machine springs into action in order to adjudicate what kind of author a Creative Writer is. Nonetheless, the binarism of this literally legal example demonstrates the seriousness and irreconcilability with which the Creative Writer casts two shadows from the spotlight of the author-function. First, there is a broad cultural assumption (as the general reaction to the Meecham case demonstrates) that an author does in fact have a say in the meaning of their production. Then, in the academy, this position cannot co-exist with that of the critic, whose functioning depends upon an author-figure who is severed from the meaning of their text. Finally, the author will potentially be asked to account for the meaning of their text after all, whether as a teacher, or as a critic, or (as we will see in chapters two and three) as a producer of auto-commentary.

Is the issue of authorship in Creative Writing really as irreconcilable as all that? Perhaps not: people working in Creative Writing do, after all, successfully operate as academics and authors, just as some professional literary critics also produce their own literature. Further, this theoretical model might be used to persuasively sketch out a potential future in which the author-function adapts to the realities of Creative Writing, abrogating (for instance) the idea of meaning as property and settling upon alternate grounds for identifying the illegality of a text, leaving authorial and critical statements on even ground when it comes to the question of meaning.

Perhaps less radically, we might turn this model towards the prognostications Paul Dawson makes in his 2005 monograph *Creative Writing and the New Humanities*, in which he sketches out a future for Creative Writing as an integral component of a humanities reoriented and redefined in response to broad changes occurring at the level of the academic sector and of Western culture as a whole. In the chapter 'What is a literary intellectual?', Dawson situates Creative Writing – or at least its recent upsurge in popularity and prominence – as contemporaneous with a 'posttheory generation' which is marked by a 'sense of

belatedness in regard to the baby-boomer excitement of the 1960s', wherein theory provided a new intellectual and ideological rationale for the work of the humanities, as well as 'the 'down-sizing' mentality of increasingly corporatised universities', wherein well-paid long-term jobs are increasingly being replaced by precarious and part-time contracts (181). This situation has led, in Australia, to a thinking of 'the New Humanities as a move *beyond* Theory', which carries the promise of ensuring the survival of the humanities by making it more public-facing, more openly accessible, and more indispensable to the world beyond the academy. Dawson sees a tension between this move and Creative Writing's practice of providing students with a space which is buttressed against that outside world, in which aesthetic value might be learnt and practised: 'a site of withdrawal from politics and society' (183-4). In order for Creative Writing to 'assume a non-antagonistic institutional position within the New Humanities', therefore, it must have the capacity and authority to speak of literature and culture beyond the walls of its workshops, which means we must ask 'to what figure in the academy has literary authority traditionally accrued, and how can a vision of authorship be elaborated in relation to it?' (185).

Over the following pages, Dawson outlines a history in which that literary authority has increasingly accrued to the figure of the critic, a history which, taking place over a period of time in which Creative Writing was either unheard of or inchoate, took place without the same intensity of anxiety I have been discussing in this chapter, and a history which, at each turn, might be understood as a contestation over the site of meaning between critical and literary author-figures. The intellectual ground zero for this contestation, for instance, can be taken as Matthew Arnold's call for a criticism which is 'aloof from thoughts of practicality, and untouched by the political concerns of the review pages'; this criticism was academically formalised by degrees, through the work of T. S. Eliot, I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, and Austin Warren, into a 'practical criticism' which 'became an indispensable pedagogical device' with the capacity of 'promoting the

transformative power of imaginative literature'; and practical criticism then made way for an 'oppositional criticism', characterised here by Edward Said, Terry Eagleton, and the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, which 'sees this textual critique as the base for social change, rather than cultural defence' (186-9). Or, against a background in which John Dryden termed criticism as 'the art', practised by writers, 'of judging the qualities of a literary work, rather than the practice of censuring it' (185), the site of meaning was first moved, by Arnold, out of the hands of interested writers, then changed, by practical criticism, into a transmissible skill which inaugurates certain people as having responsibility for that meaning, then launched, by oppositional criticism, as a platform from which to speak to (and against) the world at large. As a result, in terms of literature the role of 'public intellectual' as one whose position and learning authorises intervention in politics and culture has, by the time of the posttheory generation, fallen squarely within the domain of the critic, leading Dawson to ask if it is 'any wonder that Creative Writing has not claimed a position of literary authority in the New Humanities if it cannot elaborate a more forceful figure of the writer' (188).

However, this collocation of the role of public intellectual and the practice of oppositional criticism has, in Dawson's analysis, been made vulnerable by developments which have occurred alongside the emergence of a posttheory generation. Internally, the fact that 'Theory has become fragmented and applied to areas and applied to areas such as Cultural Studies and Race Studies' has decentred the literary object as oppositional criticism's locus, and in particular it has moved 'beyond theoretical rereadings of the literary canon' and into applying its critical mode to a much more broadly defined 'text', such that there is 'no specific figure of *literary* authority in the New Humanities, no critic to proclaim upon literature as a distinct realm' (180, 201). Externally, a wave of 'backlash against the infiltration of radical Marxist views into university curricula', a backlash which operated in the 1990s via the synecdoche of 'Political Correctness',

has left oppositional criticism culturally embattled, such that it has the defensive task 'to popularise academic cultural criticism rather than to generate new theoretical paradigms' (197-9).

Those anti-Political Correctness pressures have metamorphosed into something quite different in the fifteen years since Dawson published his monograph – a fact for which the Mark Meecham case might operate as a portrait-in-miniature – but Dawson's conclusion is still valent. With Creative Writing having firmly ensconced itself within academia, and with criticism having loosened its role as the creator of the 'specific figure of *literary* authority', Dawson identifies the space for Creative Writing to 'elaborate a figure of the writer as a *literary* intellectual' who can 'act as a medium between the academy and the public sphere', but this specific formulation of the public intellectual operates 'not necessarily as a model which individual academics can aspire to and train students to take up, but as a zone of contestation, as a discursive site' (201-3). On the one hand, Dawson is here questioning and problematising the critical author-figure's claim to a contested site of meaning over and above the literary author-figure's, but more importantly, his analysis effectively recasts the anxiety which plays out between these two author-figures in order to make a virtue of it. In the very fact of stepping into this publicly intellectual position, a step made possible by Creative Writing's entry into the academy, a writer might make that anxiety the very grounding of their public status, as the position from which they conduct their discourse, answering Dawson's demand that 'a new vision of authorship needs to be elaborated, where literature is an intellectual practice *alongside* other non-literary discourses in the academy, and where the division between fiction and non-fiction still exists, but in a non-hierarchical relationship' (194).

This is not the only potential future behaviour for the author-function in Creative Writing. Indeed, Dawson explicitly marks one alternative by claiming that in pursuing the model of the literary intellectual, Creative Writing 'will

claim a stronger disciplinary position within the New Humanities than it will by perpetuating a theory/practice divide or by evading it with hybrid forms of writing' (201). Here, 'hybrid forms of writing' signals the potential for a model which, rather than renegotiating the state of play between critical and literary author-figures, dissolves that binary entirely, producing works which might variously be termed hybrid, creative-critical, fictocritical, or post-critical. As of yet, no one option has established itself at the centre of things as Creative Writing's new de rigueur modus operandi.

Even before any such prognostication, however, this super-positioning of mutually exclusive author-figures engendered by an author-function working against itself does constitute a readable, understandably anxious situation which, if nothing else, serves to explicate Creative Writing's fascination with 'The Death of the Author'.

Chapter 2: The Supplementary Discourse

or: exegesis; reflection; response; self-assessment; critique; commentary; journal; poetics; critical commentary; self-reflective essay; self-commentary; critical preface; reflective element; synopsis; gnosis; self-reflexive commentary; critical essay; reflective essay; critical/reflective essay; reflective commentary; critical response; critical contextualising essay; personal writing project; self-evaluation document;

2.1: Names

The Creative Writing MA courses at the universities of Birmingham, Kingston and Sheffield all call it a 'critical essay'. The corresponding MA at the University of Exeter goes a step more elaborate with the term 'critical contextualising essay'. Bangor University's BA dissertation calls it 'criticism in practice'. The University of Leicester's BA refers to it as a 'critical reflective essay', while the University of Warwick's BA adds a comma with 'critical, reflective essay'. 'Reflective' rears its head elsewhere, too, in 'reflective essay' at Bath Spa and Birkbeck, 'critically reflective essay' at Lancaster University and 'reflective commentary' for MAs at London Metropolitan University. The University of East Anglia's BA programme specification stipulates a 'critical commentary', its MA a 'self-commentary', and the course description for its MFA in Creative Writing refers to a 'reflective self-commentary'.

This list is far from exhaustive: these are just a few examples drawn mostly from public-facing documents – prospectuses and, where available, course or module descriptions. What's more, actual usage amongst academics and students in these institutions may (and, given the multitude of available alternatives, probably does) vary. Such variation might pose few pragmatic problems for day-

to-day usage, but if one wants to approach this text in a theoretical mode, the above situation is clearly untenable.

'This text'. What is this excessively named (and so ironically un-named) text I am trying to talk about? Is this text even to be thought of as a text – or is it a genre of text, or an institutional practice which generates many different types of text? In amongst these terms given to this text there is an instinctive sense that there is some unity amongst their profuse variety, both for thematic reasons (this text criticises, this text reflects, this text essays) and for what they are not (above all, this text is not creative). In Creative Writing it is common for there to be work being produced besides the 'creative' writing itself. The Creative Writing Subject Benchmark from the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), a British academic body, suggests that it is

> normal practice that, in addition to producing a piece or pieces of writing for assessment, students will also write an accompanying critical, reflective or contextualizing piece. Recent research in the UK reveals a wide variety of names and forms for these non-creative elements, including reflection, response, self-assessment, critique, commentary, journal, poetics, critical commentary, self-reflective essay, and critical preface. (9)

A similar sentiment is expressed by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, which categorises Creative Writing as an element of the discipline of English; in its 2007 'Subject Benchmark Statement: English', it suggests that Creative Writing should be assessed not by creative works in isolation, but by 'portfolios of creative and critical writing (which may include fiction, drama, and poetry; reflective journals; essay plans; annotated bibliographies; critical reviews; and electronic materials such as websites and blogs)' (9). The Creative Writing equivalent of that Benchmark Statement, published 2016, provides a list of potential components to a submission including

'a critical commentary, critical reflection or preface to the creative work discussing creative context, influences, and process' (16).

In these policy documents we thus find yet more potential names for this text, from 'journal', which implies that a particular style and form will be used, to 'non-creative elements', which perhaps implies only that this text is not that other text. However, although one might expect these benchmark statements to identify a best practice for this text, or hope that they will, both of them instead refer to a number of extant practices without either censure or recommendation. Neither document suggests a universal name for this text, nor any guidelines about what its nature, execution and function are, nor what, in an ideal scenario, they would be.

Here I have suggested two different questions about this text: what is it? what should it be? The latter, of course, carries with it an ethical and normative implication. To ask what it should be is to ask what would be best, for whom, and why. Or to put it another way, the question 'what should it be?' carries with it a pedagogical inquiry about what 'good' teaching looks like and why, as well as a political inquiry about what form of this text would be best for the discipline at large, and a pragmatic inquiry about what kind of work load the academics involved can bear.

As a phenomenon, this text has not gone undiscussed, but the discussion around it has generally paid more attention to this question of what it should be than that of what it is. Early on in her 2004 *TEXT* article on the topic, 'What Does it Meme?', Estelle Barrett suggests 'a number of key questions relating to creative arts research generally, and to the exegesis in particular' ('exegesis' here being yet another term for this text, this one drawn from the Australasian scene of Creative Writing) which need to be answered:

* What is it?
* Why do we need it?

* What can it do within the context of a knowledge economy?

* How do we judge its success and value?

These questions match the is/should division I have already suggested, involving both the nature of this text and its implications, but Barrett moves swiftly from the former to the latter. Her analysis is based on Richard Dawkins' idea of the meme – that is, an idea which replicates itself by being expressed through cultural artefacts such as literature. In answering her first question Barrett thus suggests that 'the exegesis may be viewed both as a replication or re-versioning of the completed artistic work as well as a reflective discourse on significant moments in the process of unfolding and revealing', which is to say that the exegesis re-expresses the creative work's memetic idea in a new artefact, whilst at the same time explaining how the creative work came to express that memetic idea.

One immediate query one might have regarding this is what it means for the relationship between this text and the creative work it accompanies: if the creative work needs another text to explain its memetic content, and that other text does so by replicating the meme, then why doesn't that other text itself demand a further text explaining *it*?; and if this is not the case, if the other text can stand alone in its expression of that memetic content, then doesn't that imply that it is itself superfluous to the creative work's memetic value in the first place? If one role of this text really is to re-express the meme in a different form, then it must be to some degree either insufficient or superfluous, and the question then might be how this text operates in spite of this fact – for people clearly continue to write it regardless.

Rather than venture into this relationship, however, Barrett moves on to how this view of the exegesis justifies it as a better 'valorisation' of creative writing as opposed to traditional means of valorising art such as publication and reviewing. By valorising she means assigning a positive social and cultural value to the artwork, and she suggests that, for instance, hanging a painting in a gallery valorises it via a decontextualisation of it, cutting it off from the creative

processes which created it and thus treating it as a finished, unified product. The exegesis, by contrast, valorises the work via a weaving of it back into the processes which created it, and as a consequence can create a validation for the work as an academic research output rather than just as a finished artistic product. As such, Barrett suggests a powerful justification for this text, which might be especially useful for researchers attempting to justify their discipline to the wider academy and academics attempting to launch and run Creative Writing courses, but in doing so glosses over more fundamental questions about what this text looks like and how it works.

A similar movement from what this text is to how it should be can be found in two *TEXT* articles which attempt to present miniature taxonomies of this text: '"Exit Jesus": Relating the Exegesis and Creative/Production Components of a Research Thesis' by Barbara H. Milech and Ann Schilo, and 'The Problem of the Exegesis in Creative Writing Higher Degrees' by Nike Bourke and Philip Neilsen (both 2004). In 'Exit Jesus' Milech and Schilo describe the exegesis as the 'written component' of a higher degree in Creative Writing as opposed to the (creative) 'production'. They then outline three models for this written component: the 'Context Model', which 'rehearses the historical, social and/or disciplinary context(s) within which the student developed the creative or production component'; the 'Commentary Model', which works 'as an explication of, or comment on, the creative production', in the form of either criticism or a research report; and their favoured 'Research Question Model', in which 'both the exegetical and the creative component of the research thesis hinges on a research question posed', and thus work in tandem towards a common, cross-referenced goal. These three versions of this text correspond to 'what appear to be the dominant models for the exegesis at Australian universities', based on the authors' personal experience and what they refer to as a 'local history' of the discipline, and as such should not be taken as attempting anything like a systematic typology.

Milech and Schilo wittily note that demands for Creative Writing to produce two texts are 'Solomonic: they divide the "baby" in half, but do not indicate how the baby might live as a whole'; their solution is the 'Research Question Model', which also has similarities with Barrett's memetic account of the exegesis, in that the two texts involved jointly approach something which is external to both – though Barrett's abstract 'meme' is here replaced with the more familiar 'research question'. However, even though Milech and Schilo dismiss the 'Context Model' and 'Commentary Model' on grounds that they do not properly explicate the relationship between the creative work and the exegesis – the former leaving 'unresolved the questions of why there are two parts' involved and the latter problematically designating the exegesis as secondary, and so potentially as no more than an intellectually superfluous exercise in 'compliance with the requirements of contemporary academic structures' – the relationship portrayed in their favoured model is only a little clearer than Barrett's. They envision theses in which the two components 'are substantively integrated, form a whole', and having each component respond to the same question(s) seems a satisfying way of achieving that, but even if the texts are two halves of a whole, that still leaves a question of the relationship between the two halves. If Barrett's justification of this text seems to make it fall on either one side or the other of being a necessary and sufficient addition to the creative text, Milech and Schilo's doesn't seem to explain why the 'Research Question Model' makes this text necessary in the first place. They explain that 'each component of the thesis is conducted though the "language" of a particular discourse', but not why a Creative Writing research question demands to be answered twice or, more importantly, what each answer does which the other does not – and so are themselves no less Solomonic.

For their part, Bourke and Neilsen approach the issue in a more systematically taxonomical way, collecting eighty exegeses from two Australian universities and placing them into one of four categories: 'First Order Journal Work', 'Second Order Journal Work', 'Literary Theory', and 'Cultural Studies'. From their

categories alone it is clear that Bourke and Neilsen's approach shifts the question of the exegesis somewhat: whilst all of these terms might suggest something about the form of the exegeses in question, what they are primarily interested in is the degree and kind of academic discourse being employed. Briefly, they define First Order Journal Work as a diaristic and anecdotal account of the work's creation; Second Order Journal Work as a more reflexive account which analyses the processes behind the work's creation; and Literary Theory and Cultural Studies work as more traditionally academic approaches which draw from those respective fields. Importantly, these categories can hold regardless of form: an instance of this text which is essentially anecdotal despite looking like an essay rather than a diary would still count as First Order Journal Work. The methodology behind these categories is not fully explicated, but more significant is the fact that, like Milech and Schilo, the authors employ this taxonomy not for its inherent significance, but as a means to proposing an argument. Students who 'desire *only* to write in the creative mode and do not wish to pursue an academic career', they conclude, 'struggled with the writing of their exegetical work, lapsing frequently into First Order Journal Work', whilst students who 'are interested in the option of an academic career [...] were more likely to be confident and intellectually adventurous in their exegeses', by which they mean they tended to use more literary theory and cultural studies. While they ultimately make a series of recommendations regarding who should have to write exegeses and what theoretical approach is most appropriate, Bourke and Neilsen's apparently more concrete taxonomy does not say much more about the nature of the exegesis and its relationship with the creative work.

One more contribution to the 'what should this text be?' conversation can be found in Jeri Kroll's 2004 article 'The Exegesis and the Gentle Reader/Writer'. After saying that the 'variety of terms employed to describe the academic part of the thesis reveals the slippery nature of the beast', Kroll interestingly suggests that candidates 'often blend tones and styles in an eclectic melange' and are 'aware

that since they are creating a new type of discourse that addresses a complex audience they have to consider, in a way no straight academic MA or PhD does, how they position themselves as narrators'. In this she not only positions this text as the 'academic part' of a thesis, but also suggests that it will by necessity deviate from typical forms of academic discourse. This effectively dispenses with any idea that this text need follow in the formal footsteps of, say, literary theory or cultural studies, even while demanding that it do academic work, suggesting that its form could be *sui generis* for each instantiation of this text and we should instead focus on its function.

After a discussion regarding how 'the impulse for a writer or artist to explain their work and set it in a cultural context is not new', but rather in line with a tradition of authors' 'musings, forewords, afterwords, essays, interviews, conversations, letters and notes' which 'range from the highly theoretical to the off-the-cuff comment; from the letter to the apologia' – a suggestion we will return to shortly – Kroll discusses what that function might be. Citing Barthes, she wonders how students and academics involved in Creative Writing engage with the fact 'that postmodern literary theory has called the whole idea of the "author" into question', given that the discipline asks them to perform as both author and (potentially) theorist. If being a Creative Writing author-academic means attempting to accept a responsibility (for a text and its meaning) which theory has already delegated to the reader, Kroll sees 'the exegesis therefore as a protest of sorts, the authorial voice once more demanding to be heard, to be part of the communication equation'. Of course, theory is here an already-academic component of an equation which includes a creativity traditionally located outside of the university, and this fact informs Kroll's version of what I am referring to as the ethical view of this text: by protesting theory's view of authorship, it creates space for authors to 'speak [the universities'] language', whilst at the same performing something similar to Barrett's idea of valorisation in its ability to relate the creative text to the literary canon.

My implied criticism in response to each of these articles – that they move too swiftly from what this text is to what it should be – is perhaps unfair. After all, it is the natural progression of an academic article to outline and define its topic and then attempt to effect some change in its reader's view of that topic. Moreover, each of these articles is written in order to advance the status and quality of a relatively young discipline, and so even when survey-based they have a polemical quality which an article written in the context of a more mature discipline might not. A polemic is always also personal and subjective, and it is therefore natural that each article's definition of this text is, as with Milech and Schilo's 'local history', effectively just what it seems to the authors to be. Within the confines of such subjectivity, each article does suggest something interesting about the relationship between this text and its creative counterpart in ways in which we will return to, but this polemical projection of a particular ideal for this text under the guise of analysing it is not the only way of approaching the issue.

One alternative is found in J. T. Welsch's '"Critical Approaches to Creative Writing": A Case Study' (2015), which offers a brief history of this text in terms of a more fundamental division which operates between notions of creativity and criticality – a topic we will return to, in a different way, in the next chapter. Having historicised that dynamic, Welsch goes on to give an account of an MA module he developed with the aim, in part, of ameliorating that creative/critical division such that 'critical and creative practices might co-exist'. One of the key innovations for this module was the introduction of a manifesto as part of the programme of assessment. Here, 'manifesto' is not (quite) another item to add to the long list of names which have attached themselves to this text; as a mid-semester assessment, it coexists with an end-of-semester instance of this text, which itself sits alongside the creative text it refers to. As such, the manifesto doesn't precisely accompany the creative text, but in its name there is an anticipation of at least a resonance with the creative text, and thus it has a stake in the textual relationship I am exploring. One reason why Welsch's intervention

is of interest here is that the term 'manifesto' itself resonates with the meta-Creative Writing discourse I have discussed so far in this chapter: if the attitude to this text, on the level of the individual academic, is often 'here is what I think this text should be', the framing of a manifesto devolves that prerogative down to the student level: 'what do you think your text should be?'. As Welsch notes, besides implying a sense of agency over the student's eventual creative production, the manifesto itself 'integrates critical and creative processes on a deeper, formal level'. This is seen in its history as a form variously construed in distinctly creative ways by F. T. Marinetti, William Carlos Williams, and Guillaume Apollinaire, amongst others, and therefore eases a sense of absolute distinction between this text and the creative work it relates to. The other key interest of Welsch's intervention is in its flagging up of the fact that, faced with various and contradictory accounts as discussed above, or, in his case, faced with with the various institutional edicts sent forth from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the National Association of Writers in Education, and the Quality Assurance Agency, there is an opportunity to put forth new configurations which reorient how Creative Writing does work. The lack of a clear, authoritative line 'leaves us free to define [Creative Writing's] spectrum of practice' – or, more effective interventions might be made by simply owning that sense of intervention, polemic, or manifesto.

This future potential nonetheless proceeds from a current position which might be better understood. In 'Supplementary Discourses in Creative Writing Teaching at Higher Education Level', a 2003 report from the UK-based English Subject Centre which is cited by NAWE's benchmark, Robert Sheppard and Scott Thurston deliver some of that understanding by taking a survey-based approach in order to explore 'the varieties of discourse that creative writing tutors ask higher education students (from BA levels 1, 2 and 3, M level to postgraduate research) to produce to accompany, complement and/or supplement writing' (3). Hence, they also supply yet another term for this text: 'supplementary

discourse'. Sheppard and Thurston start from an anecdotal observation that 'there is little uniformity over the value, principles, aims, techniques, level descriptors or assessment patterns and weighting, or even amount, of this writing' and 'no uniformity of view as to the influence of this (usually) separately assessed discourse on the reception and assessment of the creative elements' and then give an account of a three-stage methodology designed to 'determine the range and extent of [supplementary discourses]' and 'evaluate the functions of such discourses in terms of pedagogy and level' (3).

Whilst the report does make recommendations regarding how supplementary discourses should be implemented, this is, unlike the articles from *TEXT*, kept separate from the initial data-gathering process, which itself was conducted according to a clear methodology. As such, a large part of its interest comes from its quantitative evidence, especially as it gives a British account of a subject which has primarily been written about from an Australasian context. As such we learn that, for instance (circa 2003): almost all students are asked to produce supplementary discourses (5); there are indeed any number of different names for it (5); the weighting of marks between supplementary discourse and creative work can range from 67:33 to 20:80 respectively (6); more than three quarters of tutors see its function as helping them to 'assess students' creative products and processes' (7); tutors tend to feel that it also functions for the student to both explain their work and learn about literature (8); an important extra audience for the supplementary discourse is internal and external moderators (9); some consider that it also operates as a defence mechanism to prove that the subject is sufficiently academic (9-10); there is little agreement regarding how and to what extent it influences the marks given to creative work (10-11); and the majority 'of practitioners see a link between supplementary discourses and literary-critical and/or theoretical discourses', though the nature of that link is contentious (17). All of which, perhaps encouragingly, suggests that the British situation is not so different from that of the academics writing in *TEXT*. On the one hand, the

supplementary discourse is endemic in Creative Writing, being present far more often than not, and there seems to be a broad acceptance of it amongst academics. On the other, there is no clear consensus about its form, function or audience – regarding each of which there are a number of often contradictory responses.

Besides this reassurance that the British scene is not so different, the report provides some interesting additional ideas about this text – primarily, the very name it gives to it, which is useful for two reasons. First, it identifies it distinctly without either delimiting the form it might take or privileging the terminology of one institution or group of institutions; compare the Australasian term 'exegesis', which implies some similarity with or echo of the very specific tradition of biblical exegesis. In 'Preface as Exegesis' (2002) Nigel Krauth explores the history of the word 'exegesis' and points out that its use here carries certain ironies. Because the traditional exegetical form is written with reference to the Bible, the word contains 'the idea of there being a *canonical* text that the exegesis supports: i.e. a *canonical* text that *needs* explanations' which is, for one thing, diametrically opposed to any notion that the creative writer's text might be still in progress and ripe for improvement. The term 'supplementary discourse', meanwhile, is apparently used by no institution and echoes no particular tradition.

Beyond this, it suggests something interesting – or at the very least provocative – about the relationship between this text and the creative text it accompanies. This is addressed briefly in the report, with one tutor responding to Sheppard and Thurston's neologism by saying it is 'not supplementary. The study of writing is, and should be, on an equal par with the practice of writing' and another that they 'place a VERY strong emphasis on reading, research and scholarship equal to the so-called creative process. The discourses, for us, are in no way "supplementary"'. Two other tutors likewise suggest that the word 'supplementary' itself 'might be better replaced by the term 'complementary' or even 'symbiotic'' (12). When these respondents rail against the idea of this text

being a supplement, they appear to be thinking in terms of the *OED*'s definition 1.a. of that word: something 'added to make good a deficiency or as an enhancement; an addition or continuation to remedy or compensate for inadequacies'. Which is to say, this text should not be thought of as supplementary because suggesting that this text exists to make good an insufficiency elsewhere damages the sense that it is valid and important in itself, that it might have its own inherent merit. Just as damagingly, this insinuates that the creative text is somehow incomplete or unable to stand on its own merits – which are not qualities any writer of literature would presumably desire, especially when aiming for a passing mark.

However, the alternatives offered here – the idea that this might instead be thought of as a complementary or a symbiotic discourse – carry their own insinuations. The *OED*'s first definition of 'complementary' says that it means 'completing, perfecting' something else, whilst the second suggests that when two or more things are complementary they are 'completing each other's deficiencies'; its biological definition of 'symbiosis', meanwhile, suggests organisms which 'live attached to each other, or one as a tenant of the other, and contribute to each other's support'. In either case, there is still in these words a suggestion of insufficiency in isolation – indeed, a similar sense to the *OED*'s definition 1.b. of 'supplement', a 'part added to *complete* or extend a literary work' (emphasis mine). None of these descriptors quite manage to position this text as something which is intimately related to the creative text without implying that the creative text is incomplete when left to its own devices. This problem is not simply for lack of a better word: the fact that the respondents in Sheppard and Thurston's survey picked up on the word 'supplementary' and attempted to replace it suggests some anxiety about the relationship between these two texts. The word 'supplement' and its derivations, of course, has a particular significance in the context of Derridean deconstruction. Christopher Norris explains that

> On the one hand a 'supplement' is that which may be added to
> something already complete in itself and thus having no need of such
> optional extras. On the other, it is a necessary addition, one that supplies
> (makes up for) some existing lack and must henceforth be counted an
> integral part of the whole (111)

We will return to this 'double logic' later, but suffice to say it seems to neatly capture the problems of these words – 'supplementary', 'complementary', 'symbiotic' – used to describe the discourse of this text: the creative text must stand on its own two feet, but at the same time the supplementary discourse must needfully provide something absent from it.

This same anxiety can be traced in articles written on the subject, and possibly even in those articles' rapid movement from 'what is it?' to 'what should it be?'. I have already suggested that Estelle Barrett's account of how this text can valorise the creative work, useful as it might be, actually glosses over a knotty problem in her own model of this text as a carrier for a meme. In fact, looking at how Norris describes the Derridean supplement we might now rephrase that argument by saying that the same basically problematic structural relationship between this text and its creative counterpart holds even without the idea of memetic value being introduced, and her introduction of memetic behaviour might stem from a place more rhetorical than theoretical. Likewise, Milech and Schilo state that their issue with certain models of the exegesis boils down to the relationship they imply between exegesis and creative text. Their favoured model could be seen as an attempt to have it both ways: as they put it, each part is 'substantively integrated' even whilst each is 'conducted though the "language" of a particular discourse', but as the part written in creative discourse is obviously non-negotiable in a Creative Writing submission, one might further suggest that the other part must be supplementary, and so the same issue appears. Kroll casts the relationship between the two texts in two different lights. For practical and

administrative purposes, thinking of the supplementary discourse as the place where verifiably academic work is done seems useful. Although it does suggest that the work being done in the creative text might not be academic as such, it is entirely possible that this is something that someone in the discipline would be willing to accept, and not take as a sign of insufficiency in that creative work. At the same time, that creative work is still being subjected to the same processes (rubrics, marking, degree-granting) as any other piece of student work, and it remains to be explained precisely what content, besides being written in a particular discourse, this text provides which the creative does not.

Potentially more interesting is the idea that this text is not so different from the various ancillary texts which literary authors have long produced as part of the business of being an author – as Kroll puts it, 'musings, forewords, afterwords, essays, interviews, conversations, letters and notes'. In both this and the suggestion that this text offers the writer a chance to place themselves back into a 'communication equation' which Barthes's 'The Death of the Author' has excluded them from, Kroll's article is echoing ideas in Krauth's 2002 article 'The Preface as Exegesis'. Krauth persuasively builds two lines of argument for the idea that this text has its clearest analogue in the literary preface. The first is through the term 'exegesis' which, whilst potentially misleading in some respects, does tie this text into a long history. The Bible, he suggests, has 'a cultural excuse for this sort of ongoing explaining' in that the culture receiving it is increasingly removed from the culture which produced it as time goes on. He locates echoes of this impulse- and demand-to-explain in activities writers pursue alongside writing, such as giving interviews and appearing at literary festivals, and then also in literature produced before the preface found its codified place in publishing culture, such as the argument in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the chorus in Shakespeare's *Henry V*. His second line of argument, which in effect fills in the gap between these two historical points, explores in more detail some Victorian and modern prefatory work which seems to him to feel like a Creative Writing exegesis, including that

of Edgar Allan Poe and Vladimir Nabokov. In Nabokov, for instance, he looks at the afterword to *Lolita* and the foreword to *Bend Sinister*, both of which 'identified, emphasised and elaborated the territory of the preface as a key exegetical site' in their reflexive awareness of the fact that the preface is a place which can be used for the kind of explanatory work normally taken on by critics. In just the same way, the writer of this text is effectively taking on a role as reader not normally available to a writer of literature. Perhaps more persuasively, Nabokov's *Pale Fire* is cited as a novel which even 'looks like a PhD submission', consisting as it does of 'a 999-line poem in heroic couplets followed by a 200-page Commentary with Index'.

I earlier suggested that the word 'exegesis' would be, potentially misleading if taken as a model rather than just a name. However, there is no available corpus of examples of this text which is so broad and fairly sampled that one could arrive at a justifiable abstract model of it through analysis of the thing itself – and even if there were such a corpus, Jeri Kroll's suggestion that writing an exegesis means 'creating a new type of discourse' would give us pause over the potential results of such an analysis.[*] That being the case, it would be useful to have a comparable

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[*] One thing we do have in this regard is Creative Writing degrees at PhD level, which often feature a critical component and are often made available via the British Library's EThOS repository. However, such critical components don't tend to partake in the kind of relationship with the creative text which I am here interested in. As an example, a search on EThOS for a recent Creative Writing thesis gives us Anna James' *'The Scribbler's Tales', and, Scribbling, talking and jangling: Ned Ward's 'The London Spy' in the discursive spaces of late seventeenth-century London*. This rather ungainly title signifies the two sections of the thesis: *The Scribbler's Tales* is a novel set in late-seventeenth century London, while the critical piece examines a periodical written in late-seventeenth century London. As such, the two share a thematic concern, but the one does not directly

kind of text through which to explore how this text might function. Krauth's argument for its similarity to the preface – as well as being persuasive in its own right – offers that kind of model. As well as discussing certain similarities in terms of the contents of prefaces/exegeses and the impulses involved in writing them, Krauth raises an idea about the relationships between these texts and their literary counterparts:

> No matter what it is called, this prefacing or exegetical activity is a framing device positioned between the world created in the fiction (or play or poem) and the world the reader inhabits. It is aimed at creating a link between the creative work, its milieu of production, and the broader field into which it is projected. It is not fictocritical; it involves a narrative voice obviously different from that employed in the creative text. While it comments on the mechanisms of the main text, it is itself an associated site and therefore a mechanism of the main text too. It is *a part* of the main work, but *apart* from it. As is the case with the academic higher degree exegesis.

Here, *a part/apart* wittily summarises the anxiety in the relationship between this text and the creative text which I have been discussing elsewhere, as well as Norris's gloss of the term 'supplementary'. Krauth is essentially arguing in favour of the value of the exegesis as a component of Creative Writing, and therefore does not explore the problem he tacitly raises, but it is entirely possible to respond by asking, well, which is it? If it is a part of the 'main work', what does that say about the literature which Creative Writing produces? If it is apart from

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comment upon the other; the critical component operates in the mode of – and is in principle publishable as – a 'traditional' work of literary criticism. While this chapter does not explicitly concern that particular relationship, its direction might be informative for thinking about this form of Creative-Critical PhD thesis.

the 'main work', is it then secondary in status, or even unnecessary? Or if (as seems to be the case) it is both, then what does that mean for the student attempting to write this paradoxical text?

Through looking at recent writing about this text I have been attempting to identify a particular angle on this text which seems to me to be both important and generally overlooked. The question of 'what is this text?' is particularly indicated by the issue of what to call it. Every institution makes its own decisions which contribute to its own history, and so variations in naming are not uncommon: a British university might call its undergraduate English course 'BA English' or 'BA English Literature' or 'BA English Literature and Language', and so on. However, this text is remarkable for having names so numerous and disparate, even whilst everybody seems to agree that they all refer to essentially the same thing; a rare similar situation, as we will see, is that of the preface. The one caveat here is that certain non-creative Creative Writing outputs, such as the 'step outline or planning document' or the 'exercise in professional preparation such as a mock interview or funding application' also mentioned by the QAA's Creative Writing subject benchmark statement, might be thought of as more general pedagogic tools rather than something particular to Creative Writing – but these are anyway clearly not the kind of thing which Creative Writing academics are so keen to discuss (16). Multiply defined, multiply named, but nonetheless a particular thing: that is the condition of... at this point, we can't go on with the game of referring obliquely to this text as 'this text'. The rhetorical point has probably by now been made, and so I will continue by referring to it as the 'supplementary discourse'. This term also highlights something else about the angle I am attempting to identify: all of this writing about the supplementary discourse seems to be reliably anxious, in one way or another, about how it relates to the creative text it accompanies. Without a standard, or at least predominant discursive or formal model in place for it, it seems that any answer to the

question of 'what is it?' must start with that relationship. We will begin to explore it by means of the preface.

2.2: Paratext, function, and the supplementary discourse

So, it might be useful to think about the supplementary discourse in terms of the preface. But how are we to define the preface, and how are we to think about its function? Any simple answer to the first question – perhaps 'the text labelled 'Preface' which is published in a book immediately before the beginning of the text proper' – does not in itself get us very far in answering the second. Under that definition, an author in a mischievous mood could after all choose to put *anything* in that section (another fictional piece of writing, an essay unrelated to the main work, a shopping list) and have it qualify as a preface – and it might indeed qualify, but this tells us little about how prefacing works. In his afterword to *Quilt*, Nicholas Royle suggests that an afterword might 'go anywhere' or even 'turn out to be *longer than the work preceding it*', and the same is surely true of the preface (153). What is the difference between an afterword and a preface, anyway? Perhaps only that the afterword is after and the preface is pre the text, though much might be said about the difference this might make to a reader's experience of the text(s), and even the difference between words and faces. But then, for our comparative purposes, the supplementary discourse is neither pre nor after the creative text, necessarily. Through the whims of institutional practice and sheer chance, it might be stapled into a document before the creative text, or after it, or stapled separately, with the two documents in an arbitrary order, or, as is increasingly likely, submitted and assessed entirely electronically, such that there is no real before and after between the two documents.

In the preceding paragraph I have been talking about two qualities, nominal and spatial. For the former quality, the supplementary discourse is only rarely actually called a 'preface', and we know that there is no settled alternative name for it. We might also discount the latter quality as being effectively an arbitrary factor, both for the above reasons and because a reader (or, more pertinently, a

marker or an examiner) might anyway choose to read the two texts in whatever order they like. What is important here is the function of the preface.

This is what Gerard Genette addresses in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (originally published in 1987), in which he discusses a number of examples of what he calls 'paratexts'; elements which form the border between a text and the wider world. Focussing on literary texts (although much of what he says might be applied equally to a non-literary work), he notes that a 'text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations' (1). These elements, along with other paratexts such as publishing details, epigraphs, and footnotes, each may or may not be present with a text. However, a text without *any* of these paratexts is almost unimaginable in the real world: the idea suggests an completely unlabelled, unmarked volume which begins and ends precisely with the text.

But, even then, factors such as the place where the volume was found, and the nature of its binding, and even the typography might influence how it is interpreted in ways analogous to the title and preface, and so might be considered paratextual. For instance, any reasonable reader would react to and read a stapled sheaf of A4 discovered in a field differently to an unlabelled leather-bound tome found in a second-hand bookshop – even if the texts they contained were identical. In just the same way, the paratexts which Genette discusses all, in different ways, work to condition a reader's response to and interpretation of the text to which they are attached. As he puts it, paratexts are 'always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial [...] at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it' (2); or, one of their functions is as a strategic point at which the author might influence the reader.

Genette's account of paratexts makes space for the difficulty regarding the supplementary discourse's relationship with the creative work, in that a paratext is neither a part of nor apart from, neither inside nor truly outside the text. The

leather binding of our hypothetical paratext-less book would not be considered as being part of the text, of the same order as a sentence from within the text, but it nonetheless clearly influences how the text is read; likewise, Genette asks us 'how would we read Joyce's *Ulysses* if it were not entitled *Ulysses*?' (2). The title, again, evidently conditions the reading of a text, but is not a necessary piece of that text – as further evidenced by the fact that, especially for older works, texts are often given titles after the fact by scholars, or given different titles in different places. This difficulty in assessing the relationship between text and paratext leads Genette to employ a variety of phrases – 'threshold', 'vestibule', 'fringe', 'edge', 'undefined zone' – to express its ambiguity (2). We will return later to the usefulness of this slightly ambiguous language of transition for thinking about the supplementary discourse.

Having brought his general topic into focus, Genette then begins to suggest some of the significant characteristics which a paratext might have, beginning with the spatial, which we have already briefly discussed for the preface, and then its 'temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics', or: where; when; how; from and to whom; and to do what, respectively (4). Rather than dwell on these in the abstract, we will discuss them specifically in terms of the preface and the supplementary discourse. It is important to note initially that the first four of these characteristics 'lead to the main point, which is the *functional* aspect of the paratext' (12). These four, according to Genette, can be described in terms of the options they take from a limited menu of alternatives. A title, for instance, might be placed (spatially) on the front cover, or withheld until an inside page before the start of the text, or, theoretically, announced at the end of a text – but not on the back of someone's hand, or kept as a secret by the author, because these options would disqualify it from functioning as a title. A dedication might have been published (temporally) in the first edition of a book, or in a later edition – but can't be published before the book is published, or relayed only in

private correspondence, because that would disqualify it from functioning as a dedication.

These examples use the word 'functioning' deliberately, in that these characteristics work to affect the function of the paratext: a dedication added to a later edition of a text might well function differently, at least to its addressee(s), than one in the initial publication. However, they do not *define* the function, and Genette suggests that, unlike the other characteristics, 'the functions of the paratext cannot be described theoretically and, as it were, *a priori* in terms of status', which is to say that the function of the paratext is not a restricted choice amongst limited alternatives (12). Like the literary text itself, a title (for instance) might hold any of a limitless number of functions, and more than one function at once: it could be humorous, emotive, descriptive, hyperbolic, generic, intertextual; it could target a particular audience, and be inviting, or forbidding, or attempt to suggest that the text targets no specific audience; it could be taken from the text, or refer to the content of the text, and be accurate, or deceitful, or have no obvious relation to the text; and so on, *ad infinitum*. As such, the other characteristics of a paratext are generalisable, discussable in the abstract, but its function must be discussed with regards to its specific instance.

Nonetheless, those other aspects do delimit some of the ways in which the paratext can or does function: a preface, by its nature, holds different functions from a title, or the name of an author, and an afterword enjoys a different set of functional possibilities to a preface. It is in this way that Genette offers a useful analytical route, providing language to discuss these characteristics with and modelling how they might affect a paratext's function. But, is it useful for the supplementary discourse – or, is the supplementary discourse a paratext?

In a moment we will (finally) come to discuss the preface/supplementary discourse model for which I have already made a case, but there is one more abstract point to be made in relation to this question. One thing which can be said *a priori* about the supplementary discourse is that, even in its loosest, least

self-reflexive form, it would not exist without the creative text it is written alongside. A 'critical reflective commentary' (or whatever language one chooses to use) without a literary text upon which it can reflect and comment is not quite a nonsensical idea, but it would at the very least, in referring to a non-existent text, itself become fictional. Indeed, these creative potentials residing within the idea of commentary have been exploited by literary fiction, perhaps most notably by Nabokov's 1962 novel *Pale Fire*, in which a 999-line poem is followed by a significantly longer commentary which turns out to be much more than 'just' a commentary. Of course, in that novel the long poem is written by Nabokov precisely so that he might write a commentary upon it, but the poem still exists; more absolute examples of the practice might be found in the short stories of Jorge Luis Borges, particularly 1939's 'Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*', which carries out a critical biography of the life and work of the entirely fictional Pierre Menard. That this is not just a one-off novelty avenue of creative practice is marked by the upcoming publication of *The Anthology of Babel*, edited by Ed Simon, which takes as its name a pun on Borges' 'The Library of Babel', and which features twenty commentaries on non-existent authors or texts (Simon 2018). The contemporaneity of this anthology, which even while it nods its head to Borges bills itself as 'inaugurat[ing] a completely new literary genre', invites speculation as to how far the supplementary discourse and its cognates form part of its inspiration and genesis; in claiming to blur 'the lines between scholarship and creative writing', there is a distinct sense that this book is emerging from precisely the institutional conjunction of English and Creative Writing which is the focus of this entire thesis. However, this literary-fictional capacity of commentary notwithstanding, would an essay written about compositional issues drawing on the writer's own practice still hold as an essay, for which academic credit is conferred, if that practice had never actually occurred? Probably not. In this, the supplementary discourse matches exactly Genette's suggestion that 'the paratext in all its forms is [...] dedicated to the service of something other than

itself that constitutes its raison d'être [...] the paratextual element is always subordinate to "its" text' (12).

Genette begins his discussion of the preface by defining the term broadly, noting that (in a situation which, it seems fair to suggest, mirrors that of the supplementary discourse) 'the list of that term's French parasynonyms is very long' (161). The equivalent English list, whilst perhaps shorter than the French, might include *preface*, *postface*, *foreword*, *afterword*, *introduction*, *essay*, *note*, *acknowledgements*, some instances of *prologue* (though not Chaucer's), some instances of *prelude* (though not Wordsworth's), and others. In order to account for this multiplicity, the term 'preface' is, in Genette's words, broadened to include 'every type of introductory (preludial or postludial) text, authorial or allographic, consisting of a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it' (161). This seems to capture the supplementary discourse, with the proviso of a question mark over the term 'introductory', which might be too strong a restriction on a text which can also be seen as having a number of other functions. From here, Genette discusses some factors which make up the status (that is, the condition in terms of the first four characteristics already mentioned) of a preface, which I will briefly summarise with reference to the supplementary discourse; all quoted italics are in the original.

Place: I have already mentioned the issue of place a number of times with regards to the preface/supplementary discourse analogy. However, as well as reiterating the possibilities of pre- and post-, Genette here raises the interesting point that a preface might, after the fact, be reproduced without its reference text: examples might include Henry James' essay collection *The Art of the Novel* (1934), and the four forewords reproduced in John Barth's *Further Fridays* (1995). Likewise, a supplementary discourse might reasonably be reproduced later on its own – perhaps as a model text for later students or, especially in the case of doctorate-level work, as an academic publication in its own right. This might lead

us to the question of whether or not a supplementary discourse maintains its paratextual status even when held separate from the text to which it is para-. (172-4)

Time: Here Genette is discussing not the date of composition (which fact is generally invisible to the reader) but the date of publication. Although, as he notes, a preface might theoretically be published at any moment in the 'ensuing eternity' following publication, in practice there are 'certain typical and functionally significant temporal positions' (174). Most commonly, a preface will be published in the first edition of a text – 'the *original* preface', which must functionally anticipate the text's reception; or, it may be published in a later edition, most commonly the second – 'the *later* preface', which might functionally respond to a reception the text has already received; or finally, it may be published when the work is reproduced in a new form, such as in an anthology – 'the *delayed* preface', which functionally might respond to the fact and nature of the republication. Moreover, prefaces may disappear and reappear in ensuing editions, both ant- and posthumously, for a variety of reasons. It is clear that within these possibilities, the supplementary discourse is effectively an original preface, 'published' (if that term is taken as applicable to an assessment submission) simultaneously with its text. However, this situation may be complicated when the text has already been discussed in a workshop or seminar, in which case the supplementary discourse might respond to that earlier criticism in the style of a later preface, although the creative work will typically have been changed and edited in the intervening period. (174-8)

Senders: Genette apologetically announces that this trait demands 'a cumbersome typology' because the sender of a preface is not who wrote it, but who appears to have written it, or the 'alleged author'. Most commonly, the sender is identical to the author, which Genette terms the '*authorial*, or

autobiographical, preface'. However, a preface could easily be signed by a character from the text, which he terms 'the *actorial* preface', or by a 'wholly different (third) person: the *allographic* preface'. Each one of these categories might then be further defined as being '*authentic*', '*apocryphal*', or '*fictive*'. For example, if an allographic preface is both written and signed by the same person it is authentic; if it is written by one person but falsely signed in the name of another real person it is apocryphal; and if it is signed in the name of an imaginary person, regardless of who actually wrote it, it is fictive. Hence, Genette creates a typology along two axes which cross reference into nine possibilities, although some are significantly more common than others. At first glance, it might seem that supplementary discourses could be regarded as universally authorial and authentic, in that each one is, by necessity, signed honestly by (the anonymised student ID of) the student who wrote it. However, within that bureaucratic frame it is easy to conjure ways in which a student might subvert this apparent authenticity. A supplementary discourse might, for example, successfully fulfil its commentarial functions while speaking in the voice of another, in the second person, to the author. Or, if the creative work has a certain meta quality, it may well be appropriate to have a character from the creative work speak of their own composition and development over time. No doubt there are myriad other possibilities raised here: I would suggest that any category in Genette's typology could successfully be employed by an exegesis – except the authorial apocryphal, which would doubtless be deemed plagiaristic. (178-94)

Addressees: The addressee – or, who the sender is sending to – has fewer possibilities than the sender. In the broadest sense, the addressee of a preface is merely whoever happens to be reading the text. Or, with slightly more nuance, the addressee is whoever has just or is about to read the text – depending on their order in the publication and the order in which the reader chooses to tackle them. There is, however, the possibility of a 'relay-addressee' to whom the preface

is explicitly addressed, regardless of the actual audience. For example, the preface might take the form of a letter to a particular person or character, but ultimately have the same readership as the text itself. For the supplementary discourse the addressee is, *de facto*, the examiner or marker, and it seems to me that any deviation from this via a relay-addressee would have effects not dissimilar from those of an apocryphal or fictive sender. For instance, a supplementary discourse might well invert the earlier suggestion of being written in the voice of a character and instead be addressed to a character, with similar consequences vis a vis the drawing in of elements from the creative text. (194-5)

In any case, Genette does not account for the addressee in his final typology of six functional types of preface. At this point, he begins a new chapter by taking his earlier chart of types of senders and making 'adjustments according to the parameters of place and time' to produce a 'strictly functional typology divided into six fundamental types' which he will then spend the ensuing chapter justifying. This typology, he quickly clarifies, is 'wholly operational', not 'watertight', in that it provides an equivocal means of proceeding to discuss the preface, rather than a stable structure into which *all* prefaces must necessarily fit, but it is via these six fundamental types that he moves from a discussing status to discussing function.

At this point, it might be useful to consider what we can say about the preface/supplementary discourse analogy thus far. Certainly, if one were to do what this chapter is explicitly not doing and analyse some number of supplementary discourses wholesale, Genette's language seems to provide a step towards that end. Thinking about place, we might discuss how the student's anticipation of either the creative or the supplementary text being read first (whether due to submissions guidelines or personal assumptions) might affect how it functions. Thinking about time, the condition of whether or not the text has already been workshopped, and hence whether the supplementary discourse is

closer to 'original' or 'later' in nature, clearly affects its reflective and critical qualities.[*] Thinking about senders seems especially germane to a text which not only aligns with the nature of the preface in significant ways, but which is also being produced within the context of Creative Writing. Creative Writing does not primarily aim to teach the student how to write a supplementary discourse, but how to write literature: to say as much is both a seeming truism and supported by Sheppard and Thurston's survey, in which respondents largely reported that the supplementary discourse only takes priority over the creative work in specific and exceptional circumstances (14-15). The supplementary discourse is thus subordinate both ontologically and in terms of importance to that creative work, and it therefore seems reasonable to expect creative deviations from the authentic authorial mode – which is to say, creative variations of the sender – which would likely characterise almost any other academic output.

Genette's typology is, however, and by his own admission, itself susceptible to deviation, and there are number of problems we might raise with his approach both in the abstract and with regards to the preface/supplementary discourse

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[*] There is here an additional complication regarding whether the text submitted for assessment is strictly the same text as that which was workshopped. If one holds that the changes made in the intervening time mean that these are two separate texts with two separate identities, then the supplementary discourse would effectively be 'original'; if the text's identity survives those changes, such that these are two versions of the same text, the supplementary discourse is 'later'. Of course, the former possibility would never be placed upon a text which has undergone grammar and spelling corrections, while the latter would never be applied to a short story being rewritten as a poem. Arbitrating the difference between these options, effectively deciding how many changes must occur to a text before it is no longer the same text, rapidly approaches the condition of Zeno's paradoxes, and so will not be pursued further.

specifically. For instance, at an abstract level, *Paratexts* is ambiguous about where we should be drawing the border between paratext and not-paratext – an ambiguity which gestures towards a deconstructive potential which Genette, given his affiliations with a more structuralist approach, does not greatly pursue. I will return to this shortly, but even requesting or expecting such a border is, of course, immediately ironic: as we have already seen, the paratext is for Genette the very thing which creates a border-zone around a text and 'enables it to be offered as such [i.e., as a text] to its readers' (1), and so to draw a line beyond which texts no longer count as paratexts would be to mark those texts immediately beyond the line as constituting the border, and so as paratextual. For example, one might (quite arbitrarily) decide that only elements published within the same volume as a text can be paratexts, but to draw this line is to create a relationship between the elements on either side of it (e.g., this title is paratextual as opposed to this interview, which is not), and upon entering such a relationship the elements on the other side of the line necessarily become paratextual. In fact, Genette does consider interviews to be paratextual elements; this situation is perhaps why he adds an additional stricture to paratext-status beyond having some relationship with the text by saying that this 'group of practices and discourses' will be 'federate[d] under the term "paratext" in the name of a common interest [...] which is characterised by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility' (2-3).

However, this very fact, this inherent instability in the para-status of paratexts, raises questions Genette does not pursue. For instance, he asserts early on that 'a text without a paratext does not exist and never has existed', but 'paratexts without texts do exist, if only by accident' (3-4) – his example is of titles which survive whilst their texts have been lost to history, but we might equally suggest prefaces which are read by readers who have never and will never read the texts they relate to, as must surely be the case for at least some readers of Henry James' *The Art of the Novel*. In such a case, what was the paratext is now

functioning as a text in its own right, with its own set of paratexts (title, footnotes, possibly even a further preface) with respect to which it is in the dominant position.[*] This kind of shift might be replicated for any given paratext. From this I would suggest that (1) paratexts either can be or are always also texts in their own right, (2) if a paratext is also a text, it must have its own paratexts, and (3) if this status of text or paratext is mutable, some discourses generally considered texts might also be or become paratextual to some other text. Two pieces of writing might even function as text and paratext to one another.

At stake in all of this is both the nature of the supplementary discourse and its relationship with the creative text. Recall the protests of those respondents to Sheppard and Thurston's survey: the supplementary discourse is not supplementary, and to say it is does a disservice to both it and the creative text it accompanies. For all their variety and power, paratexts are evidently less read, less studied, and less regarded than the literary texts they frame. In Creative Writing, this imbalance is unacceptable to any tutor who treats the supplementary discourse as an important product in its own right, whether that be because it forces the student into intellectual contact with their own practice of writing or because it acts as a vehicle for creative writers to do the vital work of reading and digesting the practice of other writers. This imbalance would be equally unacceptable to any tutor who regards the supplementary discourse as unfortunate or superfluous due to the imputation that the forced inclusion of this

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[*] I am here using the word 'text' specifically in the context of Genette's typology, as opposed to as a general term for any written or printed discourse, under which definition all of the above could unproblematically be termed textual. This more restricted usage is invited by Genette's own distinction between the two terms: for the time being, take 'text' to mean the piece of writing which is bordered by paratext(s).

lesser part makes about the self-sufficiency of literary text. For both hypothetical parties, and those on the scale between them, the more amorphous version of the text/paratext relationship I am suggesting, in which status and power are not so strictly delimited, offers a way out of that imbalance.

Clearly, the relationship between these two texts is more complicated than a simple dominant/subordinate pairing. In 'The Critic as Host', J Hillis Miller responds to an idea of a 'parasitical' criticism by exploring the prefix para-:

> "Para" as a prefix in English (sometimes "par") indicates alongside, near or beside, beyond, incorrectly, resembling or similar to, subsidiary to, isomeric or polymeric to. In borrowed Greek compounds "para" indicates beside, to the side of, alongside, beyond, wrongfully, harmfully, unfavourably, and among. (441)

Leaving aside the negative implications of para-, we might from this come back to a consideration of how the preface (as a paratext) might not only be beside and subordinate to its text, but also resemble, reflect and (isomerically or polymerically) restructure it – how it might be amongst it even as it is alongside it. As Miller has it, the prefix denotes something which is 'simultaneously this side of the boundary line, threshold, or margin, and at the same time beyond it, equivalent in status and at the same time secondary, submissive'[*], and also 'the boundary itself which is at once a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside [...] dividing them but also forming an ambiguous transition between one and the other' (441).

These possibilities are not raised as a counterargument to Genette's typology: the difficulties of this relationship which I will go on to explore do not alter the status of the texts on either side of the relationship. Moreover, Genette is not deaf

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[*] The word 'threshold' is significant here as a word not only repeated by Genette but also employed in the French as the original title of *Paratexts*: *Seuils*.

to the issues raised by the para- in 'paratext': the opening paragraph of *Paratexts* describes the paratext as 'a *threshold*', 'a zone without any hard and fast boundary', 'a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*' (2). Not for nothing does he refer a number of times the the 'Outwork' of Derrida's *Dissemination* (1972), a text which we will also be approaching (161-2, 196, 235).

We left off an account of Genette's typology of prefaces in *Paratexts* precisely at the point where it comes to ideas of function. At the same time as coming back to the issue of function in Genette's account, it is important to be cognisant of the issues which are raised by a more concerted look at the relationship between the supplementary discourse and its creative text. I will begin the next section by exploring that issue.

2.3: A supplementary detour

As I have mentioned, Genette refers a number of times to Derrida's *Dissemination* (first published in 1981), specifically the opening section, which is titled 'Outwork' and introduced by a page which offers, in a manner not dissimilar to the first page of this chapter, other names including 'Hors d'Ouevre', 'Foreplay' and 'Prefacing' (1). Although Genette does not analyse or respond to Derrida in a substantive way, the possibility that *Paratexts* was, at least in part, triggered by 'Outwork' is also suggested by the text itself. Early on, Derrida asks

> But what do prefaces actually do? Isn't their logic more surprising than this? Oughtn't we some day to reconstitute their history and their typology? Do they form a genre? Can they be grouped according to the necessity of some common predicate, or are they otherwise and in themselves divided? (7)

To reconstitute the history and typology of the preface and other paratextual devices, and pursue those questions of genre and grouping, is precisely Genette's project in *Paratexts*, albeit in a modest form which does not claim to be rigorous or complete. As such, Genette is picking up a thread of thought which Derrida disavows by saying that these 'questions will not be answered' (7).

However, even as Genette follows Derrida temporally and logically, it could be said that 'Outwork' would be better read (if one is interested primarily in what it has to say about the preface) after *Paratexts*, or at least alongside it. Still in the opening pages of his text, Derrida explores the chronological aspect of writing and reading a preface from his own vantage point of being in the process of writing what might be a preface. He says that if 'Outwork' were a preface it would outline 'a *general* theory and practice of deconstruction', but by being written (inevitably) after the main text, such an outline would conceal a 'hidden omnipotent author' announcing 'Here is what I wrote, then read, and what I am

writing that you are going to read' (6). In this, Derrida is speaking simultaneously of both his own situation and the general condition of prefaces. This destabilisation of the apparent chronology of the volume in the reader's hands – the preface composed after the fact as though in advance – is then replicated in the reader's reading, as 'once having read it, you will already have anticipated everything that follows [i.e., the rest of the book] and thus you might just as well dispense with reading the rest. The *pre* of the preface makes the future present' (7). Resisting the urge to diagram the loops and leaps Derrida is here describing, it is enough to say that this builds significantly on Genette's analysis of the time and place of a preface. Looked at from Genette's point of view, time is not a key issue for the supplementary discourse (as has been discussed), perhaps precisely because it is not subject to conventional codes of publication, but Derrida draws out the consequences that these factors might have on the content of the preface, regardless of when or where it was actually published: the idea that one 'might just as well dispense with reading the rest' resonates with the supplementary discourse. If Genette allows us to usefully speak about the preface by delimiting his discussion to the time of publication within the system *original/later/delayed*, then Derrida's subsequent (to be ironically anachronous) removal of that delimitation opens up a different set of possible consequences of the preface. At the same time, Derrida is structuring his own analysis by having it respond to the fact that he is writing a preface to *Dissemination*, and as such it is doubly instructive, in that a creative writer must in just the same way account for the fact that they are writing a supplementary discourse. This again recalls Jeri Kroll's observation regarding students' awareness 'that since they are creating a new type of discourse that addresses a complex audience they have to consider, in a way no straight academic MA or PhD does, how they position themselves as narrators'.

This difference – wherein Genette delimits the scope of his analysis in order make formal statements about the preface generally and Derrida delimits the scope of his analysis according to its immediate occasion – continues throughout

'Outwork'. While this is certainly not the only program that Derrida is following in 'Outwork', when he does ask the broader kind of questions which might also have interested Genette – 'what do prefaces actually do?', 'does a preface *exist*?' (6, 13) – his response is generated as a preface-writer rather than as someone looking at the phenomenon from an external position. The latter of those two questions, for instance, comes at the tail end of a section which establishes the reasoning for Derrida's refusal to mark 'Outwork' as either a preface or not-a-preface ('this is a preface, this is not a preface' (30)), saying in part that

> either the preface already belongs to this exposition of the whole,
> engages it and is engaged in it, in which case the preface has no
> specificity and no textual place of its own [...] or else the preface escapes
> this in some way, in which case it is nothing at all: a textual form of
> vacuity, a set of empty, dead signs (12)

The irony is clear when, a paragraph later, Derrida suggests that if one attempts to make sense of it in terms of its content and form 'one cannot comprehend the writing of a preface', that being precisely the challenge he faces – 'But in thus *remaining*, does a preface *exist*?' (13). In targeting the opposition form/content – alongside 'signifier/signified', 'sensible/intelligible' – as the source of confusion and misdirection in the attempt to make sense of the preface, Derrida is of course following a typically deconstructive course. We do not need to trace this deconstruction in full, as it is to a large extent focussed on bringing the idea of dissemination into view (another function of 'Outwork'), but it is interesting to note that the opposition form/content might be another way of viewing the organisational principle Genette employs. The status of the preface, as already discussed, considers the issue of form; the following chapter of *Paratexts*, 'The functions of the original preface', considers the content of the preface, arranged under the groupings 'Themes of the why' and 'Themes of the how' (196-229).

Before coming to explicitly identify this opposition, Derrida has already addressed the issue of content in a broad way by suggesting that all types of

preface 'have always been written, it seems, in view of their own self-effacement' (7). Once a preface has gathered up and presented, for instance, 'the conceptual content or significance' of the text-to-come, and 'put before the reader's eyes what is not yet visible', Derrida reasons that 'the route which has been covered must cancel itself out' (6, 8), must be effaced if a reader is to bother going on to read that text which has already been accounted for and made-present. However, this erasure leaves 'a *remainder* which is added to the subsequent text and which cannot be completely summed up within it': once the reader has moved on to read the real thing, that reading is still marked by the reader's having read the preface, even though the preface was anyway only ever an after-the-fact distillation of the real thing (8). Here he is specifically considering, naturally enough given the context, the content of a philosophical preface, but in this there is at least a stirring of what it might mean for the supplementary discourse to both belong and not-belong to the creative text as a whole.

Arguments such as this one in 'Outwork' respond to both Derrida's immediate task of writing a preface, but also to another programme he is following in this text. His negotiations with the idea of the preface also take place in the form of extended analyses of others' prefacing practices: most extensively with Hegel's preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and his introduction to the *Science of Logic*, in which he finds a strange redoubling both in their joint 'condemnation of the foreword' and in the possibility that either 'the entire *Phenomenology of Spirit* is in fact a preface introducing the *Logic*' or that it 'is *in truth* an endless postface' (12). In this analysis, then, he is bringing in the question of the form of the preface, and the formal relationship between preface and text. I have already mentioned something of the malleability of the text/paratext formula which Genette applies, and we find it here again with Derrida asserting that not only does the content of a preface give rise to difficulties, but the location of those difficulties is unstable. Having shown the seeming impossibility of proceeding towards an account of the preface through the opposition of form/content, Derrida announces, using the

word which Genette would take on as the French title of his work, that we 'have come to a remarkable threshold [*limen*] of the text' (12).

After working through analyses of Hegel and Marx, Derrida comes to an example which seems more immediately germane to the supplementary discourse. 'In either case,' he says, referring to the possibilities that the preface is either erased by the main text or integrated into it, 'the preface is a fiction', but in the first possibility it is a fiction in service of the truth, allowing itself to be erased in order to bring the main text about, whilst in the second it is a fiction which works against the 'teleology of the book', disorganising the paratext/text division which the formatting and titles of the relevant sections attempt to enforce (28). His example of the latter is the 'hybrid preface' to *The Songs of Maldoror*, a 19th-century poetic novel by Comte de Lautréamont. *Maldoror*, he explains, is arranged into six Songs, but only upon coming to the sixth Song does the reader find that it '*presents itself* as the effective body of the text, the *real* operation for which the first five Songs would only have been the didactic preface' (28). Literally announcing in the body of the text that everything read thus far must now be retrospectively considered as prefatory, *Maldoror* again exhibits the indefinite nature of the threshold between preface and text, but also has a couple of other notable aspects.

First, it plays with and dramatises the fact that the preface is known to be such because it is marked as such. When the sixth Song '*presents itself*' as the text to which the first five have been prefatory, it is only through that act of presenting that the first five can be identified as prefatory; while this may seem trivially self-evident, it shows from a different angle how that particular status of the text cannot be analysed purely in terms of its form and/or content. Had Lautréamont excised this self-reflexive moment where the text discusses its own status, then the discussion of its status would never have arisen, as (according to Derrida's account) neither the form nor the content of the first five Songs indicate it. This raises an interesting question with regards to the supplementary

discourse and the many names given to it: whilst it seems relatively unlikely that a student would (or, depending on the bureaucratic processes involved, could) attempt anything quite so radical as omitting the division between the two texts entirely, it is worth asking whether Derrida's analysis of *Maldoror* implies that the name given to the supplementary discourse affects the writing and reading of that text rather more deeply than just by guiding it towards a particular stylistic model such as the essay or the journal. The effect of naming might also help bring resolution to the iterated problem that, in spite of their apparent impossibility, these texts, prefaces and supplementary discourses, nonetheless exist: in a moment of circular logic, they exist because they are identified as such. The other notable aspect is that, unlike the other examples Derrida uses and unlike *Dissemination* itself, *Maldoror* is a work of fiction. It is then interesting not only that can we see the same effects play out in a work of fiction as in a work of philosophy, but also that the fictional nature which Derrida ascribes to prefaces takes on a different tenor in the context of a work which is already fictional. Part of the discussion in this chapter so far has noted the distinction between a supplementary discourse and a traditional piece of critical work in English, but it is worth mentioning that the statuses of these two texts might not quite be analogous – the primary focus in Creative Writing must necessarily be on the creative work, and students in either English and/or Creative Writing are not generally asked to produce reflective pieces on critical essays. As such, the fictional nature of the preface (if the supplementary discourse does indeed share it) enters into the academic milieu in precisely the zone where fiction is already practised, in a way which we might relate back to the possibilities raised by Genette's account of senders. In either case, the latter kind of fictionality – working against the teleology of the book – seems to be the right one to consider with regards to the supplementary discourse: it is hard to imagine an argument in favour of the supplementary discourse which is erased by the main text in terms of either how that would work or why one would want it to work. To rephrase an

earlier observation, it is not a general condition of creative literary work that it needs a prior text to bring it about. Or: being so desired, the supplementary discourse must provide something otherwise absent.

Suppose that I were, in the manner of Lautréamont, to announce at this point that this section, 'A supplementary detour', of this chapter, 'The Supplementary Discourse', was in fact supplementary in character all along; not only a detour on the topic of the supplement, but also a detour which forms a supplement. I say 'supplement', here, because 'preface' would be too restrictive: perhaps this section supplements the previous one, an afterword filling in the background beyond the edges of Genette's schema; or perhaps it is prefatory, placed to bring into view some number of ideas which must be set immediately to one side once we return to the flow of Genette proper (as we very shortly will). Suppose that as of now, this whole section has always been on the other side of the threshold. What might we then say about it in light of 'Outwork'? That we are no longer in a linear line of argument: this section sits astride those around it, bringing forward the content of the next ahead of itself and making the previous dispensable. That it features a definite lack: if it belongs to the text as a whole then it has no specific place of its own, but if it stands alone it becomes nothing. That it is, of course, only known to be supplementary because I have marked it as such: leaving open a question of whether, without that marking, the broader argument would be readable as a continuous through-line rather than one which features a flagging up of something deviant and circular. And that it is written to efface itself: if the sections it corresponds with are to be read and understood anyway, it can only be by way of this section's erasure – we will after all continue to talk about the preface and the supplementary discourse as though they not only exist, but are possible. Because all of this is impossible, in a sense, but as we return to Genette the remainder of this section will be concerned with the fact that when a student sits down to write an account of the how and why of their own creative work, whether that be in making a case for its novelty and unity, or recalling the scene

of its composition, or offering up a statement of intent, they are also writing, in spite of impossibility, across this threshold.

2.4: Writing how and why I wrote

What might a student do when they come to write a supplementary discourse? How might they account for and give an account of the creative text, the space beside which they are writing the supplementary discourse into? This is a different question to one of what it is that universities' rubrics tend to request of students: while a rubric demands evidence of certain competencies, an actual piece of work will always contain something more than those competencies, if only in its attempts to bind them together into a cohesive text. Moreover, to ask what a student might do is to ask what possible array of strategies could be used to achieve a supplementary discourse, rather than what strategies actually do get used.

In a similar way, we might imagine a scene in which a publisher says to an author: we need a preface for your book. Here there is certainly no question of rubric per se, although a publisher might have some qualities in mind when they make the request, and so the immediate task for the author is to find a way to write into the space just before (or after) the text they have already produced. I have already discussed the formal characteristics a preface might employ in terms of Genette's typology of status, but not what those features are in service of: if an author employs what a follower of Genette might call an authentic actorial preface, the natural question is, for what? Or, in light of Derrida, the task might be to find a function for this preface which gives it its own place within the volume whilst remaining faithful to the text it prefaces, which advances the cause of that text without limiting its ability to perform its own function.

Genette responds to this issue by breaking out a number of distinct functions he sees extant prefaces fulfilling. As ever, this list is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive: in his examples, one preface might correspond with multiple functions, and there is space for prefaces which do not correspond to any of them. A preface, after all, is a preface because it is designated as such rather than

because it embodies a certain form, but within this there are certain tendencies which come about more frequently, in response to both contemporary fashion and the demands a preface places on its writer. At the same time, this list is of a different sort to that of prefatorial status, as its members are not differentiated by the aspect they refer to. Any preface will by necessity have some sense of a sender, being composed from a certain position, or of time, being published at a particular date, and so these aspects must be considered in turn and individually. The functions of a preface listed by Genette, however, all inflect on the same aspect, and need not be taken one at a time: the text in question might display any or none of the suggested qualities. For this reason, and because some are more germane to the scene of Creative Writing than others, we will look at just a few of these functions and how they pertain to the supplementary discourse.

The greater part of Genette's discussion speaks particularly about the functions of 'original prefaces' – that is, prefaces signed authentically by the author and published concurrently with the main text – but these functions cross over into other types of preface. This typology is split into two broad categories, 'themes of why' and 'themes of how', which speak to the two main overarching functions Genette sees the preface as fulfilling: respectively, '*to get the book read and to get the book read properly*' (197). In principle it may seem that the former category is at some distance from the supplementary discourse. A tutor, unlike a general reader, must read the main text regardless of how unappealing its paratexts might make it seem. In practice the rhetorical attempt to demonstrate why one should read the book involves accounting for why the book was written and, similarly, rhetoric regarding how to read the book involves accounting for how the book was written. The preface is in part a place where the author can act as a reader, and so we see echoes in the 'themes of the why' of tactics a Creative Writer might pursue (198). For example, the theme of 'importance' appears less likely to be found in student work. Claims such as those cited from Thucydides, Montesquieu and Rousseau regarding the intellectual usefulness of their work,

which suggest that the reader will become a better person for having read the text, would be rather grand coming from an undergraduate (although some might make them nonetheless) (199). However, the same quote from Montesquieu ('…that men were able to cure themselves of their prejudices. Here I call prejudices not what makes one unaware of certain things but what makes one unaware of oneself') might well be found in the supplementary discourse of a student whose practice involves trying to write against their own type or in the voice of another. In other words, recast into the context of learning to write, the importance might be for the individual, rather than for people in general, and still inhabit the same form.

A more straightforwardly relevant theme is that of 'unity', in which prefaces to collections of texts attempt to present a seemingly 'contingent jumble of things' as having a 'formal or, more often, thematic unity' (201). This seems to be a very natural, though by no means mandatory, function of those supplementary discourses which are appended to portfolios of short stories or poetry. This is particularly the case in research degrees, where there is a need to demonstrate that the thesis as a whole demonstrates original knowledge effectively shared, and its components must therefore be seen to pull in the same direction. An idea of unity presented in a supplementary discourse for a taught degree might be developmental in nature in the interest of, as with importance, providing evidence for a learning process: 'in the first story I… and then in the second story I…'. In either case, the theme of unity gives the writer a chance to say something about the main text which the main text might not be able to explicitly state about itself, given the ontological constraints of literature.

The section on 'the themes of the how' begins by observing that 'since the nineteenth century the functions of enhancing the work's value have been relatively eclipsed by the functions of providing information and guidance for reading' (209). Given that this shift from why to how coincides with the birth and growth of Creative Writing, it is perhaps not entirely coincidental that these

themes correspond more closely with what a supplementary discourse might do. The theme of 'genesis', for instance, 'inform[s] the reader about the origin of the work, the circumstances in which it was written, the stages of its creation', effectively relating how the work was written in order to provide guidance on how to receive it (210). Put into the context of Creative Writing, this is how the student's writing practice might be represented, with circumstances and stages of creation cast in light of the module or course structure rather than personal biography. The theme of 'choice of a public' likewise seems inherent. In Genette's account this is taken to be an author effectively saying that one should read the book if you are or as though you were this particular kind of person – Boccaccio, for instance, writes a preface in which he 'address[es] himself to "the charming ladies"' (212). In Creative Writing the issue is perhaps keener, as there is always a non-negotiable 'public' in the form of the person marking the work, but in order to do that marking effectively it is likely that that person may need to know what the supposed audience is: if the dialogue in an apparently tragic tale is hilarious, the tutor needs to know whether the audience should ideally want to be moved to laughter or to tears.

A few more of these themes have similarly simple connections to Creative Writing. 'Commentary on the title', which might inform the reader of a reference being made or defend pre-emptively against misreading, needs no further explanation, whilst the theme of 'the order in which to be read' may be a simple necessity for formally experimental works (213, 218). The theme of 'contextual information' gathers together elements in prefaces which explain to the reader a 'context-to-come', whether that be the as-yet-unpublished remainder of the present text, or pending related texts, such as further volumes in the series (219). Likewise, this might be seen as a necessity if the submission constitutes a section of a novel or a set of stories which share a world, if the candidate wants to briefly explain the rest of the plot and context.

Rather broader is the theme of 'statements of intent'. As Genette has it, the 'most important function of the original preface, perhaps, is to provide the author's interpretation of the text or, if you prefer, his statement of intent' (221). Indeed, it could be argued that in terms of both the preface and the supplementary discourse all other functions are pressed into the service of this one. Genette gives a number of examples, from Rabelais to Borges, of authors using the preface to present 'the reader an indigenous theory defined by the author's *intention*', such that their 'common theme is thus, roughly, "Here is what I meant to do"'. This formulation could well be used to bracket other themes already mentioned: 'commentary on the title' really being 'here is what I meant the title to mean', 'unity' being 'here is the unity I intended the work to have', and so on. Interestingly, Genette points out that this 'approach is apparently contrary to a certain modern vulgate, formulated in particular by Valéry, which refuses to grant the author any control over the "real meaning"' – which is interesting at least in part because it sidesteps a reference to Barthes, who formulated it in particular, and probably more famously, in 'The Death of the Author'. Whatever Genette's motivation was in locating this refusal specifically in Valéry's thought, there is in this theme a clear conflict with the discipline of English, in all of the ways which were discussed in the first chapter. This quality of the preface has already been mentioned, but Genette's account of the 'original preface' makes it central. At the same time, however, in the very term 'statement of intent' there is a clear echo of academic practice. In PhD applications and official documents, in research proposals, in the initial stages of taught-degree dissertations, and in (as we will see in the next chapter) Research Excellence Framework submissions, there are statements of intent (and cognate terms) wherein the student or academic must account for their literary output in much the same way. This thus forms a nexus where the issue of the supplementary discourse crosses over into the other issues addressed in this thesis: questions of how authorship is construed, how that construed author might account for their own writing in writing, and

how Creative Writing embodies research are all involved in and involve this problem of intent.

Perhaps this does not directly address the central issue of this chapter, which is not the relationship between the supplementary discourse and the academy, but the relationship between the supplementary discourse and the discourse it supplements. However, one notable aspect of statements of intent as they exist in the bureaucracy of academia is that they are always provisional devices intended to be discarded once they have fulfilled their function – in contrast to the work itself, which is written to be the finished product, to exist hopefully indefinitely. This is uncontroversial, because why would anybody want or need to read a provisional, exploratory document once the project it was exploring itself exists? It would seem that for (let's say) an English PhD thesis such as this one, the work of making a case for the importance of a topic and outlining its intellectual context would by nature be built into the thesis itself. In the case of Creative Writing, an analogous document takes on a tandem status with the finished work: statements of intent proper can undoubtedly be written for Creative Writing also, but when they are that function is frequently replicated at a later date by a supplementary discourse – for what? Importance, nature of the audience, reason for the title: if the explanations given for these things in a supplementary discourse were to persuade their reader and appear valid, then they must be at least implied in the creative text itself. This goes even for issues of unity and context, where I have suggested that the literary text may be unable to state its case directly – if a collection of poems is written with the intent of unifying around a theme, and if the author enjoys any success in that aim, then that theme must anyway be indirectly present.

All of which makes the preface as a model for the supplementary discourse so close and yet so far. To briefly reiterate, all of the issues of status Genette raises are equally germane to the supplementary discourse, and in the case of senders and the possibility of fictional prefaces seem to predict some of the tactics which

the writer of a supplementary discourse might employ. Likewise, many of these themes of prefaces would be perfectly sensible and likely routes to take with a supplementary discourse and capture what a supplementary discourse might discuss. Certainly, as a pedagogical device the preface could be a way of explaining and rationalising to students what a supplementary discourse should be, do, and say: even themes which might seem specifically academic, such as a student's engagement with the syllabus of a module, might be framed in terms of the importance of the literary text. Nonetheless, there is a point of divergence which we might mark between the supplementary discourse and the preface which is also, not incidentally, the point at which the supplementary discourse attains a summative quality: while a statement of intent is to be discarded, and a preface might well be skipped, a supplementary discourse remains, still to be reckoned with even though the creative work exists and even after it is read.

What is this excessively named (and so ironically un-named) text I am trying to talk about? My analysis of the supplementary discourse here meets a kind of bifurcation. Down one path is all manner of paratextual production which accompanies the writing of creative work. We have been speaking of the preface as the most useful model for the supplementary discourse – and I think it does keenly capture much of what is at stake in that practice – but this production also ordinarily entails what Genette groups under the heading of 'private epitext' (371). These are: the writer's 'oral confidences' and 'correspondence', which might map to the workshop process and the written feedback that results from workshopping, respectively (372-86); the writer's diaries, in which the author gives 'testimony' of their writing process, and which is clearly equivalent to the journal work sometimes found in or requested of the supplementary discourse (387-94); and the 'pre-texts', which consist of those drafts, sketches, ideas and notes which compose the textual detritus which emerges from the process of writing literature, and for which occupation of the scene of Creative Writing makes no discernible difference (395-403). None of these categories, for which the

majority of their genetic structure is again shared between the work that happens in Creative Writing and that which happens outside it, appear to have the direct resonance with the supplementary discourse which the preface enjoys. And yet, these paratexts clearly have the potential to provide the material which actually makes up a supplementary discourse: nothing would be less surprising than to find a student discussing a moment from a workshop, or tracking the changes between two drafts, or recalling from their notes a particular character's moment of genesis, in order to obtain whatever function they wish their supplementary discourse to have.

And so, down the other path is exactly the same thing, is all manner of paratextual production which (unlike, for example, the title of the text) is for the reader in some way avoidable, with one salient difference: *it gets read*. Under the terms of that adjectival binary opposition read/unread, any amount of labour which would (or at least could) happen anyway becomes a site of contestation, from its name, to what it should consist of, to how it is weighted, to whether or not it should even exist. The slightness, the marginality of this distinction returns us to the ambiguity of Genette's discourse on the paratext – 'threshold', 'vestibule', 'fringe', 'edge', 'undefined zone' – as something which may or may not be, or which may or may not count as, a component of a text's existence.

All of which brings us to a second question. This chapter has, in a way, been itself a (hopefully) necessary preface. Just as Derrida's 'Outwork' is a way of bringing into view the idea of dissemination, this chapter brings into view a question which it is beyond the scope and methodology of this thesis to answer, and which oversteps the is/should elision in the meta-Creative Writing discourse: what is this excessively named (and so ironically un-named) text I am trying to talk about *for*?

Chapter 3: Creative Writing Research

3.1: Research as knowledge, practice as research

The previous chapter discussed a certain kind of textual relationship between a supplementary discourse and the main text which it accompanies. There, the situation was analysed in the context of a formulation wherein the supplementary discourse and the literary text are presented, via a paratextual effect of titling and a bureaucratic effect of submission, as a single product. In this way a difference is marked between these supplementary discourses and other texts – including in Creative Writing pedagogic tools such as writing diaries and in English traditional critical essays – which take part in a relationship with literary texts. This arrangement is most typical of student Creative Writing work (in particular at undergraduate level) in which the supplementary discourse is employed as part of the assessment process under the names exegesis, critical commentary, reflective commentary, and so on.

However, there is another type of supplementary discourse which might be found not in student work, but in the work of already-established and -accredited Creative Writing practitioners. Alongside the rapid growth and development of Creative Writing over the last three decades there has been a concurrent emergence, at least in the British and Australasian scenes, of national governmental research evaluations which are designed to periodically quantify the quality of research output at each institution and distribute research funding accordingly; in the UK this process was formerly known as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), first conducted in 1986, and is now the Research Excellence Framework (REF), first conducted in 2014. In brief, the REF requires that each full-time researcher at a university submits an allotment of their

research to be judged by a centralised panel so that the institution might be collectively scored, and research funding accordingly allocated. The existence of the REF points to the larger institutional contexts in which the concerns of this thesis are situated, in which the university is subjected to the imperatives of 'professionalisation', governed by economic and political motives which it cannot be my business here to address. It is in this chapter, however, that their force can most obviously be felt.

The REF, as with its Australian equivalent ERA, allots space for the researcher to accompany each of their submissions with a statement explaining and justifying its nature and status as research. Not all submissions from Creative Writing academics take advantage of this – a fact which, given how seemingly endemic the supplementary discourse is at the student level, is itself interesting. When supporting statements *are* given, there is a degree to which they can be viewed in the terms laid out in the previous chapter, in that they too seem to supply something which is absent from the main text and in that their presence might affect the meaning (in this case, for the REF auditor) of the main text. It is, in essence, instinctually unlikely that a member of a REF panel will react to a novel submitted to the panel in the same way as they would if they had read the same novel while on holiday; this chapter will, in part, explore what kind of consequences this context could have in that regard.

However, as well as responding to a literary text in some way, these supporting statements are also responding to another, more direct, more transparent demand: they must justify that text as 'research', according to a seemingly particular definition of research. Which is to say that whilst students' supplementary discourses are subjected to the familiar vagaries of rubrics and academic judgement, these supporting statements aim to fulfil an additional and highly pragmatic function of acquiring as much funding for the host institution as possible. To take an example from the 2014 REF, when Sarah Maitland writes in Lancaster University's submission that *A Book of Silence* 'represents an

experimental form, conflating two usually distinct genres within literary studies' she is writing in a mode very much familiar from the supplementary discourse, but when she continues by saying that its 'research method reflects this, combining as it does traditional socio-historical work into the history of silence with meditation and prayer, interviews and conversations' she is writing in order to bring that work towards an idea of research as represented in the REF criteria.[*]

We will return in more detail to the specifics of those criteria and the REF process later, before going on to conduct a detailed examination of the Creative Writing supporting statements produced during the process of submitting to it. First, it might be made clear that this issue of categorising a piece of work as 'research' implicates the work itself as much as its supporting statement. Even for those outputs submitted without a supporting statement, there is an implication that this text is, or should be, or can be considered as 'research', even if it has already been published in a format which holds no such implication. To draw on the language of the previous chapter, by entering the context of the REF the submitted novel (or whatever the output is) is placed within a new paratextual frame, with all the potential effects on meaning that that entails.

This issue also goes beyond those governmental frameworks. Although British academics today may be most keenly concerned – because of its importance for funding – with the definition of research as described by the REF, a similar pressure might be found in the work of a graduate student who must for the first time consider and justify their production of 'research'; or in applications for funding from other sources which might demand a future-tense explication of

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[*] Whilst REF output details are published online, the database containing them is not easily-referenceable. Output details referred to in this chapter will therefore be identified by title and submitting institution and may be found in full via the searchable database at http://results.ref.ac.uk/search.

'research' content; and most of all, in the fact that 'research' is a constitutional element in the modern formulation of the idea of the university as an institution.

This last point is discussed at length, and particularly in terms of the British scene which the REF operates in, by Stefan Collini in his 2012 work *What Are Universities For?*. He suggests, contra a general belief that the founding of European universities in the early second millennium constitutes a genuine origin for today's institutions, that 'the modern university is essentially a nineteenth-century creation' dating to the 'establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810 by Wilhelm von Humboldt' which placed research at the heart of the institution (23). This German cultural innovation had global repercussions, and 'had considerable impact in Britain, too, not least in standing for an ideal of *wissenschaftlich* 'research', which came to be grafted onto the native traditions of teaching and scholarship' (24). While '*wissenschaftlich*' here means 'scientific', the research practices which were 'coming to be seen as part of the defining purpose of the university' at this time covered both what we would consider scientific endeavour and 'those fields that were later to be designated as the humanities and social sciences' (23-4). From this flash point of research being grafted into the British academic system, Collini lucidly traces a subsequent history involving a simultaneous explosion in the numbers of higher education institutions and expansion of governmental oversight and control of those institutions continuing to the present day (27-35). While research still plays a definitional role for the university, it has over time been drawn under the aegis of what Collini terms 'HiEdBizUK', in which the agenda-setting quality of research, informing teaching, scholarship and the whole tenor of the university, has been gradually replaced, due to increasing government intervention, with an agenda set by 'the needs of the economy', and so today universities operate like businesses, thinking in terms of value for money (35). Collini illustrates the consequences of this for research in a reading of a 2003 White Paper on higher education, suggesting that its comment on the RAE is one of 'bare-faced inanity' in which the fact that 'departments

receive higher ratings now than in 1986 when the system was instituted' is taken as indication that research quality has improved. Calling this 'the Fallacy of the Self-Fulfilling Measurement System', Collini points out that there is a difference between getting better at the RAE and getting better at research itself, and that the former will be prioritised by universities over the latter because the former unlike the latter generates additional funding (159-60). It is therefore important to remember in this chapter that being research is never, in the contemporary British academy, as simple as just being research.

This last point will be touched upon again, but it is worth first exploring how Creative Writing academics have already responded to the idea of Creative Writing as research in the abstract as well as in terms of national research evaluations. One thing in the meta-Creative Writing discourse is immediately clear: any discussion of Creative Writing Research in that discourse is functionally equivalent to a discussion of Creative Writing Knowledge. Such an equivalence is made repeatedly and even taken as a given in the opening salvos of relevant works of meta-Creative Writing discourse. Graeme Harper's book *Making Up* (2013), for instance, takes the form of a novel bookended by expository work on the nature of Creative Writing Research and the novel's relationship with it. While the literary text itself is apparently unconcerned with issues of academia, the introduction and conclusion frame it as being about knowledge in Creative Writing precisely because it is a product of Creative Writing Research. So, although the first paragraph of the introduction argues for this being a work which 'not so many years ago would not, indeed could not, have existed' because the notion of Creative Writing as research is so recent, the second smoothly segues into an assertion that 'the idea that works of Creative Writing contain human knowledge [is] a very well-supported and ancient notion' (1) without interrogating the link thus made between research and knowledge. Diane Donnelly makes a similar move even in the title 'The Case for Creative Writing Research as Knowledge', a chapter in her 2011 monograph *Establishing Creative*

Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline in which she conducts a literature review examining how the link between Creative Writing and 'knowledge' is perceived, but not the association of 'research' and 'knowledge'. Jeri Kroll summarises the terms of the contemporary debate around Creative Writing research as 'what methodologies facilitate this re-imagined species of research and what kinds of knowledge it can produce in the context of doctoral education' ('Originality and Research' 150).

Simon Holloway approaches the idea of Creative Writing Research from a different angle, in that his is a reflective and autobiographical account of a PhD in Creative Writing. He analogises the difference between an English PhD and a Creative Writing PhD as the difference between inspecting how existing pocket watches were made and making your own pocket watch. Of course, there is in this metaphor a loaded implication that criticism is a passive activity which does not itself constitute an act of production, but his point is that Creative Writing Research provides 'a different set of data about the making of pocket watches, knowledge about their construction and creation which you could only have got through action', and because of this data's distinctiveness there is a need to justify to those outside of Creative Writing how this can 'connect and add to the wider body of knowledge, in order to fulfil the criteria of valid academic study' (130-1). Three key ideas can be located in this argument: first, Creative Writing can do research which is different in nature from that of other disciplines; second, that research must therefore be justified to others (just as, we might add, it is justified to the REF); third, the nature of that justification relies on an idea of knowledge.

In 'Creative Writing and Ph.D. Research' Jon Cook begins by describing an antipathy between Creative Writing and research evaluation in which 'the requirement that universities should be publicly accountable [... and] accompany their activity with statements about what they do and why they do it' can create a 'maddening pressure to be explicit about something called creativity' (2012: 99). Bracketing this as a 'time-honored confrontation' between creative freedoms and

institutional norms, Cook nonetheless employs the language of the institutionally normative 2001 RAE when defining research (99-100). Whilst this leads him to use the word 'insight' rather than 'knowledge' – the RAE passage includes the phrase 'new or substantially improved insights' – the implied meaning of the term appears identical to knowledge.* For instance, when Cook creates a thought experiment in which George Eliot has submitted *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* to the REF panel and asks 'What kind of insight does this work provide?' (100) the range of potential answers to that question which he goes on to suggest each, I would suggest, imply particular areas or types of knowledge: 'reflection on the nature of the human' implies an anthropological angle; 'insights into how human beings act and behave' implies a sociological or psychological angle; 'how much of this action is shaped by forces outside [people's] control' implies a philosophical or theoretical angle; and 'how a particular instance of Creative Writing acts in relation to genre and form' implies a literary critical angle (101). Thus, Cook moves the conversation from an assumption that Creative Writing Research is Creative Writing Knowledge to a question about what kind of knowledge that research might constitute, but knowledge is still at the heart of the conversation.

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* The REF, likewise, refers to 'new insights' rather than new knowledge in its definition of research, but the kinds of example given there ('the invention and generation of ideas'; 'new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes') make it clear that as well as the definition of 'insight' suggested as dominant by the OED – 'The fact of penetrating with the eyes of the understanding into the inner character or hidden nature of things; a glimpse or view beneath the surface; the faculty or power of thus seeing.' – there is implied in this usage of the word 'insight' the earlier sense of 'Knowledge of or skill in (a particular subject or department)', in that a REF panel is not asked to agonise over whether a submission pertains to a 'hidden nature', only whether it is 'new'.

This question – 'okay, well, what knowledge?' – is answered in a range of ways in the meta-Creative Writing discourse. Craig Jordan-Baker wryly turns the question back on meta-Creative Writing discourse itself by noting that there 'is a persistent self-referentiality in discussions and the practice of Creative Writing research' (2015: 244). While the nature of the meta-Creative Writing discourse might be useful for the present thesis, it is unusual that, as Jordan-Baker has it, 'the object for much Creative Writing research then is often itself; its pedagogy and history [in a manner analogous to] Eagleton's *The Function of Criticism* or Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy*. However, research in English and Philosophy is typically directed to understanding its objects of knowledge through analysis, argument, scholarship and the proposal of new theories and readings' (244). Of course, the products of Creative Writing research might nonetheless be published as 'novels' or 'poems' and so on rather than as 'research', but that still leaves the fact that literary output from Creative Writing Research which is actually labelled as 'research' (outside of the purposes of the REF and similar exercises) appears to be the domain of graduate study rather than academic publication. Conversely, Creative Writing Research labelled as such tends to be, like Jordan-Baker's article itself, non-literary and self-referential. A rare counterexample to this is Harper's *Making Up* which, as mentioned, does present a literary text under that heading.

In an article, Harper summarises what he sees as the available modes of Creative Writing Research by saying that it might be 'research through the undertaking of creative writing, research about creative writing, or even research using creative writing. Or it can refer to a combination of these' ('Creative Writing Research' 278). Within each of these modes, he further suggests that the knowledge which Creative Writing Research produces might fall within a few more specific brackets, which he lists via four subtitles: 'Critical Understanding' (i.e., knowledge akin to traditional English research); 'Reflection, Reflexivity, Response' (i.e., knowledge about the writer's own creative practice which might

be transmittable and transferable), 'Research about Creative Writing' (i.e., the self-referential work Jordan-Baker describes, potentially expanded to knowledge about non-academic creative writings), and 'Research Using Creative Writing' (i.e., Creative Writing 'as a method of unearthing knowledge' which falls within the domain of other disciplines.) (282-7). Again, the suggestion is that Creative Writing Research might fall under any or all of these categories, just as it might employ a combination of modes. Cook takes a similar view when he suggests that the research process at play in Creative Writing might be 'broken down into three components: research into a content, research into a form and research into the relation between them', all of which 'are always in play' and 'overlap with established research methods' (102). Likewise, while writing specifically on Creative Writing Research in doctoral degrees, Jeri Kroll argues for the necessity of 'flexible guidelines that allow myriad forms of knowledge production' in terms of both methodology and content (150). Amongst all of this there is both an urge to typologise Creative Writing Research and a developed consensus in favour of an idea that Creative Writing need not pin itself down to one particular type of knowledge – and, indeed, an optimistic sense that an ability to operate within such a state of flux is in fact a strength of Creative Writing. However, because these lists of research outcomes are always non-bounded (which is to say, they are presented as a subset of the kinds of knowledge Creative Writing might be able to bring about and not a complete list), this broad church school of Creative Writing Research does not answer in a strong way the main question Jordan-Baker raises by bringing up Creative Writing's self-referentiality: what, besides itself, are Creative Writing's 'objects of knowledge'?

Other responses to the question of what kind of knowledge Creative Writing contains might usefully be categorised in terms of Harper's four subheadings mentioned earlier, partly because they are sufficiently broad, partly because they are focussed on content rather than methodology (which I will discuss in a moment), and partly because the most interesting thing is not what these

responses are saying but their non-consensus. The chapter on Creative Writing Research in Diane Donnelly's *Establishing Creative Writing Studies as an Academic Discipline*, as the title of the monograph suggests, falls under 'Research about Creative Writing', saying that 'research leads to creative writing as knowledge and, as teachers, we should want, at the least, to be informed about our pedagogy' (124). She does later move beyond the purely internal issues of academic pedagogy by suggesting that creative writing studies 'can encourage practitioners to link theory with practice and to form its own creative writing theory', but here too the knowledge created – a hypothetical theory of Creative Writing – seems to be about the discipline itself (125).

Simon Holloway's article falls squarely within 'Reflection, Reflexivity, Response', asking whether his 'novel was exactly as it would have been had it been composed under other circumstances' and seeking 'to address in critical terms the actions of my own creativity' (129). As well as reflecting upon the experience of doing a PhD, this article has a reflexive quality in that it engages in the form of knowledge-generation it is itself advocating for: Holloway's 'explication of research' in Creative Writing as 'an explanation of how something so esoteric and private as an individual's creative process can speak to others' itself emerges from an attempt to explain his own esoteric process to others (131).

Jeri Kroll spends time focussing on the notion of 'originality' as a defining characteristic of research, which is to say that research must be not just knowledge, but new knowledge (150-65). This leads to a discussion about the kinds of 'Critical Understanding' which Creative Writing might generate, in terms of a comparison made between 'publishable' work and 'high quality' work and the implications that this might have for 'disciplinary or critical knowledge' about the historical contexts of the production of literature (158-9). Kroll's focus on originality also finesses the category of 'Critical Understanding', in that the necessity for originality in critical research underlines its inherent lowercase-c

creative quality, and so loosens an implication about form that the term 'Critical Understanding' might make.

Graeme Harper's own *Making Up* perhaps unsurprisingly has elements of all of these. Notably, however, even while he explicitly describes his work as 'practice-led research', there is relatively little focus on reflexive or personal knowledge, stressing instead 'Critical Understanding' and 'Research using Creative Writing'. For instance, he summarises the behind-the-scenes graft of research which went into the novel in an endnote which reads 'This research involved empirical research in and around prisons in the USA, Europe and Australia, together with journeys to Algeria, theoretical investigation of the literature of incarceration and the history and style of prison texts, and the consideration of such things as the modes of metaphor', suggesting a generation of knowledge both about the subject matter and about the way in which that subject matter might be presented (166). As we will see, this identification of research 'graft' – travel and archive work – is also common in REF submissions. As has been mentioned, he also spends time making observations regarding 'Research about Creative Writing', including a list of seven recommendations for the advancement of Creative Writing Research including publication 'of both creative and critical aspects of Creative Writing research', greater emphasis on 'project-based work' alongside 'blue skies research', and the 'need to more publically value […] the artefacts of Creative Writing that are not final works' (164-5).

Of course, there is a degree to which these four categories – or any other categories of subject knowledge which might be drawn up – do not actually matter. After all, if research is indeed equivalent to knowledge production, then as long as new knowledge of some kind is being produced, research is taking place. However, the arena of knowledge which a given piece of Creative Writing research claims to inhabit does make a difference, both to the authorities surveilling research activity (who may turn out to take brighter or dimmer views of various approaches) and for the sake of Creative Writing's relationship with

other disciplines. Jordan-Baker suggests that the reason for Creative Writing Research's 'persistent self-referentiality' is precisely its anxious need for a place of its own in the academy, in that knowledge about Creative Writing itself is the type of knowledge which is least likely to bring Creative Writing into conflict with other disciplines, and which therefore 'minimise[s] conflict with its claims to distinctiveness' (244). Ironically, this approach simultaneously threatens to diminish Creative Writing's specificity and displace its position in the academy if its research output becomes dominated by Creative Writing-history or Creative Writing-pedagogy rather than Creative Writing-itself. On the other hand, 'Critical Understanding' and 'Research using Creative Writing' may be areas of knowledge sufficiently covered and mapped by other disciplines to the point that Creative Writing's offerings risk going beyond interdisciplinarity into superfluity. The question here is one of whether or not it makes a difference to the research that the new knowledge in a given piece of work is being generated within a discipline of and labelled as 'Creative Writing'. If it does not, the work may as well happen in the form of English or Comparative Literature (in the case of 'Critical Understanding'); or of History, Sociology, Politics, Philosophy, ad infinitum (in the case of 'Research using Creative Writing'). If it does make a difference, then an account of the knowledge in a work of Creative Writing must go beyond simply stating that there is new understanding or insight at play and account for the origin of that knowledge. 'Reflection, Reflexivity, Response', meanwhile, relies on a potentially difficult notion that the knowledge produced about the writer's own experience of writing is effectively shareable – with the implication that it is both understandable by and useful to others. The problem that Jordan-Baker identifies regarding the distinctiveness of Creative Writing Research – and which I am attempting to flesh out here – are not thoroughly responded to in terms of content in the meta-Creative Writing discourse I have surveyed.

However, alongside the issue of content is the issue of methodology, and here there is a greater sense of consensus in the meta-Creative Writing discourse. Holloway's metaphor of building a pocket watch is a way of pointing towards the idea of practice-led research, and whilst other methodological elements (such as Harper's first-hand data collection in prisons) are often mentioned, practice-led research is generally and uncontroversially taken to be Creative Writing Research's institutionally distinctive characteristic. Which is not to say that practice-led research is a methodology unique to Creative Writing; indeed, the term emerged in the more general context of the creative arts, and works such as Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean's *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts* explore the concept in the contexts of dance, performance, music, and visual arts as well as that of writing. The reason why practice-led research is nonetheless distinctive for Creative Writing might be identified when Smith and Dean observe that in certain definitions of research (they are here referring to the OECD's definition) there is an 'unstated implication [...] that knowledge is normally verbal or numerical', which clearly disadvantages research activity taking place in the contexts on which their book focusses (3). Creative Writing, of course, is absolutely verbal and suffers no such handicap, but this in itself may be a disadvantage in that it places Creative Writing Research in position to be read alongside traditional forms of research, even while it has to take place in a different way to that research and needs to find a way to be read differently in order to identify its place within the institution.

In the introduction to Special Issue 14 of *TEXT*, which focuses on practice-led research, Scott Brook explains that the stimulus for the special issue came from the fact that a 'notion of practice-led research had achieved something like a 'practical consensus' within university creative arts programs', suggesting that practice-led research is so entrenched as the default mode in Creative Writing Research that it must be re-interrogated afresh – though the articles in that issue consist of permutations of and reflections on the methodology rather than

rebellions or polemics against it. Likewise, Diane Donnelly begins an article on Creative Writing as knowledge with some predicates, beginning with '(1) If we agree that creative writing is a practice-led research discipline – an area of study that is focused on the nature of practice and the ways in which this practice leads to new understanding and knowledge', apparently taking it as read that we will, in fact, agree (222).

This general acceptance of practice-led research is repeated throughout the meta-Creative Writing discourse, often together with a suggestion that it might be combined with other methodologies with the same kind of broad church mentality seen in discussions of knowledge content. However, the question raised by all of this is how far it gets us in terms of understanding how Creative Writing constitutes research activity. Practice-led research does offer a marker of difference for Creative Writing's approach to objects of knowledge typically found elsewhere in the academy. But there are questions: is a methodology in itself a sufficient distinguishing factor if and when the research is not primarily about the methodology? Conversely, if the research does not fall within Harper's category of 'Research about Creative Writing', what kind of difference does the fact that the research is practice-based make? Or: if a historical novel set in Victorian England re-produces knowledge already well established in History, but through a different route and into a different format, is it new knowledge, regardless of how effectively it is shared? Moreover, isn't the term itself self-evident, in the sense that Creative Writing students are obviously engaged in a practice of writing literature? And does the fact of being practice-led necessarily mean that knowledge is being produced?

One major issue, then, is the idea of knowledge itself. It would be easy to draw up some lines of demarcation from the outset: on the one hand, literary texts inherently contain knowledge because they are constituted of the thought processes of their authors; on the other, such knowledge is not identifiable and transferable in the way in which we expect from academic research; and so on.

However, there is running through much of the above discussed work a spectre, which (perhaps due to being slightly seedier in nature than the high-minded concept of 'knowledge') is mostly only inferred and implicit, and yet which might be a self-sufficient alternative to the formulation in which research equals knowledge.

In fact, as much might be signified by an invisible elision: works of meta-Creative Writing discourse will often move from the stated subject of 'research' to a discussion of where the 'knowledge' is in Creative Writing without a bridging analysis of how research and knowledge are related – and will often smooth that path via reference to institutional frameworks. Moreover, the institutions referenced are more often than not either bodies which directly provide university funding such as the REF or bodies which are fundamentally economic rather than academic. For instance, Jeri Kroll goes about making the case for the importance of 'originality' in a definition of research by referencing, first, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (as Smith and Dean did), and then the US Patent and Trademark Office, and then two academic research organisations, and then Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA; Australia's equivalent of the REF), and then the RAE, and then the REF itself (152-3). While she goes on to discuss sources such as Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's theory of creativity, it seems significant that in the first instance the ideas of research which are most important are drawn in from sources with an interest in the connection between research and funding. Of course, these documents do make reference to ideas of research, knowledge, and originality – that is why Kroll references them in the first place – but it is worth asking whether the object of meta-Creative Writing's affections is really the status of research, or whether it is the status of having been rubber-stamped by the guardians of funding, and the gainful employment which ensues.

Whilst Kroll is an extreme example, similar references, most often to the REF and ERA, can be found throughout the meta-Creative Writing discourse, and

some have already been mentioned. Gerry Turcotte and Robyn Morris approach the issue more directly, exploring how fit for purpose national research evaluations are for research in the creative arts and introduce the Freudian idea of the Uncanny as a way of exploring how authority interacts with creativity (72-4). However, it is notable that the theme here is one of how research evaluations impact upon the creative arts, rather than one of how the creative arts in fact measure up nicely to the demands of research evaluations. This is precisely the opposite of the general theme in other meta-Creative Writing discourse works on the topic, where the argument is one of how Creative Writing can and does work as a research discipline, rather than one of how the demand to 'do research' weighs down upon Creative Writing. What this counter-example brings out is a certain lack of interrogation of national research evaluations in this work; whilst numerous ways of 'doing' Creative Writing Research are identified, the tendency is to identify rather than analyse the fact of evaluation and the effect that it has on research.

Mike Harris takes a view which is both broader and more nuanced when he asks 'was there ever a 'socio-political climate' in which the processes we loosely term 'creativity' weren't in some way trivialised, commodified or commercialised?' before giving examples from Ancient Rome to Angus Wilson (120-3). From there he describes the developmental history of a play he wrote with a narrative which oscillates between his creative process and the funding processes which drove it. Perhaps what is most interesting here is that, in Harris's case, the funding issue is an acknowledged demon, but this funding is coming not from the REF or other academic funding bodies, and not with the proviso that he is doing 'research', but from charities and foundations trying to create art with a social impact. In Creative Writing Research it isn't at all clear that there is a well-developed line of thinking regarding the relationship between funding and research-status which might be analogous to Harris's account of his own 'funding devil'.

The anecdotal example Harris gives shows how the ultimate nature of the work was to some degree predetermined by the contextual events which allowed the work to come to be, as against his original vision. In the present context we might thus identify a certain lack in the meta-Creative Writing discourse when it comes to interrogating the institutional character of both research evaluations and the concept of research itself. In tandem with the ongoing elision of a distinction between 'research' and 'knowledge' there is an omission of any suggestion that the nature of Creative Writing Research might be a product of those evaluators institutions as much as it is a product of Creative Writing academics consciously writing towards an institutionally-approved formulation. Creative Writing Research, then, involves an entanglement of various problems, and the meta-Creative Writing discourse does not strongly indicate where the heart of the matter might be. Before beginning the work of some form of theoretical disentanglement, therefore, we will turn to an alternative body of evidence.

3.2: A REF Guide to Creative Writing Research

I began this chapter by pointing out that there is another kind of supplementary discourse which is found alongside submissions to the REF. They were not explicitly considered in the previous chapter because, unlike a typical student supplementary discourse, they are not presented alongside, before, or after a creative text, but are instead stored in the output details for a particular submission alongside its title, publication details, and other technical information, under the heading of 'additional information'. Kept aside from the output itself, this additional information is thus presented as a preliminary detail which merely aids the reader in accessing the thing which is actually to be assessed. In this space, Creative Writing academics have an opportunity to directly express how their work responds to or corresponds with the idea of research – or, at least, the definition of research as set out by the REF.

This is not a special dispensation for the sake of work which might fit awkwardly with an established idea of what research is or can be. All submissions have the opportunity to include additional information, although the ways in which the space might be used depends on which panel of the REF the work is being submitted to, with each Main Panel issuing distinct guidelines. Main Panel D, of which English is a part, shares with the other panels allowances for information which might be termed bibliographical: identification of work which includes substantial elements written before the current REF period; further details regarding co-authored and co-produced submissions; summaries of work published in languages other than English; and requests to double-weight a submission. However, Main Panel D differs from the other panels in its rules regarding factual information about the significance of an output and contextual information about the research process. Whilst the factual is entirely disallowed (whereas it is allowed in about half of other subject areas), the contextual is given a much broader remit than in other panels, with space provided for the specific

issues regarding contributions to anthologies and grouping of multiple smaller works as well as a more permissive allowance for the explication of 'any output where the research imperatives and process might further be made evident' (97-8). This last suggestion goes well beyond the language from panels A through C where such additional information may only be included when the research process 'is not evident' within the output itself. While one can only speculate as to whether the REF would consider the 'imperatives and process' in any given Creative Writing output to be 'not evident', it is probably always the case that the research process 'might further be made evident', and as such this is an open invitation to Creative Writing academics to offer a personal insight into their research process.

Thankfully, we need not speculate as to whether Creative Writers do indeed take up that invitation, nor speculate as to how they do so. Like the many guidelines, policy documents and memoranda involved in conducting the REF, the details of outputs are all published on the REF website, including any supplied additional information. In order to explore how that additional information field was employed, I extracted the Creative Writing outputs from fifteen universities which had five or more Creative Writing outputs each. This is not a comprehensive survey for two reasons. Firstly, there are certainly universities with Creative Writing outputs which are not included here; an exhaustive survey risked becoming unmanageable, and so I chose universities know from personal experience to have significant involvement with Creative Writing. Secondly, Creative Writing is categorised under English and its outputs are usually not explicitly identified as 'Creative Writing', and so some may have been missed. Likewise, I may have included some outputs which their authors would not consider to be wholly Creative Writing; while novels, poems and plays are unmistakably Creative Writing works, there are a number of creative-critical and experimental works where the line is not so clear. As such, I attempted to include any output which might reasonably be considered to be primarily

Creative Writing in nature, including meta-Creative Writing works. The survey resulted in details of 235 outputs from 105 academics across 15 universities, including their additional information when present, an assessment of whether or not they are meta-Creative Writing in nature, and what type of output they are listed as (e.g., book, chapter, article, and so on).

The first conclusion to draw from this is that, amongst non-meta outputs, the overwhelming majority do supply additional information. While 18% of such outputs had no additional information, most of these exceptions came from the University of St Andrews, where no output had additional information, and the universities of Warwick and Sussex, where 66% of outputs have no additional information and the remainder consist entirely of one-sentence descriptions of prizes and publications. Amongst the rest of the outputs, the tendency is to provide, with a few exceptions, additional information which approaches the 300-word limit imposed by the REF. This institutional demarcation is unsurprising, as all universities will have introduced local policies on submitting to the REF, but the trend towards providing additional information is clear. This trend is emphasised by the fact that meta-Creative Writing work from the same institutions, which is non-creative by its nature, rarely employs additional information. While this sample is much smaller - comprising 13 of the 235 outputs - just three of those supply additional information, one of which merely explains the author's contribution to an edited collection. Overall, the rate of submissions supplying additional information, regardless of length, is 55 percentage points higher amongst creative works.

It also seems clear that these academics are taking advantage of the relatively permissive rules for Main Panel D: while the relevant guidelines suggest that information other than that about 'the research process and/or content' carries a 100-word limit, 86% of additional information in Creative Writing goes over that word limit, and 45% gets within fifty words of the overall 300-word limit, suggesting that these academics see their additional information as doing

something more than providing plainly factual information. It is likewise the case that, while it is not always clear exactly how the additional information for an output explicates its research process, the information given is only rarely bibliographical. In fact, the only entirely bibliographical additional information in the survey is from the University of Warwick's submission, for David Morley's *The Cambridge Companion to Creative Writing*, which reads, in full, '50% edited. To be included as part of this submission is the solo-authored essay, "Serious play: creative writing and science"'.

So, it is de rigueur in Creative Writing to supply additional information for the sake of explaining its nature as research – but more important is the question of how that explanation tends to function. There are two comparisons we might make here. The first is against the REF's own definition of research:

> 1.   For the purposes of the REF, research is defined as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.
>
> 2.   It **includes** work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. It **excludes** routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes such as for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques. It also **excludes** the development of teaching materials that do not embody original research.
>
> 3.   It **includes** research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available in the form of assessable research outputs, and confidential reports (as defined at paragraph 115 in Part 3, Section 2). (48; emphasis in original)

For much of this definition, it is hard to see how a Creative Writing output might want or need to respond to it. Some parts, such as the ideas of 'invention and generation' and 'research that is published, disseminated or made publicly available', seem to be inherently fulfilled by creative work, assuming that they are published and found not to be plagiaristic. Others, such as 'the maintenance of national standards' and 'confidential reports', are almost certainly irrelevant to creative work. Whilst phrases such as 'the use of existing knowledge in experimental development' might be construed as having an artistic or literary meaning as well as the industrial one which seems to be the primary implication, the main, repeated, key concept which Creative Writing might respond to here is that of newness: 'new insights, effectively shared', 'new or substantially improved insights'. Taken in an artistic or qualitative and not a pedantic sense, this quality of newness is something which could be both not obvious within the text and usefully explicated by the author.[*]

However, the additional information provided often goes above and beyond the simple message that 'this is new'. For instance, when the additional information for Samantha Harvey's *All is Song* (Bath Spa University) begins by stating that it 'is a novel that loosely reinterprets and modernises part of the story of Socrates', the claims of reinterpretation and modernisation neatly bring to bear a sense of newness; as something old is made new, and presumably effectively shared, we have in one phrase the image of point 1 of the REF definition. As the text continues, the nature of this newness is complicated:

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[*] By a pedantic sense of newness I here mean simply that it could be said that any non-plagiaristic work is 'new' due to the fact that the precise sequence of words it contains have not been recorded prior to that text's creation. However, this is clearly not what most people would mean when suggesting that there is something 'new' about the writing in a novel or poem.

listing the problems which her research sought to respond to, some turn out to be interdisciplinary ('How tolerant is modern society to philosophical scrutiny?'), some essentially literary ('How might philosophical discourse, a non-narrative form, be housed in the narrative and dramatic form of a realist novel'), and some deal with specifically Creative Writing issues (the novel is 'an exploration of how to go about working philosophical discourse into a realist novel'). These distinct strands are summarised by Harvey when she suggests that this last 'is a question that has persisted, unresolved, in philosophy, literary theory, and amongst novelists for decades'.

All is Song neatly summarises a pattern in which the newness that the REF holds as definitional to research is presented as occupying Creative Writing outputs multiply rather than in a single, empirically new quality. Toby Litt's *King Death* (Birkbeck), for instance, has an additional information which begins with a precis and ends with a claim of something intellectually new. Along the way, one paragraph is spent exploring a particular meta-Creative Writing quality, explaining how Litt's Creative Writing students 'become obsessed with (and oppressed by) the American minimalism of Raymond Carver', and another views the novel from a traditional critical position, explaining the novel's relationship with Christopher Isherwood, Graham Greene, Banana Yoshimoto, Haruki Murakami, and John Keats. Litt's conclusion that 'I hope I have demonstrated that minimalism is neither exclusively American nor exclusively about one easily teachable brand of exclusion' brings these strands together whilst underlining, with the implication that what is 'demonstrated' has not been demonstrated before, the output's newness.

The additional information for *Edgelands* (Lancaster University), by Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts, begins by describing it as 'an original and experimental work of non-fiction in both research methodology and approach'; 'original', especially, is a keyword which recurs in these texts as a signifier for newness, appearing 31 times in the sample, whilst 7 outputs are similarly branded

as 'experimental'. However, perhaps more interesting here is the phrase 'both research methodology and approach', in that methodology and approach seem like they should mean the same thing in the context of academic research. What is perhaps implied by this phrase is, again, a multiplicity in how the output constitutes research: a mention of being 'co-written and co-edited by writers working in tandem' suggests an innovation in the Creative Writing process, whilst being 'both part of a tradition of 'nature writing' and a critique of that tradition' makes the work an innovation in terms of literary genre; the former, perhaps, is 'methodology', and the latter 'approach'. Mention of 'radical naturalists such as Richard Mabey and environmentalist Marion Shoard' gives the output a further interdisciplinary quality. Being co-authored, *Edgelands* appears again in the REF as part of Manchester Metropolitan University's submission, and interestingly the MMU submission has different additional information. This one begins by directly describing the work as 'an attempt to break new ground in British landscape writing', and while some of the reference points are similar, such as 'wilderness literature', Marion Shoard, and co-authorship 'conducted on an entirely shared basis', this one also presents the first-hand research work of 'extensive travel to the English edgelands of - in particular - the post-industrial north-west, on the fringes of Liverpool, Manchester and Lancaster, the midlands belt around Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and the end of the so-called M4 corridor around Swindon' - which goes beyond the exclusively textual content of the first additional information and, like Harper's *Making Up*, attempts to show an investment of effort beyond that of sitting behind a keyboard.

The usage of words which explicitly claim a certain newness is not always tied, as it is in *Edgelands*, to the work as a whole, but serves to emphasise the variety in kinds of newness on show. In her additional information for *The Village* (Oxford Brookes University), Nikita Lalwani says that her research for the book's location includes '*original* interviews with female inmates, obtained by working closely with Penal Reform International'. The additional information for Fay Weldon's

The Stepmother's Diary (Bath Spa University) concludes that it 'proved to be an *original* 'literary novel' not true to the genre, deadly serious with laughs'. For Trezza Azzopardi, *The Song House* (University of East Anglia) 'is *innovative* in form and content, rendering in prose form the effect of music on memory'. Kate Clanchy's *What is She Doing Here* (Oxford Brookes University) is glossed as being '*innovative* and *inventive* in style, using poetic lists, short essays and imaginative storytelling'. Paul Farley, explicating his poetry collection *The Dark Film* (Lancaster University), explains that some of the poems 'were written as the result of *innovative* collaboration, for example with the Royal Philharmonic Society and Classic FM'. For *Journey Into Space* (Birkbeck), Toby Litt explains that his work attempts 'to find something *new* by investigating a familiar narrative set-up more patiently, deeply and in a more philosophically grounded way'. In each example from this parade the emphasis is mine (the REF database having no provision for formatting), and the words picked out relate the work's newness in terms of background research, genre, form, style, working method, and content, respectively. Moreover, in each of these examples an implication of newness is anyway already present – we would assume that any interviews conducted are the person's original work, that a novel written in a genre but 'not true to the genre' must be inventive – but the newness is nonetheless stressed.

These examples were chosen because they all contain language which responds to the quality of 'newness'. This is not always the case: often when the research content is made further evident, the newness of that research is inferred rather than explicitly claimed. However, it is generally true that across all of these additional information texts, there is no shared sense of what knowledge or insight a Creative Writing output might or should hold – and more often than not, this sense is not even univocal within one particular additional information. Whilst the texts being provided here might respond to the REF definition of research and the panel's stipulations for additional information, neither of those criteria are suggesting or providing for how the additional information field

should be filled out or what kind of research content Creative Writing outputs should present themselves as containing.

There is, however, a striking echo between the kinds of knowledge in Creative Writing being presented in these texts and the themes of Creative Writing Research which Graeme Harper identifies in 'Creative Writing Research'. In that chapter he surveyed the field via the subheadings 'Critical Understanding', 'Reflection, Reflexivity, Response', 'Research about Creative Writing', and 'Research Using Creative Writing' (282-7). To again take Harvey's *All is Song* as an initial example, the question 'How tolerant is modern society to philosophical scrutiny?' suggests a sense of research using creative writing, in that the subject matter here is non-literary. The issue of 'How might philosophical discourse, a non-narrative form, be housed in the narrative and dramatic form of a realist novel' suggests a sense of research as critical understanding, in that the same problem might be approached through an exclusively critical lens. And the description of the novel as 'an exploration of how to go about working philosophical discourse into a realist novel' suggests reflective, reflexive, responsive research, in that the insight there imparted relies on sharing the author's own experience of writing.

This, then, is the other key point of comparison for this additional information. A broad consensus that something like practice-based research helps distinguish Creative Writing from English does not supply an understanding of what Creative Writing Research itself actually is or what it seeks to understand; in just the same way, 'new insights effectively shared' might clearly signal a particular kind of response, but does not provide a definition strong enough to unify the natures of those responses. At the same time, there are themes in the additional information clear enough that (a) the currency of the meta-Creative Writing discourse is underlined, and (b) we might usefully consider that the broad conversation which informs the meta-Creative Writing discourse also informs these academics' responses to the REF.

This identification of statements echoing Harper's themes might be played out across the additional information I collected from the REF, but it is often clearest in those examples which attribute research questions to their work. For instance, the additional information for Luke A Williams' *The Echo Chamber* (Birkbeck) begins with three research questions: 'How can I interrogate and reinvigorate the form of the novel?', operating on a first-hand experience of writing, is a reflective question; 'How can I explore, through fiction, the silences and insterstices that exist in the historical record relating to a specific period in Britain's colonial history?', referring to historical, non-literary knowledge, would be 'Research Using Creative Writing'; and 'What are the confluences and contradictions that exist between language, meaning and sound?' seems to be a critical question. Likewise, the research questions for Kate Pullinger and Chris Joseph's *Inanimate Alice* (Bath Spa University) – 'What new creative possibilities for writing and teaching are offered by the new technologies? How can multimodal online forms contribute to the development of a canon of electronic literature? How can traditional forms of narrative be integrated with the new narrative forms produced by the digital technologies?' – exhibit a shift from 'Research About Creative Writing' to 'Critical Understanding', whilst those for Steve Voake's *Dark Woods* (Bath Spa University) – '1 Can one successfully combine metaphysical reflection with a narrative written in the thriller genre in a way that is accessible to a modern teenage readership? 2 What are the relationships in the thriller between the interior mental state of an individual, their intentions, and the exterior world?' – are reflective and critical, respectively.

What do these research questions demonstrate about Creative Writing Research? First, that there is a tendency in REF additional information which is symptomatic of something which Harper's categories – and the meta-Creative Writing discourse on Creative Writing Research more broadly – is also symptomatic of. Although the ways in which research content is here presented could not be described as approaching anything like a consensus, there does seem

to be a fairly reliable set of concerns which occupy this space. Second, and perhaps ironically, they demonstrate that Creative Writing academics are responding to concerns besides the criteria of the REF itself. Those criteria to do not explicate what an insight is or should be, and the question of why these categories arise finds no response in the REF definition of research. Indeed, what these research questions do not demonstrate, in concordance with the meta-Creative Writing discourse, is an analysis of why these kinds of knowledge are highlighted, what their relationship is with the idea of research, and why Creative Writing is distinctly positioned to produce them. Working within the terms prescribed by that discourse, we have for some time been speaking in terms of what Creative Writing work can know and how it arrives at that knowledge, rather than in terms of Creative Writing as 'research' per se. In order to better bridge that gap, we will now turn back to approach the idea of research.

3.3: The question of research

This move from the research question to the question of research has an antecedent in Jacques Derrida's 1984 lecture 'Psyche: Invention of the Other'. It even begins with a question – 'What else am I going to be able to invent?' – which fulfils the designation of 'research question' more thoroughly than any REF-inspired Research Question (1). This question, this 'inventive incipit for a lecture' (1), announces the lecture as a 'discourse on invention [...] presented as an invention' (4); the question both introduces a topic – invention and, in due time, newness, originality, research – and, being spoken to an audience, marks the lecture itself as an invention, and as something apparently being invented as it is spoken by a speaker 'setting out to improvise' (1). As such the question is a 'breaking with convention' (because a lecturer is expected to prepare his words), but at the same time this is typical for the topic, as an 'invention always presupposes some illegality, the breaking of an implicit contract; it inserts a disorder into the peaceful ordering of things, it disregards the proprieties' (1). In 'Creative Writing and Ph.D. Research' Jon Cook invites us to imagine George Eliot presenting her work to an assessment panel via research questions. In an opening sentence, Derrida presents us with both a research question, as traditionally understood, and a research-question: a research question about research, or the question of research, which he promises to explore.

The very word 'invention' immediately recalls that list of words which Creative Writing academics use to respond to the REF's demand for newness: 'experiment', 'innovation', 'original'. Of course, 'Creative' itself fulfils something of the same function, and a literary Creative Writing output casts two shadows in

the light of Derrida's exploration of invention.[*] Let us again take Samantha Harvey's *All is Song* as an example: first it must, like Derrida's lecture, 'put forth something brand new – in its words or its contents, in its utterance or its enunciation' (4) as against other novels; and second it must (and Derrida also discusses this angle explicitly) put forth brand new as against the corpus of existing research.

This doubling has already been alluded to, but in 'Psyche: Invention of the Other' both come under a more general problem of invention, which is also a problem for the lecture being given. On the one hand, one 'expects of [an invention] that it will say the unexpected' and it 'should make come about or allow the coming of what is new in a "first time ever"' (4, 5). This is invention's 'illegality', in that it cannot entirely repeat what has come before and so must contradict some known rule, and as with the REF respondents' concerted collective effort to state that 'this is new', Derrida finds that 'the enigma is borne in every word used here – "new," "event," "coming," "singularity," "first time"' (5). On the other hand, this unexpected, disordering invention 'will also need the signature or the countersignature of the other' (5) in order to be understood as an invention, as new. This other hand has its own collection of words: 'as we speak of invention [...] we ought to see this very speech granted a patent, the title of invention – and that presupposes a contract, consensus, promise, commitment,

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[*] Derrida later draws a distinction between the terms 'invention' and 'creation', saying that, unlike creation, 'invention does not [...] have the theological meaning of a veritable creation of existence ex nihilo', it cannot begin God-like from nothing, and instead starts 'with a stock of existing and available elements, in a given configuration' (24). However, he does also supply 'create' in a list of 'other neighbouring words' to 'invention' (23). The (in)appropriateness of this theological dimension of the word 'creative' in 'Creative Writing' notwithstanding, both terms at the very least respond to a sense of newness.

institution, law, legality, legitimation' (5). This lecture's status as invention depends on being unexpected, brand-new, and therefore never before cognised, but simultaneously it must be 'evaluated, recognized, and legitimized by someone else, by an other' (5) and so the tension of invention lies in its need to be recognised without having been cognised (by someone other than the inventor) in the first place.

All of which might be said of *All is Song*, regardless of where one places the onus of newness. Considering its status outside of academia is instructive: while it is obliged to invent and to some greater or lesser extent be new, that obligation has the constraint of being not just new, but a new novel, and, as 'an invention can never be private once its status as invention [...] has to be certified and conferred' (5), it must be legitimated by 'the other as member of a social community and of an institution' (5) (e.g., by members of an institution of literature) as novelistic, and therefore as generically recognisable, legal, expected, and so on. When Harvey suggests that her central research question is one that 'has persisted, unresolved, in philosophy, literary theory, and amongst novelists for decades' she is in part positioning the novel in a context which, regardless of the outcome of the REF, must already have verified it; whether it is a novelistic work amongst the work of novelists is not for the REF to judge, and to already present it as such suggests that that moment of recognition has already taken place. A similar structure is in play for research generally, only substituting for 'institution of literature' the phrase 'institution of research' (i.e., the academy) and for 'novelistic' something like 'research-istic'; Derrida in fact closes his lecture with a section on the 'Politics of Research'. However, for literature-which-is-also-research, which is already responding to this problem as a piece of literature (with the possible addition of some explanatory text like a supplementary discourse or additional information), a text already in some way ratified by some kind of literary institution has to be ratified again by an academic one. Interestingly, Derrida says of invention that no 'preface announces it; no horizon of expectation

prefaces its reception' (4), which is of course precisely counter to the nature of additional information generated in REF submissions. Whilst Derrida suggests that for a discourse on invention one 'expects that it will say the unexpected', the typical additional information as examined earlier instead identifies and pre-cognises that unexpected, unsettling the structure and making it expected. For now, though, we will suspend that issue to ask how the output itself, caught between literary-invention and research-invention, might be situated in this general problem of invention.

Reading 'Psyche: Invention of the Other' in this light involves an experience of being offered surprisingly germane categorisations into which the Creative Writing output might fit only to have them destabilised as being not so simple after all. The first of these comes after the introduction into Derrida's discourse of another text, Francis Ponge's poem 'Fable'. After a brief reading of that text, Derrida hypothesizes that in the contemporary era

> There are only two major types of authorized examples for invention [...] Someone may invent by fabulation, by producing narratives to which there is no corresponding reality outside the narrative (an alibi, for example), or else one may invent by producing a new operational possibility (10)

where 'operational possibility' indicates technologies 'such as printing or nuclear weaponry' which generate real situations which could not have come about without that technology's existence. The pertinence of the division seems self-evident. It is not just that Creative Writing outputs would so obviously be considered 'fabulation' (as even non-narrative or non-fictional creative texts could be seen as productions which function in indifference to reality), but more importantly this seems to indicate a disjunct which separates Creative Writing from a broader sense of research. Where the REF definition of research 'excludes routine testing and routine analysis of materials, components and processes', it might equally exclude research which produces no new operational possibilities;

where it stipulates that 'ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design' must 'lead to new or substantially improved insights' in order to be counted as research, it might equally stipulate the importance of a correspondence with reality, in that an insight observes 'the inner character or hidden nature of things' (OED). Using Derrida's broader terms for these categories, the fact that Creative Writing invents 'stories' in a system which expects the invention of 'machines' provides a locus for Creative Writing's difficult relationship with research – albeit briefly, as the same paragraph closes by saying that the 'aim here is to grasp the unity or invisible harmony of these two registers' (10).

Derrida's identification of that invisible harmony emerges from his reading of 'Fable'. In order to avoid reproducing his reading in full, we will focus on the poem's first line: '*Par le mot* par *commence donc ce texte*'; '*With the word* with *begins then this text*' (8). Derrida's critical attention here is on the fact that by 'its very typography, the second occurrence of the word *par* reminds us that the first *par* – the absolute incipit of the fable – is being quoted', which is to say that the first line is quoting and referring back to itself even whilst it is under way (11). Taken as a whole, this first line is an absolute example of narrative fabulation: not only does its fictional status mean that it does not rely on a reference to external reality, but all reference is neatly self-contained within the line, without (ostensible) analepsis or prolepsis, such that it doesn't even rely on the external reality of the rest of the text. Its quality of invention in this context thus seems simple, but for Derrida the auto-quotation which makes that simplicity possible also complicates matters, for 'the first *par* is used, the second quoted or mentioned'. On the basis of this distinction between 'use' and 'mention', which operates on the grounds of speech-act theory, Derrida argues that 'on the same divided line, the event of an utterance mixes up two absolutely heterogenous functions' (12). In terms we will shortly return to, the first *with* is performative: in referring to nothing beyond itself, it institutes itself as it is read, actively producing the poem. The second *with* is constative: referring to something which

is already the case, it points out rather than producing. However, at the same time, the constative *with* is itself performing, and that which the performative with instantiates only comes about due to its constative echo. Two *with*s with two heterogenous functions, and each only functioning with regards to the other: the 'infinitely rapid oscillation' which this sets into motion is, for Derrida, beyond the ability of speech-act theory to account for, and beyond that of other theories of literature and language.

On these grounds Derrida suggests that 'Fable', before it is a fable or 'an apparently fictional story', is 'the inauguration of a discourse or of a textual mechanism' (10), or a 'sentence that invents itself while inventing the tale of its invention' (11), or, after some further analysis and most explicitly, 'a machine, a technical mechanism that one must be able, under certain conditions and limitations, to reproduce, repeat, reuse, transpose, set within a public tradition and heritage' (20). Or, in its unsettling of something previously thought to be understood, it creates a new 'operational possibility', 'a rule-governed or regulating mechanism capable of generating other poetic utterances of the same type, a sort of printing matrix' (20-1). Hence, there is an implication of unity between the two registers earlier hypothesised, in that while fabulation demands no corresponding reality outside of the narrative, it nonetheless produces new possibilities, and for having been done there is knowledge of how to do that work.

The other germane categorisation which arises in the process of Derrida's reading relates to the performative/constative division itself. He asserts that

> the concept of invention distributes its two essential values between
> these two poles: the constative – discovering or unveiling, pointing out
> or saying what is – and the performative – producing, instituting,
> transforming. (12)

Unlike the division of two modes of invention, we are here thinking in terms of a distribution across poles, of two terms co-implicated from the start. Because of

this, and because we are at this point already in the full flow of analysis of Ponge, there is no need for a warning bell that things are not so simple. We might, however, raise a question of whether this distribution is even, or of whether an invention is predisposed to one pole over the other. To again take the division at face value before following Derrida's argument, it is tempting to imagine or suggest that our hypothetical Creative Writing output would be performative in the first instance and only secondarily constative, that its essential quality is of a production which institutes its own reality and any discovery of 'what is' would be only incidental, or at the very least up for debate. We have already seen how, in both the meta-Creative Writing discourse and the REF additional information, there is a great deal of variance in the kinds of constative content Creative Writing academics ascribe to their work as compared to a relatively high degree of agreement regarding that work's performative (or practice-based) character.

In his reading of 'Fable', Derrida's very 'sticking point here has to do with the figure of co-implication, with the configuration of these two values' (12). As we have seen, Ponge's text 'performs *and* describes, operates *and* states' (12), and as well as instantiating a 'technical mechanism' which is iterable in other literary texts, or which might itself produce other texts, this co-implication 'spontaneously *deconstructs* the oppositional logic that relies on an untouchable distinction between the performative and the constative' (13). Moving once more past his analysis of the remaining seven lines of 'Fable', Derrida concludes that the 'hybrid of the performative and constative' in the text is at once 'a unique event' and 'a machine and a general truth' (20). This machine operates in the first instance as the aforementioned 'printing matrix', but is extended in the next section of the lecture. Whilst speaking of the difference between an invention and 'a veritable creation of existence ex nihilo' he argues that

> 'Ponge's "Fable" creates nothing, in the theological sense of the word (at
> least this is apparently the case); it invents only by having recourse to a
> lexicon and to syntactical rules [...] But it gives rise to an event, tells a

fictional story, and produces a machine by introducing a disparity or gap into the customary use of discourse [...] it forms a beginning *and* it speaks of that beginning, and in this double, indivisible movement, it inaugurates. This double movement harbors the singularity and novelty without which there would be no invention. (24)

A double movement without which there would be no invention? To briefly unpack this idea: there is a subtle inversion here from the previous statement that invention co-implicates performative and constative poles, to a statement that the co-implication of those poles is what produces the conditions for invention. The implication of this is itself double. First, literary-inventions, which seemed to be aligned with fabulation and performance (an inventive text is 'truth that is nothing other than its own truth producing itself' (20)), must be constative in order to function as inventions – and what a text perhaps constates is itself, which is also a machine to produce further texts ('but it is also a machine and a general truth' (20)). Second, those inventions which seemed to be aligned with the constative, with operational possibilities, are themselves also performative – one imagines a patent which describes, tells the story of, the process necessary to create the object it refers to, as when later in the lecture Derrida says that 'in all cases [inventions] are "stories": a certain sequentiality must be able to take a narrative form, which is to be repeated, cited, re-cited' (34). From here, there is no question of a tendency towards performativity or constativity, for these have shifted from incidental to fundamental qualities of invention.

Up until this last point, we have for some time been speaking in terms of fictional, literary texts as inventions, of how a Creative Writing output might invent given the terms of Derrida's account of invention. The text as machine as well as fabulation, the text as something which creates the conditions of possibility for future texts, and the anxiety of the text's need to differentiate itself from and align itself with its generic context are a lot to work with in that regard, but this is not all that Derrida is discussing in 'Psyche'.

He mentions an interesting possibility whilst analysing the deconstruction of the oppositional logic of performative and constative utterances in 'Fable' by asking 'does the deconstructive effect depend on the force of a literary event?' (14). His response is to say that not only is this effect not exclusively literary, but 'the same structure, however paradoxical it may seem, also turns up in scientific and especially in judicial utterances, and indeed can be found in the most foundational or institutive of these utterances, thus in the most inventive ones' (14). As such, he suggests that not only does the deconstructive effect of 'Fable' arise in non-literary texts, but its qualities which pertain to invention – its co-implication of story and machine, of performance and constatation – are generalisable to all invention. The performative/constative structure of fictional invention is constitutive of all invention. Here Derrida merely says that he is 'convinced' of this and then moves on, but we can follow the development of this train of thought with one eye on the REF.

There is something similar identified in his discussion of René Descartes's project for a universal language; he quotes a letter of Descartes's saying that this language would make it possible to

> enumerate the thoughts of all men, and to record them in order, or even to distinguish them so that they are clear and simple, which in my opinion is the great *secret* one must have in order *to acquire correct knowledge....* Now I hold that this language is possible, and that one can find the knowledge on which it depends, by means of which peasants could better *judge the truth* of things than philosophers do now' (35; emphasis Derrida's).

The invention of such a language would surely, if actually performed, be the most 'foundational or institutive' of utterances, but Derrida observes that not only is this language fundamentally inventive in character, but it also 'presupposes *and* produces science' (35). Likewise, a similar proposal by Leibniz 'is not only located at the arrival point of an invention from which it would proceed, it also proceeds

to invent, its invention serves to invent' (36). For both of these (hypothetical) inventions, what is invented is not just invention-as-product, not even just inventions as iterable things (whether in terms of being reproduced or making possible further production), but inventions which 'anticipate the development and precede the completion of philosophical knowledge' (36); further inventions are thus not only anticipated but also formulated by the instituting language-invention. Derrida's choice of example here clarifies the argument, in that a work of philosophy conducted in a universal/philosophical language would only be able to operate in terms of that language. Following the logic whereby the performative/constative structure of literature is applicable to invention per se, we might draw from this that that quality of making-possible future inventions is also a quality of determination, such that invention generally both opens up and restricts the field of possibility for future invention.

Later still, discussing property rights to inventions, he raises the issue of the 1883 Convention of Paris, 'the first great international convention legislating industrial property rights' (37). For us the key moment is his initial observation: its 'juridical mechanisms are themselves inventions, conventions instituted by performative acts' (37). Here we are picking up on the earlier mention of 'judicial utterances', which 'especially' display the inventive structure found in 'Fable'. Again the example is apt: not only does the Convention (like other law regarding intellectual property) display a relatively clear impact upon subsequent invention,[*] but it is also dateable, traceable to a particular document (though the

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[*] In the Convention's terms only invention sensitive to 'exploitation of the industrial type' may claim a patent, thus (in Derrida's analysis) sidelining both 'literary or artistic invention' and 'theoretical discoveries' which 'technoindustrial mechanisms' may not easily be derived from; such inventions nonetheless persist, of course, but the Convention is 'the advent of [a] new regime of invention' which impacts the field of invention generally (37).

document may have received significant amendation since) and so its moment of invention is reified. The performative quality of judicial invention is thus brought out: a seemingly constative document, referring out to international patent law, simultaneously performs the establishment of that body of law.

Throughout this movement beyond the literary invention there is an echo of the REF, and in all of the ways so far discussed in this section the REF itself can be viewed as an invention. First, it is an invention in the sense of non-preexistence: when the guidelines and surrounding documents for the REF were published, it was for the first time, creating something both new and iterable. Second, its invention set into reverberation the performative/constative opposition in the same manner as Ponge's 'Fable', in that its documents performatively inaugurate the REF even as they constatively refer to the institution still being inaugurated. Third, it did so by means of something already-established in order to be recognised, exploiting the common stock of the RAE, previous debates around funding, previous definitions of research, among other things which could each be considered as a regime of invention. Fourth, to the same extent that it was produced via prior invention, it is a 'machine' for invention, creating the conditions of possibility for the inventions it claims only to assess after-the-fact; as with Descartes's invented language, it presupposes the knowledge or kinds of knowledge which may now be produced and be 'counted' as research.

While discussing the patent system, Derrida says that, compared to the past, 'what is called a patentable "invention" is now programmed, that is, subjected to powerful movements of authoritarian prescription and anticipation [...] Everywhere the enterprise of knowledge and research is first of all a programmatics of inventions' (27). In the contemporary British scene of academia, that programmatics might well be the REF, not directly by means of disallowing certain kinds of research, but as a regime of invention, as a machine generating what gets to be research at all. Thus, the condition of Creative Writing research is

still double: working through 'Psyche' we have, on the one hand, graduated from a sense of research-invention versus literary-invention to a general sense of invention, but on the other hand we have arrived at a situation where a Creative Writing output is both inherently research – an invention *ne plus ultra* – and apparently predetermined in its research capacity, if it is research at all, by a prior institutional invention the prescriptions of which it cannot avoid.

3.4: The invention of research

What research does the REF then invent? What type and degree of predetermination is put into place by its utterance? Or, how did this now-identified regime of invention affect the writing of Harvey's *All is Song*?

This is of course a question for which a truly satisfying answer would be impossible to give. One could take that novel – or any of the other texts in the 2014 REF, or any which will be prepared for the next REF exercise, or any other literary text which is otherwise bound by some decree to 'be research' – and attempt to divine how it was conditioned by the idea of research, by means of interviewing those present during its invention, or by analysing it through the lens of discourses on research, or by attempting to comparatively demonstrate certain trends amongst literature written under this regime (as Mark McGurl does with the American MFA system in *The Program Era*), but all such responses could only ever be a kind of divination. Whilst the trends might be verifiable and the interviews conducted sincerely, there would still be something invisible and inaccessible about a text's inheritance from the idea of research, as the thought processes which were involved are ultimately lost, and the idea of the same text being written outside of the regime of research is as impossible a what-if as that of Jorge Luis Borges' Pierre Menard (65-6).

It is nonetheless tempting to hypothesise that the answer to that last question would be 'not very much'. While much could and has been written about the impact of Creative Writing as a whole on literature – particularly in terms of its pedagogy – it is easiest to imagine a novel being written with its quality as research an incidental, secondary consideration, or even an afterthought. After all, and as has been mentioned, literature is written anyway, regardless of the REF, and for all of the research questions being asserted, the surveyed additional information gives us little sense that literature is being written for the sake of its research-status. Indeed, even though there was no allowance for 'factual

information about the significance of the output' as part of submissions to the REF's Main Panel D, which dealt with English, it is common to find in the additional information mentions of audience figures (for instance, *A Country Diary*, Paul Evans, Bath Spa University), financial grants (*The Wizard the Goat and the Man Who Won the War*, DJ Britton, Swansea University), literary awards (*The Bees*, Carol Ann Duffy, Manchester Metropolitan University), media reviews (*The Salt Harvest*, Eoghan Walls, Lancaster University), radio serialisation (*The Son*, Carrie Etter, Bath Spa University) and other such signifiers of verification and validation which fall outside of the remit of the REF and outside of the idea of research.

It therefore seems that, although research-validation might place impositions upon Creative Writing academics, a controlling effect on the literature which they produce is not one of them. Of course, an institutional body which exists for the purpose of funding or not funding a large group of other institutions is bound to produce certain social effects, impacting upon the interpersonal culture of a university department, which might induce changes to a literary production just as much as any other significant social factor, such as personal relationship status and national political environment, but this implies a different form of opening-up and foreclosure of possibility to that of a regime of invention. It is therefore problematic for an assertion that the REF is both an invention and a regime of invention if, despite having the capacity to function in that way, that capacity is not reified in the texts it refers to. As a point of comparison, Derrida suggests that the Convention of Paris established a regime of invention, but this is only worth discussing because 'it is the advent of this new regime of invention, which launches techno-scientific or technoindustrial "modernity"' (37), from which we might observe that (a) such regimes are not total, in that the Convention inaugurates a particular scene of invention which much invention, including artistic invention, does not necessarily operate within, and (b) whilst all invention might have the capacity to act in this way, it is not necessarily the case

that an invention must have such an identifiable consequence – and it may in fact be notable when it does.

In order to assess whether or not the REF is acting in this way vis a vis the work of Creative Writing, whether it has a hand in producing the work of Creative Writing, it might be useful to briefly look again at how invention and production are related in 'Psyche', and particularly in Ponge's 'Fable'. Early in his analysis Derrida states that 'first "Fable" is the tale of an invention, [...] the inauguration of a discourse or of a textual mechanism' (10). The latter term we have already discussed somewhat, but the word 'discourse' is also interesting here. When one is in the middle of reading an essay which is about to speak in terms of Speech Act Theory, it is easy to take this noun in terms of its specialised meaning in Linguistics: 'A connected series of utterances by which meaning is communicated, esp. one forming a unit for analysis' (OED). 'Fable' is, in common with any poem, a perfect example of this kind of discourse. However, because it is analogous to 'textual mechanism' we are invited to also take this 'discourse' in the same sense as 'meta-Creative Writing discourse' or as, in the OED's terms, 'The body of statements, analysis, opinions, etc., relating to a particular domain of intellectual or social activity, esp. as characterized by recurring themes, concepts, or values'.

It is not clear how a 'discourse' in the former sense would function as a 'textual mechanism', in that what it indicates is a strong specificity: if the discourse of 'Fable' is this specific set of words in this specific order offered up in such a way as to be available to analysis, what advance in understanding could the phrase 'textual mechanism' offer which the word 'text' does not already capture? In the latter sense the situation is clearer, but with the caveat that the mechanism operates in terms of a recurrence, that what is produced iterates as it invents. As Derrida further explains whilst concluding his analysis of 'Fable', although it is

> appealing to a preexistent linguistic background (syntactic rules and the
> fabulous treasure of language), it furnishes a rule-governed or regulating

mechanism capable of generating other poetic utterances of the same type, a sort of printing matrix. So we can propose the following example: "Avec le mot *avec* s'inaugure donc cette fable," that is, with the word "with" begins then this fable; there are other regular variants, more or less distant from the model, that I do not have the time to list here. (19-20)

The utterance is here given permission to travel some distance from the model, to be a more radical variant of the model than the substitution of a single word, but nonetheless must be regulated and governed according to that model. We might thus better understand how Descartes's philosophical language and the Convention of Paris are to be considered regimes of invention; what Descartes's language predetermines or programs is not philosophical enquiry, but philosophical enquiry conducted in that language, governed by its rules and regulated by its mechanisms.

In 'Psyche', after furnishing this image of 'Fable' as printing matrix, Derrida immediately opens a counterpoint by suggesting that 'there will be invention only on the condition that the invention transgresses [...] indeed, it ought to overstep the space in which that status itself takes on its meaning and its legitimacy' (20-1). However, we might suspend that objection in order to ask how, or whether, the invention of the REF could act as a printing matrix for a work of literature in the first place. Could the themes, concepts and values of the REF's definition of research, or of the body of REF publications as a whole, or of any similarly bureaucratic account of research, act as the regulating mechanism for linguistic expression in a novel?

In the previous section I highlighted Derrida's claim that 'no preface announces' invention (4), only to set it aside in order to focus on the literary text itself – that being the 'Research Output', the object which the juridical mechanism of the REF claims to act upon. In doing so, setting aside the additional information as an object of analysis if not as a body of evidence, the

argument shifted the status of the literary text in a way which left a problem unresolved: a sense of tension between the text as literary-invention and as research-invention might be mediated by considering invention per se, but this invention must be 'recognized, legitimized, countersigned by a social consensus according to a system of conventions', and even if the sense of invention in these Creative Writing Research Outputs is singular, it must nonetheless be recognised by two such systems. How this operates in terms of literary social conventions – recognition as a novel, recognition as a collection of poetry – is itself a major question which is beyond the scope of this thesis to answer, but the case of recognition as research is what is at hand, and 'Psyche' does not provide that bridge. As we will see, for a literary text to invent under the regime of the REF would probably require it to inhabit a meta-fictional space in that the question of the text's ontology must be in play in order to bring the discourse of the REF into a fictional locus. There is no sign, at least in the submissions collected from the 2014 REF, of that kind of writing being a significant trend.

However, there is no such issue for the additional information itself. Additional information was already a problem for the invention-status of the Creative Writing Research Output when viewed in Derrida's terms, precisely because it announces the invention ahead of the invention:

> Every invention supposes that something or someone comes a *first time*, something or someone comes to someone, to someone else. But for an invention to be an invention, in other words, *unique* (even if the uniqueness has to be repeatable), it is also necessary for this first time to be a last time: archaeology and eschatology acknowledge each other here in the irony of the *one and only* instant. (6; emphasis in original)

Or, to speak in the plainest terms, an invention can only be invented once, and once invented can no more be invented again than I can claim to have invented the wheel. For those Research Outputs which have it, additional information is thus severely disruptive, and for reasons which recall the problems of the

supplementary discourse: either it represents what is inventive about the Research Output, and thus anticipates the advent of invention in a way which negates the Research Output's own inventiveness, or it is invented (for surely this text too is an invention) without regard for the Research Output's invention, and thus fails to be additional, fails to aid the reader's access to the text.

But maybe both of these conditions are to some degree true of additional information where it is present, and are in fact the condition of additional information in a relatively non-problematic way. A piece of additional information can be, and often is, regulated by the mechanisms of the REF: we have already seen how the language and meaning of the REF's definition of research is recouped in additional information. Simultaneously, the additional information's need to contravene that mechanism (an 'invention always presupposes some illegality, the breaking of an implicit contract' (1)), its relationship with its Research Output, and the fact that it is never limited by the bounds of the REF but always proceeds towards the same external territories are all explicated by relocating it *as* the invention, for if it invents in the terms of the REF it must also invent in the terms of the literary text which it accompanies. Each Research Output is itself here functioning as a printing matrix – and this must be the case, for the additional information is bound to replicate and reiterate the Research Output if it is to function at all.

This analysis, then, has formulated an answer to the question of why it might be that Creative Writing's engagement with the REF entails such an extensive usage of the opportunity to provide additional information: by its nature, the additional information can successfully invent in response to both its Research Output and the REF itself at the same time. Conversely, and as I suggested earlier, the Research Output itself has only a relatively limited scope to respond to both the REF and its literary regime of invention. This is in contrast to (using its nearest neighbour as an example) the way in which literary criticism might engage with the REF. There, the Research Output can directly iterate upon the

discourse of the REF within the text itself: if, for instance, the REF's definition of research were to change such that it indicates 'original thinking' rather than 'new insights' as its key term, it is easy to imagine a critical article framing its argument by saying that '…the importance of this original thinking on the matter is…', or '…an injection of originality is required if our thinking about this is to proceed towards…', or '…if this text is a true original, then our thinking as readers must respond accordingly so that…' – or, in Derrida's terms, they might use any 'other regular variants, more or less distant from the model' (20). The equivalent operation in Creative Writing would, it seems to me, be to have one character turn to another and say 'your stance on this issue certainly evinces a great deal of original thought, indebted as it may be to prior art regarding the subject' – or, even if it is more subtly written than that, would be to have the writing break its own ontological frame in order to incorporate a discourse foreign to the text's matter, and therefore become metafictional. The additional information, unembroiled as it is in the problems of literary ontology, suffers no such hampering.

However, the model upon which we have thus predicated the functioning of the additional information offers an alternative possibility for the Creative Writing Research Output itself. Thinking via an algebraic metaphor, there are three terms in our additional information model: we have the REF, the Research Output, and the additional information itself, and they are arranged as 'REF + RO = AI'. Which is to say, some combination or other of the regime of invention instantiated by the REF and the regime of invention instantiated by the Research Output results in the invention of the additional information. The equivalent equation for the model concerning Creative Writing Research Outputs proposed in the previous paragraph would replace the term 'AI' with the literary regime of invention which that text happens to be operating under, arranged as 'REF + LRI = RO'. Or, the invention of the Research Output occurs under the regimes of both the REF and the output's literary context. As a final equation, I will propose

that the scope for a Research Output to be both research-invention and literary-invention at the same time would be significantly broadened if we were instead to think in terms of 'LRI + AI = RO', replacing the role of the REF with something like the additional information.

To unpack this, recall the fact that the survey of REF 2014 found many instances in which the additional information was being used as a site for research questions, as with Kate Pullinger and Chris Joseph's *Inanimate Alice* (Bath Spa University), in which the authors ask 'What new creative possibilities for writing and teaching are offered by the new technologies? How can multimodal online forms contribute to the development of a canon of electronic literature? How can traditional forms of narrative be integrated with the new narrative forms produced by the digital technologies?'. These research questions are unambiguously responsive to the discourse of the REF: each features a sense of newness; the word 'online' indicates a specific method of effectively sharing the work; and the third question might even equate to the REF's allowance for 'the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials'. While it seems, prima facie, that this particular text was almost certainly composed after the writing of *Inanimate Alice* for the sole purpose of its submission to the REF, there is no reason to assume that something very like this list of REF-conditioned research questions did not pre-exist the writing process. Which is to say, we could read the additional information as though it were prior to the text it accompanies, historically as well as (for the REF auditor) chronologically. Or, we might consider the invention of the Creative Writing Research Output as taking place, alongside that text's literary context, under the regime of invention instantiated by the additional information, rather than that of the REF directly: 'LRI + AI = RO'.

In this way, with this effort of bridging between the REF and Creative Writing via the work of research questions, we can start to see how the invention of a literary text might take place in terms of an idea of research without

necessarily having to find a way to incorporate the discourse of research itself. For, as well as clearly reciprocating the language of the REF, these research questions feature language which makes itself available to literary response: while we might not find a term like 'multimodal online forms' iterated directly in the text of *Inanimate Alice*, it is easy to see how *Inanimate Alice* might recognisably invent within the regime which a term like this instantiates.

At the beginning of this chapter, I discussed how the meta-Creative Writing discourse puts forward an idea that 'research' effectively equates to 'knowledge'; the possibility was floated that 'if research is indeed equivalent to knowledge production, then as long as new knowledge of some kind is being produced, research is taking place'. There is in this possibility a position of great safety for the Creative Writing academic. More so than for any other discipline, Creative Writing (the production of novels, plays, poems, life writing, scripts, etc.) inherently constitutes new knowledge in that, in contrast with a scientific result, the necessarily original ordering of its words creates space for the argument that its knowledge-content was previously unknown. More so than for any other discipline, the fact that this knowledge is effectively shared is part of the very condition of the outputs being produced. In short, there is a persuasive tautological position to be held in which the work of Creative Writing is *obviously* research, because it is creative, and because it is writing.

The ensuing analysis of Creative Writing's relationship with the idea of research does not actually unsettle or disrupt this equation of knowledge and research. Instead, it shifts the locus of the problem. The issue now is not 'does Creative Writing produce knowledge' – and nor is it 'what kind of knowledge does Creative Writing produce', as those categories in Harper's and Cook's explorations of the issue are now no less valent. The issue is one of how Creative Writing conceives of its own research: there is now a clear route towards a Creative Writing academic inventing their literary text in terms of research, but to do so depends on placing research questions at a prior, originary point with

regards to that literary text. Likewise, the work of Creative Writing might equally occur in a way which holds research quality – whether that be submitting to the REF, applying for external funding, or teaching doctoral candidates – as being an afterthought to the writing of literature, with texts like the additional information being incidental and secondary productions. Any other analysis of Creative Writing Research – into its methodologies, into what 'kind' of knowledge it makes, into maximising its institutional and bureaucratic effectiveness – depends first of all on an implicit answer to the question of where this work falls in the dynamic between literary-invention and research-invention.

Chapter 4: Remainders – fragments

4.1: So with the word 'so' begins then the final chapter of this thesis

3.3: which is to say that the first line is quoting and referring back to itself even whilst it is under way – expanding into a self-reference to the temporality of this section and then to the work it is a section of, before quotation collapses that bubble, tightening our scene of reference onto a moment from the thesis, which scene this sentence then shifts onto the text which follows it.

The structure of Derrida's printing matrix is found on display everywhere in the form of wordplay. *The Author is Not Dead, Merely Somewhere Else.* '1967: The Birth of 'The Death of the Author''. *The Death and Return of the Author.* 'The Resurrected Author: Creative Writers in 21st-century Higher Education'. 'A subheading involving some kind of pun referring to 'The Death of the Author''. The birth of 'Derrida' was ransomed by the Death of 'Deauthor'. Plagiarists cannot use online banking because their accounts are 'deauthorised'. In Vienna Central Cemetery you may hear Beethoven's Fifth played backwards; he is 'decomposing', you see?

Wordplay, even when spoken, is a domain of inverted commas – so to speak, if you catch my drift. 'Nudge nudge' opens a double quotation mark which is closed by 'wink wink'. It operates on a horizon of quotation, in a double bind where to quote is impossible, for a difference must be marked from its source, but awareness of that source is indispensable, and so the quotation is nonetheless performed. If a poem really were to start with Derrida's 'with the word "with" begins then this fable' ('Psyche' 20), what status of quotation, citation or grafting would that line hold?

To speak of intertextuality is nothing new, but we might consider what happens when a literary printing matrix makes its mark on a critical discourse – and, worse, when it does so without inverted commas, without even a suggestion of air quotes. Is its literary quality suddenly neutered, collapsing under the weight of

this ontologically alien context like a thing forced deep underwater? Does it sit in the text like an organ transplant or foreign body, threatening to cause, but for careful, diligent management, rejection or infection? Or does it inaugurate something new which is survived by neither source nor target?

Creative Writing, criticism, theory: the three terms circle one another on orbits both carefully maintained and managed, not by any single hand, but by collective attention. In this thesis I have been handling Creative Writing rapidly, at the speed of survey, trying to pull chorus from discord, and theory slowly, trying to indulge the response in flowing any distance from its source, and doing so via whatever authorisation my position as critic grants me. Cosmologically, nothing moves save by reference to a given fixity; to occupy a position gives it a stillness around which all other discourse seems to sweep.

'Fictocriticism', he tells her, 'exercises traditionally literary forms in the interest of critical truth'. She nods. 'This conversation, for instance. Laid out on a page, bracketed by narration, it would take on a quality of literary realism, even while losing, ironically, its reality, and so, properly framed, would tell us something important *about* realism. In fact, I'm writing something at the moment, in which I think I might do that…'. She gets the impression, as she often does when talking to a particular brand of academic, both confident and desperate, seemingly always male, that this is meant to impress her.

The thinking of intertextuality is now an old thinking, and so too is that of binarism. It now hardly needs to be stated that to consider criticism and Creative Writing as opposite terms, to consider any pair of opposite terms, is to invite each into the other, to at least raise the possibility of rapprochement between them. For Creative Writing, the research-invention is really that which criticism invents; the matter of the supplementary discourse's being-read is also that of its

criticality; the authorship problem, ultimately, comes down to whether one emphasises the first or third syllable in 'speaking of literature'.

'The prevailing trope of fictocritical discourse is that of a 'space between' the categories of fiction and criticism created by the epistemological collapse of critical distance in postmodern theory' (Dawson 166). This 'creative criticism exploits, distorts, works over, hyperbolises, erases or plays with the conventions of academic critical prose' (Benson and Connors 15). 'The role of the term "postcritical," then, is neither to prescribe the forms that reading should take nor to dictate the attitudes that critics must adopt; it is to steer us away from the kinds of arguments we know how to do in our sleep' (Felski 173).

Tempting, here, to translate the contemporary parlance of being unmastered as being 'woke' into a practice of wakefully reading awoken texts. We may be able to perform certain arguments in our sleep (intertextuality, binarism, that one Roland Barthes essay about authorship) but perhaps could beget only sleep by doing so. Unmastered, without control from above, still in the process of being learnt, as yet unfinalised into its polished form. The problem is that to make being-awake into an ideological point of control is potentially to establish finality or foreclosure: how many times can a text, or can we, be awoken?

The structure of wordplay is found on display everywhere in the study of literature, and is the truly shared practice between writers of literature and writers of theory. To write a word *sur erasure* is to introduce ~~undecidability~~; is it, or is it not, present? And, for that matter, who is Josef K. (Kafka)? (Even that citation generates the undecidable.) Thinking of, about, in language seems always to generate a play with words. Who could resist, having written a book on literary theory after structuralism, giving it the title *Not Saussure*? Is to wake a text to risk its funeral?

This thesis occupies its terms multiply and in turn. First it speaks with the authority of the critic, manipulating Creative Writing and theory into dialogue, as every critical work does between some given *x* and *y*. Then it plays out from its theoretical concerns a soft mastery, speaking of criticism and Creative Writing's entanglement in an unfinished sentence. In each, the position spoken from is also at stake, in a second-order binarism against its objects. I now feel called to complete the tripartite and occupy, to the extent that I am able, a creative position which survives Creative Writing's institutionalisation.

4.2: italics

0.1: This afterword begins self-reflexively – But what does it mean to follow the desire
    to begin with an afterword?

Let's imagine that there is a novel, the title of which is the same as the title of this
fragment, and the title of which, its author insists, must be written in italics. In
this novel, there is a writer who has written an eponymous book, the title of
which also, it is very important, must be rendered in italics. This writer, at a
certain point in the novel, attempts to justify to another character the
importance of the book's title and its formatting. My book, says the writer, is
going to be discussed by academic literary critics. I know this because the book's
title is exactly the kind of thing that literary-critical academics like to write
about. In academic writing, continues the writer, there are as you know certain
formatting conventions. Being relatively short, Tennyson's 'Ulysses' is written in
inverted commas; being relatively long, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is written in
italics; and thus we may see at a stroke the difference between *Jane Eyre* and Jane
Eyre, or between 'Ulysses', *Ulysses* and Ulysses. But, the palette of textual
formatting is limited: inverted commas are also often used to, so to speak, 'cast
aspersions', and if an academic wants to emphasise something – I mean, really
emphasise something – they use italics. At some point, inevitably, and more often
than one might expect, an academic will end up wanting to italicise a phrase in
which certain words, for whatever reason, already demand italicisation. For a
quote within a quote – and I know that you know all of this, the writer reassures
us – for a quote within a quote there is the double quotation mark, which serves
rather well, but for italicisation within italicisation the letters can *lean no harder*.
So, the solution is to switch those pre-italicised words back to the standard
roman glyphs. Evidently, this is done for fear of being unable to distinguish
between *I love* Jane Eyre *so much* and *I love Jane Eyre so much.* Therefore, the title of
my book, written in italics, which is also the book's title, must be written in

italics, but, being already written in italics, cannot be written in italics. A choice is met to write *italics* italicised, and so fail to place it in its title-identifying formatting, or to accurately write italics de-italicised, leading to constructions like 'in italics, there is a character who writes a book', or 'italics, the text, involves a writer's discourse on italics, the type', or 'the writer in italics, written in italics, writes in italics their book's title, italics'.

Obviously, we want to reply, and, who knows, perhaps the writer's addressee does reply, obviously academics will simply write *italics* in italics. Obviously formatting conventions are a matter not of slavish dedication, but of making ones meaning as clear as possible. Obviously, if we're feeling optimistic, academic literary critics won't actually find the writer's little game very interesting. And yet, there is something vulnerable about our visible markers of textual distinction: it is a realm of ingenious affordances, where titling underlines become link-signifiers, where quotation marks indicate fearful distance, where acronym-identifying small caps can be THE VERY VOICE OF DEATH, each member of this small team doing the work of hundreds, as quick to context as once only words were.

The answer to a riddle, realised in a flash, Federer Jr. voyages twice in one day, *Ulysses!*

4.3: Parlour game

3.4: Each Research Output is itself here functioning as a printing matrix – And must be, for as soon as it is instantiated locally, the printing matrix is instantly operative globally.

A statement of intent for the fragmentary chapter currently being written: recall an idea which the thesis generated but could not grasp; find a moment in the existent text from which to begin; derive a direction from one and a momentum from the other in order to identify a trajectory which might produce, however partial, some value; invent a way to write out along that trajectory.

> Not only is each fragment cut off from its neighbours, but even within each fragment parataxis reigns. This is clear if you make an index of these little pieces; for each of them, the assemblage of referents is heteroclite; it is like a parlor game: "Take the words: *fragment, circle, Gide, wrestling match, asyndeton, painting, discourse, Zen, intermezzo;* make up a discourse which can link them together." (*Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* 93)

Following the desire to abstract: is Barthes's 'the assemblage of referents is heteroclite' a necessary, sufficient, or exclusive factor of the fragment? Is Barthes here speaking of a domain peculiar to the fragment, or merely of a general capacity of writing which that form particularly embodies? That this might be a general capacity is a possibility recommended by a hypothetical:

Please select one of the following questions. You should write on at least two of the texts studied on this module. Your essay should pay attention to the formal and stylistic aspects of the texts, particularly with regards to the qualities of nostalgia and rebellion as discussed this semester. Your essay will be marked with reference to both the Senate Scale and the module's learning outcomes.

4. 'To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now' (Samuel Beckett).
To what extent do your texts frame modernity as a 'mess', and how do they accommodate it?

Take the words: *texts, module, essay, formal, stylistic, nostalgia, rebellion, [Senate Scale: understanding, analysis, argument, writing, referencing], [learning outcomes: contemporary, innovative, digital, complex], mess, artist, frame, modernity, accommodate*; make up a discourse which can link them together.

An uncouth reading: anything written in terms of a rubric is constructed according to a law not of internal necessity but of inventing a discourse which maps onto an index. Its success is not its self-actualisation (as of the poetic well-wrought urn) or its consequence (as of a political discourse) or its insight (as of a philosophical treatise) but the degree to which its index indexes it. For Barthes an index, of which this heteroclite assemblage is an example, 'is itself a text, a second text which is the *relief* (remainder and asperity) of the first' (93). To write towards a rubric is therefore a perverse inversion of writing: with the index as the first

text, the now-second text is a relief of a relief. Or, it is writing conducted in accordance with a fundamental innovation of mass production: the mould.

Please attach to your application an outline of how this project will enhance the university's knowledge sharing capacity. We anticipate that successful applications will contribute to the current Research Excellence Framework cycle and the University's 2025 Excellence Roadmap. Although the project should feature its own success metrics, you should indicate how they relate to these broader projects. Opportunities for collaboration with existing initiatives and the enablement of future social and public revenue are also anticipated during the project's span.

Take the words: *application, outline, project, knowledge, capacity, excellence, success, metrics, opportunities, collaboration, initiatives, enablement, social, revenue*; make up a discourse which can link them together.

Derrida got there first, of course: the literal denotation of the term 'printing matrix' is the mould used to cast a letter for a movable type printing press; the generative original from which any number of iterations might be derived. The mould makes creation possible, both immediately, by forming the product of which it is a relief, and at a remove, by producing products at sufficient speed and consistency that they might be recombined, repurposed, and reworked. Consider a roman majuscule twelve-point Garamond Q which formed the Queen of France in one novel, a Quality Street wrapper in another, a question from an interview in a third, ad infinitum, and was just one of an uncounted many stamped by its

matrix – 'matrix' meaning, etymologically, its mater, its mother, its womb (OED). How many novels have been stamped by the printing matrices of Virginia Woolf or Franz Kafka?

Write a critical commentary on your portfolio. The commentary should include reflection on the processes of composition and revision which you undertook during this module. You may refer to the writing diary submitted as formative work earlier in the semester, as well as any workshop feedback you may have received.

Take the words: *critical, commentary, [portfolio: modernist, confessional, psychological, sincere, recuperative], reflection, composition, revision, diary, workshop*; make up a discourse which can link them together.

Writing to an index: in the weakest possible formulation, a writer writes to the index of their own psyche. Even (especially) automatic writing reflects an index which preceded it. Even (especially) the most avant-garde poet attempts the parlour game, though perhaps with a more heteroclite index. To write in a modernist form today would be to add certain items to the index which precedes the act of writing: ensure the discourse encompasses a sense of life as 'a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end' (Woolf 9).

Write a novel.

Take some words; add to them the word *novel*; make up a discourse which can link them together.

Barthes's heteroclite fragment: it might be that this adjective is not at all a positive definition of the fragment – it does not indicate the fragment as something which *has* this quality – but is instead a negative definition, in that it indicates the fragment's refusal to feign being anything other than or more than the parlour game at hand. Far more pragmatic than an involved thinking of regimes of invention, though without the same theoretical weight, would be to reassert the agency of the Creative Writer by assessing what sort of an index they were writing towards, and how successful they were in doing so.

4.4: Statements of Intent

2.4: At the same time, however, in the very term 'statement of intent' there is a clear echo of academic practice. In PhD applications and official documents, in research proposals, in the initial stages of taught-degree dissertations, and in (as we will see in the next chapter) Research Excellence Framework submissions, there are statements of intent (and cognate terms) wherein the student or academic must account for their literary output in much the same way. – Or for their critical output.

After my first year of working on this thesis, I was institutionally obliged to write a Statement of Intent for it, as part of the transfer-up process which designates research students as fully-fledged PhD candidates.

> In preparing to write my statement of intent I began by browsing the sample documents hosted on the UEA Faculty of Arts and Humanities Graduate School pages. There, alongside statements of intent from past candidates in various other schools, the text currently being held up as an example of success in Literature, Drama and Creative Writing is Philip Langeskov's statement from September 2010. Because Langeskov's PhD was in Creative and Critical Writing, his statement (uniquely amongst those on the webpage) comes with two titles: 'Creative: *Eli Eli: Stories*' and 'Critical: Great Reckonings in Small Spaces: Time, Structure and Form in the Short Fiction of David Means'. The first thing that this statement of intent states, then, is the intention to deliver - as is usual for Creative Writing - the final thesis as two separate texts, though the statement itself must cover both at once. Langeskov achieves this by offering a section entitled 'II - On the selection of a form', which contextualises both parts of his work, before moving on to sections which focus on the creative and critical elements in turn.

As a group, Statements of Intent like Langeskov's – and mine was no different – are written with an eye to their own redundancy. They open up space for

subsequent texts whose arrival they cannot survive. They are not just disposable, as a note to self or a shopping list might be, but deeply invested in their own, personal eschatology. The ideal which the Statement of Intent works towards is to be read by its audience precisely once in order that it may be never read again. Unlike the prefatory text which puts forward an authorial statement of intent, for the PhD Statement of Intent there is never any ambiguity around its relationship with its thesis: upon completion of the thesis (at the absolute latest), any scaffolding provided by the Statement falls away, readable only as an echo in the thesis (at the absolute most), and for a reader to then return to the text of the Statement itself would be perverse.

> However, before the work of the statement proper begins, Langeskov includes a short prefatory section entitled 'I - On intent and writing' which concerns the very act of writing a statement of intent for a Creative Writing PhD and the 'ways in which a Creative Writing PhD can affect the activity it is designed to encourage' (2). Quoting David Means and Flannery O'Connor, he raises a spectre of doubt over whether intent and creativity are compatible concepts and goes on to give examples from two of his own stories, commenting that in 'neither case did I know anything beyond the fact that I had come upon a storyable incident; the story itself emerged/is emerging in the writing' (3). This unknowing sits awkwardly with 'the proposed requirements of the PhD to attempt to know the entire story [...] before setting out to write a single word', and this tension between process and requirement is presented in terms of 'struggling' and feeling 'constrained' (3).

Indeed, the requirement to state one's intention is probably always responded to in tension. Even outside the sphere of Creative Writing – in how my own Statement of Intent was written, for instance – 'the proposed requirements of the PhD to attempt to know' what will be written before it is written is problematic, and this tension is compounded at least twice. The first stressor is that the

intention stated in the Statement will be at odds with its writer's actual intention. At some points it may overstate the strength of intent (in a speculatively-written list of chapter titles, for instance); at others it might understate the strength of intent (perhaps when the writer has an intellectually insupportable good feeling about a particular avenue of inquiry); in either case, and most importantly, this occurs because the function of the Statement is not to accurately represent the writer's intent, but to permit its audience to give its writer permission to continue. The second stressor is the widely circulated fact that even the most faithfully written Statement of Intent will likely bear little resemblance to the finished thesis – the process of doing the research changes the research – and so rather than attempt to speak to the thesis, the impetus is to speak to the success criteria of the Statement of Intent as a genre of writing. The third stressor is the surety that even the miraculous Statement which faithfully reflects both the writer's actual intention and, ultimately, the content of the finished thesis nonetheless aims at its own non-existence, is on the side of death.[*]

> Of course, he goes on in spite of all this to write a perfectly successful statement of intent: indeed, it eventually became, literally, an exemplary piece of academic writing. This is also in spite of the fact that although he begins by calling the problem of intent 'a piece of rubble to clear away', Langeskov is really just raising it; rather than resolving the tension, the first section closes by simply stating that 'When thinking about the purpose of a CW PhD, these are consequences worth reflecting on' (2, 4). In other words, what these opening words belie, apart from

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[*] The only exception to this fate is when the Statement of Intent is rescued by an act of recontextualisation – perhaps as a usefully readable text for an analysis of Statements of Intent, like Langeskov's, as an exemplary model for future Statements of Intent. Langeskov's Statement is, my Statement was, and upon submission of this thesis my Statement will be once more.

being a smart rhetorical move setting up the statement's talk of 'pre-occupations' instead of intention, is an unresolved, yet non-debilitating, anxiety about the process of writing literature for the sake of attaining a degree.

Statements of Intent, for PhDs of all hues, and in spite of everything, nonetheless get written. What's striking to me now about calling the problem of intent 'a piece of rubble to clear away' is its echo of Bill Readings' term 'the University in Ruins'. When Langeskov identifies the problem of intent as rubble, this metaphor of clearing the demolition site such that the new edifice might be erected is not aimed at 'intent' as a literary critic might initially understand it; while he draws the word 'rubble' from an interview with Flannery O'Connor, and quotes David Means on the inadvisability of writing 'fiction out of an intention', his discourse as a whole is disinterested in hermeneutic issues, in the dynamic between intent and reading (Langeskov 2). He finds himself 'struggling against that practice' of writing with intent because of the 'requirements of the PhD', not because of any literary-critical problematisation (3). What the word 'rubble' signifies, therefore, is the work's academic dimension, or – more boldly – all the elements of his work which make its production an academic act. To illustrate, we might here propose that, for both the creative and the critical portions of a PhD like Langeskov's, the context of being produced in a university is a necessary condition of it being academic work. Clearly, the projected *Eli Eli: Stories*, regardless of its ultimate nature, would in principle be constructible outside the university – but if this is the case, then what could make 'Great Reckonings in Small Spaces' impossible outside of the university, and can we say that, freed of the spectre of thesis submission and the pursuant processes of publication, it would necessarily be 'academic' outside of that sphere? The anxiety at hand is conjured in the interface between literary invention and the rubble of academia – which is to say, the location of the anxiety is identical to that of Creative Writing as a discipline. This schema also demonstrates a Statement of Intent's distance

from its thesis in its difference from my earlier construction of this zone of anxiety, in which

> Langeskov's opening gambit neatly captures the zone in which my thesis will reside: a zone of anxiety found at the point of contact between the academic discipline of Creative Writing and the rest of the academy, and a zone which is experienced by the student of the subject in the interim between the contemplation and the enactment of CW work. In this example that zone is thrown into relief at the moment when a Creative Writing thesis is subjected to demands which are placed upon all PhD work - the student needing to demonstrate their fitness to transfer their enrolment as an MPhil student to an enrolment as a PhD student, with that transfer's attendant rubric of viability and originality. However, this is not the only point at which this anxiety is (or might be) felt. Part of the nature of an academic discipline is that it defines itself against and justifies itself to other disciplines, in the first instance to those which it is most closely aligned to, and second to the academy more broadly.

However, this idea – of defining against and justifying to other disciplines – was written under an assumption about the nature of the 'rest of the academy' which is broken down, made rubble, by *The University in Ruins*. Readings' thesis, the ruined aspect of the university as he sees it, is that the university's status as a site of cultural generation and preservation has been replaced by an adherence to an ideologically-empty concept of 'excellence'. The former is presented as an atavistic view inherited from Humboldt's University of Berlin, in which the university supports the national culture of a state via a 'simultaneous search for its objective cultural meaning as a historical entity and the subjective moral training of its subjects as potential bearers of that identity' (68). Against this, he suggests that 'the idea of national culture no longer functions as an external referent toward which all of the efforts of research and teaching are directed'; instead, that external referent is now an 'excellence' which 'has no *content* [...] does

not carry with it an automatic political or cultural orientation' (13). This emptiness presents a distinct problem for any attempt to analyse the disciplinary structure of the university as a network of mutually antagonistic actors discovering markers of differentiation by comparing themselves to one another. Whereas in the Humboldt-influenced model two disciplines might have the capacity to compare their assays at 'objective cultural meaning' and find that their results are different in kind, having as external referent the principle of excellence means that their results can only possibly be different in degree – that is, more or less excellent – which offers a relative ranking but no mutual distinction. Of course, Creative Writing is, without uncertainty, a discipline concerned with the production of culture. It is the disciplinary *ne plus ultra* of searching for cultural meaning and providing subjective moral training. That the spread and prominence of the discipline appears to correlate positively with the spread and prominence of 'excellence', and with the concomitant decline of Humboldt's ideal, is not necessarily coincidental, but nonetheless poses an obvious challenge to one attempting to speak to the academic dimension of Creative Writing, whether that be in terms of the discipline as a whole or in terms of an individual project.

> The fact that Creative Writing experiences this anxiety at a disciplinary
> level is marked by the relatively recent profusion of academic output
> which attempts to work through it. Here there is a distinction to be
> made between two different kinds of work currently being produced by
> the discipline. First, there is CW's nominal product: novels, short stories,
> poetry, drama, and other creative works of literature. Second, there is
> work which is produced by CW practitioners about the discipline of CW
> without itself necessarily falling under the heading of 'creative'. This
> category has long included handbooks and how-to guides aimed at the
> student, or at both student and teacher. However, increasingly over the
> last two decades it has also included a rapidly growing body of work
> aimed at other CW practitioners which offers to self-reflexively analyse

the discipline; it is this body of work which I will be referring to as 'meta-CW discourse'.

Speculatively, it is tempting to suggest that, in the face of the university's dwindling cultural valency, and having cultural production as one's only tool, Creative Writing turned to the meta as a safe haven in which texts may be written in reaction to personal publish-or-perish paranoia without risking the unpalatable, difficult task of having to justify them as research – academically, an essay on assessment rubrics for *TEXT* may be easier to sell as 'research' than a sonnet cycle. However, questions of how far this is true and why Creative Writing chose this particular safe haven are rather undercut by that of whether this is a safe haven at all. Is it any easier for the English academic to state an intention to produce excellence? This fragment, at least, is not a product of any stronger intention than that in Langeskov's creative work. The personal brief: (a) to write a fragment analysing my own Statement of Intent, which in turn analysed Philip Langeskov's Statement of Intent, which in turn analysed the idea of the Statement of Intent; (b) to alternate between paragraphs of the Statement and paragraphs of commentary in such a way that, if all formatting were removed, it would be readable as continuous prose; (c) to leverage (a) and (b) to blur the disciplinary distinction between English and Creative Writing. Beyond this, I did not know anything beyond the fact that I had come upon a form which might generate criticism; the argument itself emerged/is emerging in the writing.

4.5: Sui generis

2.1: This effectively dispenses with any idea that this text need follow in the formal footsteps of, say, literary theory or cultural studies, even while demanding that it do academic work – And if 'academic work' is therefore a signifier for something other than form, then a kind of wilful, desirous writing is suddenly legitimated.

A negative journalistic review.

A critical biography of the author, by the author, in the third person.

An extended dedication to the author's biographical source material.

A keynote address to a fictional conference.

A letter from the main character to the marker.

A critical commentary on the assessment's rubric.

An autointerview.

An essay in which the author feigns unawareness of their own characters' fictionality.

An apology from the author to an unidentified second person.

A literature review of psychological research on the coping strategies of people who have a loved one with dementia.

A critical essay written in the future tense.

Just a big bibliography.

Whatever writing overflowed the word count of the creative portion.

A linguistic analysis tracking the prevalence of profanity over successive edits.

A coursebook for Creative Writers structured around writing exercises which help one understand and employ the stylistic features of various literary theorists.

An account of the dynamics of writing prose fiction when the mantra 'show don't tell' is replaced with 'don't ask don't tell'.

A 1:1 scale map of the text, rendered as an electrocardiogram.

A history of the light bulb, with particular attention to its role in world-historical events.

A piece of sociological research analysing fieldwork in which a poem was workshopped first with adults, and then with children.

Multiple versions of the same writing journal entry, in pastiche of Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style*.

Three accounts of an interview with a notable literary figure, in which the interviewer is variously cast as idolising, hostile and indifferent.

A photocopied personal diary.

The writer's Twitter history, circa the module's start and end dates.

An anagram of the accompanying short story.

A short story in which an undergraduate literature seminar discusses a recently-written poetry collection on the theme of the precariat.

A short story in which a seminar leader reads a daring, formally innovative critical reflection.

A painstaking close reading of the accompanying short story's first word.

A meditation on the importance of jokes in literary fiction, incorporating an analysis of Freud's relief theory of laughter, which turns out to be an unusually long shaggy dog story.

A polemic urging a return to metre.

A graphic sex scene, seemingly edited out of the creative component, in which the author is unaccountably stood in the corner of the room, watching.

The full, unedited text of Jorge Luis Borges' 'Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote'.

An extended collection of footnotes, elevated from paratext to text.

4.6: Genette's usefulness (1930-2018)

2.3: To reconstitute the history and typology of the preface and other paratextual devices, and pursue those questions of genre and grouping, is precisely Genette's project in Paratexts, albeit in a modest form which does not claim to be rigorous or complete. – And what is there worth reading in an unrigorous, incomplete project?

On the one hand, the satisfaction of clear analytical schemata: there is a confidence generated when we are able to say, in spite of all complication and subtlety, 'this is an actorial allographic preface'. In *The Mezzanine,* Nicholson Baker praises footnoting's usefulness as 'a rough protective bark of citations' which reassures us that 'the pursuit of truth doesn't have clear outer boundaries', but is instead composed of 'self-disagreement' and attachment to 'the wider reality of the library' (122-3). Jargon like Genette's provides an analogous shield, signifying that the new thought is authorised by its debt to the old. At the same time, the jargon is not itself the goal: that a preface is 'apocryphal' and 'later' tells us nothing about its function, about how it affects one's reading of the text it prefaces.

And so, on the other hand, the eminent sensibleness of Genette, who is willing to say, of the perfectly sensible claim that knowledge of Marcel Proust's homosexuality and Jewishness affects ones reading of *À la recherche du temps perdu,* that 'anyone who denies the difference is pulling our leg' (8). Or, the sensibleness of Genette who, having provided the following 'cumbersome typology' of preface-senders, first announces that it 'calls for some observations, additions, and perhaps corrections', and then, in the long exposition of those corrections, refers to the potential concerns of 'diehard classifiers, of which I am certainly not one' (185, 186, 193).

Role / Regime	Authorial	Allographic	Actorial
Authentic	A Hugo for *Cromwell*	B Sartre for *Portrait d'un inconnu*	C Valéry for *Commentaire de Charmes*
Fictive	D "Laurence Templeton" for *Ivanhoe*	E "Richard Sympson" for *Gulliver*	F "Gil Blas" for *Gil Blas*
Apocryphal	G *"Rimbaud" for *La Chasse spirituelle*	H *"Verlaine" for *La Chasse spirituelle*	I *"Valéry" for *Commentaire de Charmes*

Here, the asterisked examples are Genette's own hypothetical creations – categories for which 'I know of no real example, but some such must certainly exist' – and throughout he disavows the completist stance of the diehard classifier (180). His key insight in all of this seems to me to be that to make a typology inexhaustive is also to make it inexhaustible. The inevitable instance of deviation from Genette's typology does not destroy it, but, through the notability of its differentness, only strengthens the scheme's fundamental usefulness. The inevitable deviation from a supposedly exhaustive typology undoes it entirely and at once.

This sensibleness should warn us off from taking Genette's approach as a universal analyser of complex textual situations. For even a precisely demarcated issue with relatively separable subdivisions (the apparent identity of a preface-writer) leaves gaps and ambiguities, as when he suggests that the status of the preface to Diderot's *Entretiens sur le fits naturel* in the above typology 'would be A2 + D/F' (191). To what extent might I have figured Creative Writing as a site of such derivable schemata? If Creative Writing academics are embroiled in a tension between two articulations of the author-function, could we not map out the various identities such an academic might inhabit at any given moment and from there discuss which is most likely to be the default status? Andrew Cowan has gestured towards something similar with regards to the workshop.

The workshop is a key identifying and differentiating mark for the discipline, ascribed by Michelene Wandor as 'the *sine qua non* for creative writing itself' (120), and is also, like so much in Creative Writing, subject to no more rigorous a popular definition than Justice Potter Stewart's of hardcore pornography: 'I know it when I see it' (*Jacobellis v. Ohio*). Any attempt to go beyond this tends to devolve into describing particular features of the thing, not its nature as a whole. Diane Donnelly, for one, gives a list of varying emotional and intellectual stances on the workshop: it is a place to 'teach craft' and 'enhance students' understanding'; it is analogous to the 'academic practice of peer-reviewing' but also 'a wonderful place where people's lives open up'; it is a place with 'heavy reading list[s]' or 'invention strategies' or 'a process-based story workshop' or none of the above (5-6).

In another such assay, for an article in *TEXT*, Cowan accounts for the range of potential workshop definitions with a somewhat Genettean gesture, suggesting that workshop might 'be arranged along a horizontal axis that has as one pole the wholly taught, exercise-based class for beginners and at the other pole the wholly discursive workshop for advanced (perhaps already published) writers, with a vertical axis that begins with recreational or high-school-level classes and ascends through the BA to the MA and MFA'. In the interest of comparison, one could decompose this into four categories over two rows and two columns: the more likely workshop situations would be top-down teaching aimed at less-experienced writers (let's go with *neuf*-pedagogic) and conversation-based teaching aimed at more-experienced writers (or *ancien*-discursive); the complementary less likely situations would accordingly be termed *neuf*-discursive and *ancien*-pedagogic. Cowan goes on, however, to suggest that a 'third axis, were such a thing imaginable, might calibrate the extent to which a programme is vocationally oriented', bringing our number of potential situations to eight and leaving us with a difficult-to-draw table, and an 'impossible fourth axis might register the extent to which the pedagogy is premised on a formalist or a sociological poetics', at which point we'd probably want to call the typology a bust, even before

considering Michelene Wandor's analogous suggestion that the workshop is suspended along a 'Romantic/therapy axis' (which would bring us to thirty-two distinct configurations), or speculating about the in principle unlimited potential for further dichotomies (119).

And that's just the workshop – but is there nonetheless a way in which this thesis could have been written in mimicry of Genette's method? The possibilities at play in a preface are formally generated, even if the choices actually made are semantic and meaningful; the problem with the workshop example, conversely, is that it lacks such delimitation. While the *neuf/ancien* and pedagogic/discursive dichotomies identify an audience, vocational/non-vocational identifies learning outcome, formalist/sociological an ideological concern, and Romantic/therapy something like an emotional or interpersonal resonance – to which we could quickly add an activity-focus reading/writing, a teaching-attitude theory/craft, a literary-critical form/genre, and any number of other ways in which people's lives might be wonderfully opened up.

However, if Genette's is a method in search of delimitation, one thing we do have is the textual fact of this thesis's three chapters about Creative Writing, on three distinct issues, each of which presents a pair of superimposed alternatives, which might be temporarily disentangled into oppositional binaries: from Chapter 1, literary author-function/academic author-function; from Chapter 2, erased paratext/persistent paratext; from Chapter 3, research invention/literary invention. Contra Cowan, the construction of a three-axis system *is* imaginable, and even drawable:
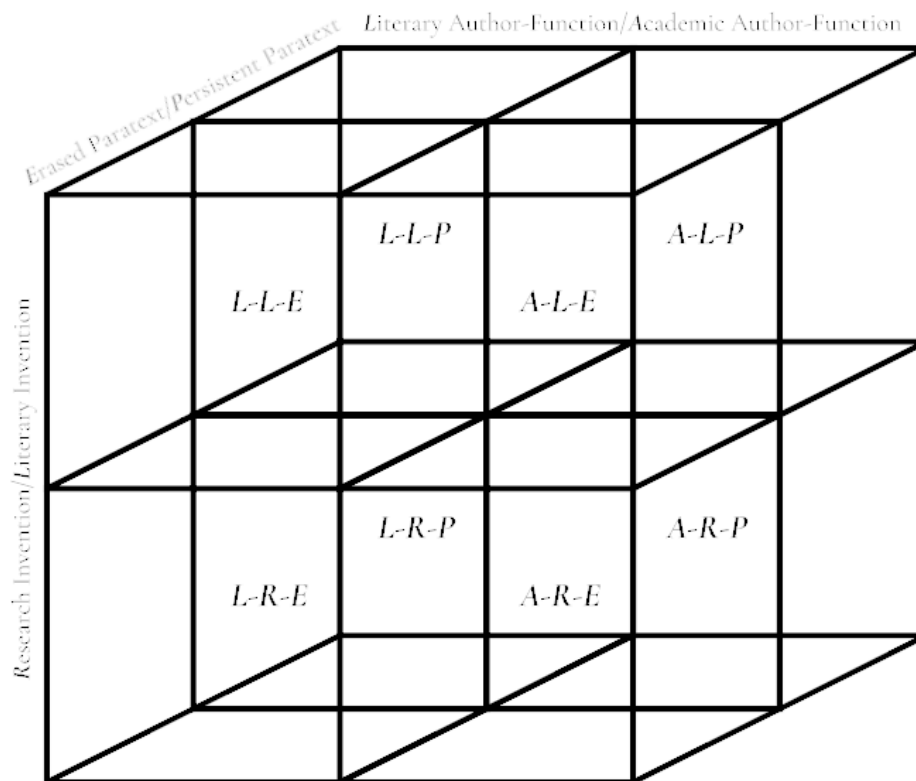
A few notes of explication regarding this diagram are worth mentioning.
First, while Cowan is thinking in terms of continuous axes – a given workshop is
more likely to be to-some-degree discursive and to-some-degree pedagogic than it
is to be entirely one or the other – this account, for ease, assumes that the
categories are absolutely binary. Just as some prefaces in Genette's analyses
occupy multiple categories, this typology too is available to multiplicity and
ambiguity. Second, the naming scheme here is reminiscent more of the Myers-
Briggs Type Indicator than it is of Genette's habit of giving local definitions to
existing adjectives (Myers & Briggs). The presence of two 'Literary's in particular
made this form more workable – the letter sequences are to be read as *x-y-z*
according to the respective axes – but, being concerned with people's opinions,
the following analysis will also be evocative of a personality-types model. Finally,
the diagram is to be viewed as a three-dimensional representation in which a cube
is subdivided into eight smaller cubes, each of which corresponds to one possible
combination of our three binary pairings, resulting in a strictly exhaustive
possibility space. In practice, this meant drawing eight Necker cubes aligned into

one larger Necker cube, the orientation of each of which is visually ambiguous, and may shift during observation. This is, frankly, difficult to look at: take it as a visual representation of the tenuousness of this typology and of the broader danger inherent in typologising. Nonetheless, certain useful comments might be made, first on the basis of the categories here outlined, and then on the basis of this diagram as a whole.

L-L-E: The figure in this category identifies primarily as an author whose work circulates as literature in the public sphere, and presents that work as fulfilling the demands of research rubrics. As such, text is produced in a manner no different to how it would be if the figure were writing without having a role in the academy, but because it is born of the academy it might also be submitted to the REF, or subjected to analogous validators of research. Any text produced alongside or in the process of that literary writing is broadly seen as secondary or dispensable – the literary work is unproblematically taken to be the *raison d'être* of the figure's labour. This category perhaps specifies the smallest possible disjoint between the idea of being an author and that of being an author-academic; as such, the figure's pedagogy is likely to favour writer's journals and writing exercises over critical essays and theoretical work.

L-L-P: This figure's assumption that literary work necessarily enjoys research-status is complicated by the production of paratexts which are shareable and consumable in and of themselves. This is most likely to be in the spirit of author interviews, personal essays, public meditations and similar epitexts, where an epitext is 'any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely' (Genette 344). If the figure in L-L-E represents the smallest deviation from the 'traditional' author role, L-L-P is perhaps in line with a more contemporary author-as-media-figure role, simultaneously producing literature and public commentary in a symbiotic

relationship. This category therefore encompasses what, as previously discussed, Paul Dawson's *Creative Writing and the New Humanities* sees as the forward trajectory for Creative Writing, in which the academy is a platform from which to speak more broadly:

> If the forum of the public intellectual is the media, the form is non-fiction – reviews, essays, newspaper columns, public lectures, panel sessions, television and radio interviews. A writer of novels and stage or screenplays, and less commonly of poetry, can command a presence as a public intellectual, but only by stepping outside the realms of fiction and operating in the forms mentioned above. That is, writers' fictional work may get them noticed in the public sphere, but they can only operate and be acknowledged as public intellectuals if they write columns, give lectures or provide interviews. (202)

Just as Dawson's account of the 'public intellectual' is formulated via discourses of the 'the perennial crisis in English' and 'the post-Theory academy' (205), this category ironically includes not only people from Creative Writing who speak on the public value of literature, but also those whose public engagements with Creative Writing are, despite any teaching or research activity they may perform, largely antagonistic (Flood; Murray).

L-R-E: This category is of a figure who self-conceives as a literary author whose textual production is informed by the fact of its framing in terms of academic research. Whilst whatever literary work this figure produces stands alone as the product of their intellectual labour, and is designated as something which will ultimately circulate on the terms of the publishing industry at large, it is not taken as read that any literary work must also be a work of research. Two models of labour therefore particularly suggest themselves here. The first is of an interdisciplinary writer, whose work is produced in reaction to or alongside non-Creative Writing research in a way which is specifically enabled by a university

context; hypothetical examples would be a play about climate change, a novel developed from a newly-uncovered historical source, or a poetry collection which encodes and responds to certain specific learning difficulties. The second is of a writer whose literary work is economically risky and laborious to a degree which make its production outside the academy untenable; formally innovative and avant-garde work of this sort might also draw on the intellectual atmosphere of the English department. As such, a figure in this category is more likely than that in L-L-E to emphasise processes of reading and theorising in their pedagogical practices.

L-R-P: In taking the research-content of their work to be located beyond the literary work which they identify as their 'main' labour, the figure in this category is likely to produce formally academic work which operates at some greater or lesser distance from their literary output. The obvious example of this is the figure who produces work which the present thesis has termed the meta-Creative Writing discourse: research work, for this figure, designates something non-literary which nonetheless draws upon the experience of writing literature and teaching literary writing. If the figure in this category conceives of academic writing as something wholly other to authorship, this might only serve to explicate the fundamental badness of a lot of the writing in the meta-Creative Writing discourse.

A-L-E: For the figure in this category, the invention at hand is literary, and so taken to be constituted according to the codes of the publishing industry and literary culture at large, and this invention neither wants nor needs the addition of non-literary texts in order for the figure in this category to fully conceive their own academic identity, and yet that identity is aligned with an academic form of authority rather than that of a novelist, poet, or similar. The most probable seeming upshot of this category is therefore a figure who, like that in L-L-E,

writes in much the same way as they would from without the academy, but with the additional aspect that their status as an academic gives their work particular currency in the public sphere. Occupation of this category may provide secondary weight to the suggestion that Creative Writing, as typified by D. G. Myers, 'seems to give every impression of being an interlocking coast-to-coast system of patronage – a network of cash subsidies and allotments of time for writers just starting out, a quilt of academic sinecures for older, more established authors', in that as well as directly funding its patronees it also propels sales and acclaim via a cachet that traditional marketing cannot grant (5). Alternatively, the figure in A-L-E may simply be drunk with internal contradiction.

A-L-P: Temporarily erasing the middle term of this category makes its figure largely unproblematic. Work located in a paratextual position originating from an academic author is a straightforward, if unusual, description of the status of literary criticism. The slight expansion of the term 'paratext' here is predicated upon, first, Genette's own account, in which a preface (to take that paratext as an example) might be written allographically (by another hand than that of the text) and exist epitextually (bound in a separate volume to the text), and, second, the fact that criticism is to be read alongside a text, or takes place on the threshold between it and the world at large – though, like any paratext, it is easily divorced from its text. What, then, are we to make of a literary critic whose invention takes place in terms of literary work, rather than the academic writing which would seem to be its natural site? The clear example which suggests itself is the emergent figure of the creative critic, for whom the literary qualities latent in any text – voice, style, form, etc. – are explicitly worked and mediated, and for whom any sense of intellectual distance and objectivity – whether mimed or sincerely believed – is substituted with a personal stake in the act of criticism. Of the fourteen writers featured in the closest thing currently available to a canonical list of creative critics – *Creative Criticism: An Anthology and Guide* – nine of them

(by my rough reckoning) have or had significant academic careers, and only two of those were heavily involved in Creative Writing. Creative criticism's place, within or without the academy, within or without Creative Writing, is therefore unsettled, but this category shows the potential for it to be constructed in terms of Creative Writing's felt pressures.

A-R-E: Work circulating on the grounds of academic authoriality, positioned as a having a quality of newness in academic rather than (or as well as) literary terms, which doesn't necessitate a paratext in order to make it available and readable: this seems, in terms of this typology, a relatively unlikely situation. The figure indicated by this category is perhaps an extreme formulation of the avant-garde writer mentioned in L-R-E, in that the innovation being performed is not just enabled by the academy, but distinctly of the academy. Models for this figure might be found in certain Twentieth-Century poetry movements: the Black Mountain poets and the Language poets both constitute self-consciously avant-garde inventions in poetry which were incubated in and delivered from the academy. Although positioning these as being situated within Creative Writing in and of themselves is potentially contentious, we may consider, in this context of Creative Writing's mass adoption, other exponents of this Avant-gaRdE.

A-R-P: If the typological challenge in A-L-P was to consider how literary criticism might itself be literary, this category presents no such problem: an academic author producing paratextual research-inventions is, directly, a university-based literary critic. The issue here is instead the fact that the figure of the literary critic is not inherently a figure of Creative Writing. Two potential solutions are clear. The first, tempting route out is to designate that particular corner of the typology our site of 'traditional' English academia, which the other seven categories deviate from to greater or lesser degrees. Certainly this would make present the fact that, even for L-L-E, which is both the negation of this

category and also the category closest to the extra-academic creative writer, English is always part of Creative Writing's disciplinary context, at least in British academia. However, to designate this category as such would be to miss the chance to encapsulate that significant subset of English academics who, despite not formally identifying as Creative Writers, practice creative writing alongside their academic role. It is true that placing that figure under this category does not quite bring it under the aegis of Creative Writing, but with the current state of the British university system, in which ever fewer employees are progressively undertaking ever more job roles, it seems reasonable to speculate that this boundary might not hold. No longer is there room for Philip Larkin's indulgent position as a university's brightest star who chooses – or rather, does not choose – his engagement with academic literary culture.

This final category of A-R-P raises the first observation which might be made regarding the diagram as a whole: physical proximity in the space of the graph also implies intellectual proximity in the nature of the categories, for the simple reason that categories which share a face only have one disparate term, categories sharing only an edge have two disparities, and categories sharing only a vertex have no terms in common. While this is in essence an accident of geometry, it does create the potential for interesting exercises in contrast, as with the figure in A-R-P who is potentially indistinguishable from a 'straight' English academic versus the figure in L-L-E who is potentially indistinguishable from a 'straight' novelist. Likewise, the figure in L-R-P, the writer of meta-Creative Writing discourse, feels particularly distinct from that in A-L-E, the writer who places the greatest weight on the university benefitting their literary career. This also means that we could consider ambiguous denotation in way unavailable to Genette's cumbersome typology of preface-senders. While that typology leads to constructions on the order of 'A2 + D/F', here it is unlikely that an academic would vacillate between, say, the avant-garde research of A-R-E and the public

intellectualising of L-L-P. Rather, we might consider this typology as a means of identifying where a given academic largely resides, with the proviso that – like an electron – their actual location upon observation is unpredictable, but more likely to be close to their category than far away from it. It may be speculated, for instance, that the academic who seems to meet the criteria of L-R-E, in that they produce literature informed by their academic context, is more likely to cross over into L-L-E and produce literature indifferent to an academic context than they are into A-R-P and produce strictly critical work.

The other general observation is to introduce one further three letter abbreviation by pointing out the deep faultiness of this diagram's implicit QED, in that it effectively converts an *a posteriori* analysis (that is, the reasoning of the thesis thus far) into an *a priori* one which rests upon the predicate that these binaries faithfully reflect the nature and dynamics and tensions of Creative Writing. It then gallops away on the assumption that this predicate holds, such that its QED places Descartes before the horse. It is obviously the case (and this is also the fatal condition of personality typologies) that if you categorise everyone in a given population according to certain demarcations then everyone in that population will have a place within the scheme of categorisation, but to do so doesn't inherently prove anything. Moreover, it is hard to imagine how a typology such as this might achieve significant resonance within the sphere it purports to categorise. An author writing a preface need not consult Genette to discover their form, and a Creative Writer submitting to the REF need not know what kind of author they are or what kind of research they do.

Nonetheless, this typology of Creative Writing figures does seem to hold a certain predictive power. It is generative of analyses which are germane to Creative Writing, which did not feature in the discourse which led to its construction, and anyone who denies as much is pulling our leg. The literary critic publishing poetry pamphlets on the side does exist. The Creative Writer leveraging the work of their colleagues in Biology, Astronomy and Maths does

exist. The creative critic's existence is demonstrated, at least as an aspiration if not as an achievement, by dint of the words currently appearing on the screen I am staring at.

Is it worth reading and considering this inexhaustive typology? Nicholson Baker celebrates the footnote in (what else?) a footnote; in fact, he does it in a late entry in the series of excessively long footnotes which permeate *The Mezzanine* to the point that they, at times, almost occlude the main text entirely. In this excessively long fragment, in this form which effectively outlaws a sense of completion, I am celebrating the act of criticism which does not complete, but which merely makes possible the next.

4.7: Nonetheless

1.5: It might come as some relief to all concerned (if mutually assured destruction is
  comforting) to hear that if the author is dead, then so too is the critic. – But
  nonetheless, critics and authors continue to write.

Writing criticism after Barthes is at least as unproblematic as writing literature
after him. The critic, it turns out, gets along quite well without the Author-God,
in indifference to intent, faithful only to the text. Closing down an avenue
wherein the author-function is taken to authorise and legitimise a particular
reception of a text, and not just its transmission, serves only to highlight
alternative avenues which were anyway available.

  But even if we imagine an alternative history in which 'The Death of the
Author' had taken on its most fatal possible form, in which Barthes's dissolution
of author and critic had led to a total shutting down of any alternative avenue,
poisoning with a textual flourish any more suspicious hermeneutics, critics and
authors would nonetheless have continued to write. Any work of analysis or
theory, no matter how suasive, how undeniable, must at some point meet with a
nonetheless: postmodernism has unpicked the grand narrative (but authors still
puppeteer the hand of history); we cannot now read *Jane Eyre* without feeling the
shadow of the plantation (unless we do); the traditional literary canon is
exclusionary, insulting, unhelpful (and thoroughly alive); the novel is dying,
poetry goes unread, television has supplanted film has supplanted theatre – yet
novels, poetry, and theatre are still at the heart of literary thinking; and in spite
of the last fifty years, literary biography is still a core genre of academic criticism.
When I browse the internet (too often) any reference to my academic discipline is
disconcertingly likely to be the following image (Brecheen):

What the author meant.

What your English teacher thinks the author meant.
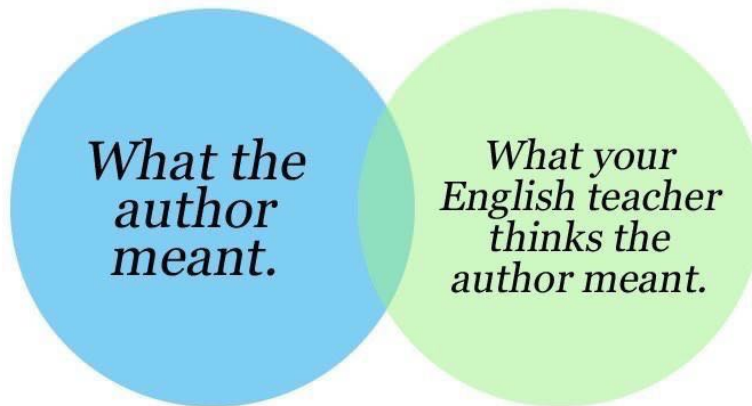
For instance: "The curtains were blue."

What your teacher thinks: "The curtains represent his immense depression and his lack of will to carry on."

What the author meant: "The curtains were fucking blue."

WeKnowMemes

The present thesis is also full of nonetheless moments. The preface, it turns out, is an imperfect theoretical model for the supplementary discourse, but is nonetheless a perfectly good practical model. Teachers of literary criticism will be at pains to highlight the issues around authorial intention, but can nonetheless make hay of the opportunities presented by having published authors in the department. The REF is irreconcilably at odds with Creative Writing research, but nonetheless functions perfectly well as an assessment framework for it. The profusion of names for the supplementary discourse makes the identification of it as an object for analysis near-impossible, but everyone nonetheless understands which object is meant by those names. Creative Writing holds both students and academics at the crux of cross-purposed, star-crossed axes – pinned between two author-functions, two textual productions, two types of knowledge – but they nonetheless learn and graduate, publish and teach, quite happily.

The present work could not in any good faith have made recommendations or prescribed the medicine which would lead Creative Writing to greater health. It is too partial, too abstract, too insufficiently authorised. It is also, however, a

repeated failure to reach any truly useful abstraction. Creative Writing refuses to be mapped, at least in this attempt, as either Genettean typology or Derridean aporia. Nonetheless, it might serve to make some trouble in and with the discipline.

4.8: It must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel.

0.1: the problems of authorship float through the afterword – Spoken as though there is
    any text through which the problems of authorship do not float.

The title of this fragment is also the incipit of *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* by
Roland Barthes, the title of which neatly captures the *spiegel am spiegel* of Creative
Writing's disciplinary condition of writers writing where writing is written about
writing, and a book which I've often thought might serve as a wholesale and
superior replacement for this entire thesis (1).

    For one thing, it is a supplementary discourse in an absolute way. No one
piece of it might be pulled out as primary, as the piece which the rest of the text
serves to support – not even Barthes's own previous work, which he refers to
constantly. Sometimes he does this in the abstract, as in the first words of the
first fragment: 'In what he writes, there are two texts' (43). Sometimes he refers to
his previous books explicitly, like when he says on page 87 that 'This began with
Writing Degree Zero, in which is imagined "the absence of every sign"'. That explicit
referencing goes as far, on page 145, as setting out his own work in a table:

Phases ~ Phases

Intertext	Genre	Works
(Gide)	(desire to write)	–
Sartre Marx Brecht	social mythology	*Writing Degree Zero* Writings on theater *Mythologies*
Saussure	semiology	*Elements of Semiology* *Système de la mode*
Sollers, Kristeva Derrida, Lacan	textuality	*S/Z* *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* *L'Empire des signes*
(Nietzsche)	morality	*The Pleasure of the Text* *Roland Barthes by Roland* *Barthes*

In this table I'm struck by the reference, in the bottom right, to the text currently being read. This, too, occurs throughout the book. When Barthes announces that the 'vital effort of this book is to stage an image-system', there is a sense of it being a supplementary discourse both on and within the discourse it is supplementary to (105).

From that table I also get an idea here that Barthes is, in part, ventriloquising the structuralist mode which Genette continued after Barthes moved on to the phase he identifies as 'morality'. Barthes's voice, while always being unmistakably Barthes, shifts around alarmingly in this text, most notably between first-person ('can I write today like Balzac?') and third-person ('he translates himself, doubles one phrase by another'), but either way referring to himself (118, 58). Sometimes this happens mid-fragment: during in the fragment 'The natural' he switches from third-person to first-person, then back to third-person, before finishing in first-person (130-1); the fragment 'The image-system of solitude' gradually descends from third- through second- to first-person. This switching is accompanied by various modes of analysis too numerous to exhaustively list: from autobiography (as with 'The rib chop' on page 61); to cultural criticism ('*Paradoxa*', 140); to pastiche ('Academic exercise', 158); to anecdote ('Pause: anamneses', 117-20); and so on. In short, because all unities are scattered, the problem of authorship achieves an astonishing prominence in this book – and yet, I never mistake the voice as being anyone but Barthes.

All unities except, of course, for the name which is used to sign the book. In what I keep wanting to present as a dramatisation of the author-function, the only thing to make this text (these texts?) cohere is the name itself; 'this book', as Barthes puts it, 'is not the book of his ideas; it is the book of the Self, the book of my resistances to my own ideas' (119). This is also why it is not an autobiography: there is no story being told amongst its many partial narratives. Which all leads me to wonder what kind of text this is. It is criticism, I think, of the critic's own work, but for the fact that rather than respecting and reproducing the meaning of

that work, it probes and upsets it and rewrites it. It is creative, I think, but for the fact that I cannot read it like a novel: at every turn, and for all its pleasure, it offers itself up as an object of study. When I ask it what it means, I am asking after constatives, not performatives, even while it tells me that the 'substance of this book, ultimately, is therefore totally fictive' (120).

I have read and re-read *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trying to find a way to work with what has always felt to me like a text which is too apt. I have annotated every moment of self-reference, every comment on the writing of this book, every comment on the writing of other books, every comment on writing itself, every shift in grammatical person. 'All this', writes Barthes, 'must be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel – or rather by several characters' (119). But only 'as if', not 'as', and on that count I'm still not sure what it is that Barthes has invented.

It is awkward to now attempt to write as I have been doing here, in a naive first-person, as though I'm composing a supplementary discourse out of first-order journal work. Without personae and polyvocality (save that of Barthes-in-quotation), critical writing feels no more possible than creative writing would. Even to replicate my own verbal tics would have an effect of persona in its inevitable non-identity with reality, which leaves me with only the simple statement to work with. Hence even in the first sentence of this fragment wordplay asserts itself over direct address. Hence this thesis's pronoun profusion of 'I', 'we', 'one', 'this thesis'; its adoption of theory-voice, survey-voice, conversational-voice, whatever-voice. There is a general truth in Barthes's incipit which upsets any notion of absolutely distinguishing Creative Writing from English.

Chapter 5: Foreword

5.1: In and With

If modernism's mantra was 'make it new', and if the slogans for Creative Writing are "'write what you know"; "show don't tell"; "find your voice"', then the equivalent dictum for theory might be *double your prepositions* (McGurl 4, 34). To always already be in a state of language, for instance, or to make trouble in and with.

There is little, of course, which does not exceed the mantra, slogan, or dictum applied to it. To write a PhD thesis in English, for instance, bears to the same extent as Creative Writing the demand to write what you know – or at least, to write what you *now* know, having done the research, and to hope that nobody notices any points at which you're writing what you *don't* know. But to write what you don't know is also the condition of Creative Writing, to leap by a force of imagination across the synapse which separates one's self from the world and so represent in writing something of the other.

That to make it new is presented as modernism's goal is made ironic by *The Waste Land's* employment of Ovid and Dante and Shakespeare and all that Western letters had to offer Eliot, or by the extended intertext with Homer's *Odyssey* in Joyce's *Ulysses*. To make it new is, much less questionably, the demand placed on academic research, overseen at every turn by officiators of originality, but here too it is hard to say full-throated that 'this has never been done before', pendent as a work of research is on the million man-hours of work it references.

It is perhaps, then, unsurprising that the discipline of Creative Writing too doubles its prepositions, in its status in and with the academy. Or rather, to recall the move which began the introduction of this thesis, it is creative writing which

doubles its prepositions, in and with the academy, for the other half of Nicholas Royle's 'ubiquitous programme', from which 'Reality Literature' hopes to save the novel, is 'the inexorable machine of the publishing industry' (154). Today, creative writing is in the academy, and is (to make a more contentious statement) in English, but there will always be a part of it which exceeds the academy, such that, even in a hypothetical future where Creative Writing has taken its strongest, most hegemonic form, creative writing will always also be something which accompanies the academy, runs alongside it, is with it. Literature, it seems almost tautological to say, is a necessary consequence of human existence which will always be produced and published outside the university – a fact which is reified in the machinery of the publishing industry.

To speculate, perhaps it is the slight gap thus formed between creative writing and the university which generates the endless stream of questions which seems to emerge from and flow around its very existence. Most significantly, that publicly chewed over question which this thesis has, until this final moment, avoided mentioning: can it be taught? There is something unmanageably unprogrammatic about an entity which can be cleaved by capitalising two of its letters, and so it is hardly surprising that it makes such trouble in the literary world.

Creative Writing, meanwhile, is certainly in the academy, but it has the potential to make trouble (and I believe it already has made trouble) in and with the academy, in its impact on the study of literature, on how literary criticism considers its object, on how theory develops new and better understandings of what happens when people read books. That Creative Writing is changing the shape of English around it is a difficult position to justify with anything like evidence or substantiation. Much like asking whether a novel would have been written differently if it weren't for the REF, to try and assess what Creative Writing has done to English is to invite yourself into a realm of counterfactuals. How can we possibly say how things would be if things were otherwise?

However, the author essay 'Reality Literature', and not uniquely, functions as a product of that interaction: critical, reflective, supplementary, concerned with its authorship, stating its originality, playing across the disciplinary threshold and performing that play in order to make the threshold visible. Noting his term's echo of 'reality TV', which is 'a fiction [...] constructed, programmed and ethnocentric', Royle assures us that '*Reality literature* invites us, on the contrary, to be wary of such constructions', that it 'seeks to question and complicate, to dislocate and interfere', that it 'is something that happens, perhaps, when the novel is operating at top speed, gone before you can say'. If, as Royle says, reality literature is 'not a genre but something more ghostly and fleeting', perhaps it is a tendency, an attitude, or a possibility of language – but suddenly the language he is using dislocates reality literature itself (157-8). It is 'fleeting'. It is in action while the novel is 'operating', but also when it is 'gone'. It is something cast forward from but uncontained by the novel.

It seems to me now, reading 'Reality Literature' one more time, that what the essay institutes, makes possible as in a printing matrix, is not more writing like *Quilt*, but more writing like itself. There is a temptation to add 'Author essay' to our list of names for the supplementary discourse, as the problems of fictionality, problems of supplementarity, and problems of authorship which float through this afterword now seem to constitute so much of the scene of Creative Writing. It is a confluence of writing and reading, where both of those gerunds are raised, nonhierarchically, from the level of activity to the level of profession. It steps forward, past the conversations which this thesis used it to set into motion, past any programmatics of authorship, assessment, or research, and invents something new.

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